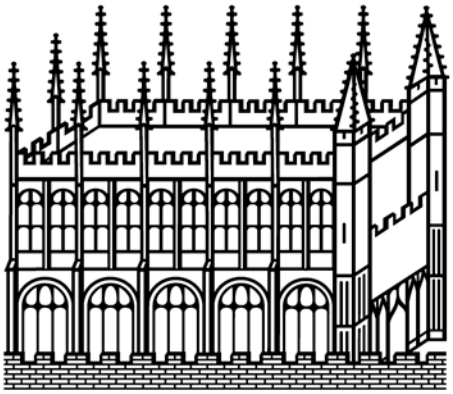


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THE

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.

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The Sunday-school Worker.

THE TIME IS SHORT.

ANOTHER year has rolled away, and we are still here. The Lord has not called us away to be at rest with Him. "There remaineth a rest for the people of God," but now is the time for work. Many workmen have been called away during the past year and are now with their Lord, but we are spared a little longer the privilege of doing something for Him. May He give fresh energy and zeal, so that that which our hand findeth to do, we may do with all our might.

Many are deeply impressed that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Evil is certainly on the increase—religious evil. This our country that for many a long year has held the name of being Protestant, is now unmistakenly and rapidly hastening on to Popery. Large churches are springing up in many neighbourhoods, which though called Protestant, are but one remove from Popery. Sisters of mercy throng our streets, insinuating themselves wherever they can, and declaring plainly that there can be no salvation in separation from the church. If they meant the church of Christ it would be true, but they mean *their* church; they point to the building and to the priest who is empowered of God, say they, to grant absolution.

But they stop not with leading astray adults; a whole class of agents are employed to ensnare the young, making tempting offers of pecuniary help to families to get the young under their control.

To these they teach the value of ordinances, the power of the church, the authority of the priests.

Sunday-school teachers, who through God's grace know the value and efficacy of the blood of Christ through faith in Him, will you see all this spread of evil—religious evil, as I have said—all around you, and not be stirred up to renewed zeal for the cause of Christ and for His great salvation? Who is on the Lord's side? Who is here to fight the Lord's battles against the enemy of souls? There is no one but you and I and our fellow Christians. If *we* shall fold our hands, or be careless or indifferent, or let little obstacles hinder us, or petty differences turn us aside, alas! what unworthy soldiers we should be!

The time too is short: every Sunday may be our last opportunity of telling of the grace of God. Let us then be instant in season and out of season.

Let us not be content with simply meeting the scholars that may come to us. If we have room for more children, let us carry our warfare into the enemy's camp, and seek to draw some away from the path of the destroyer. All our schools are not full. How is this? Are there no scholars to be had in the neighbourhood? Though schools seem to abound, yet in London alone it has been found by collecting statistics there are many thousands of children who go nowhere, and we suppose it is so in other places. Shall we not care for their souls? If a house were on fire we should care for the bodies of the inmates; but there is a worse, an eternal fire to escape from—haste to the rescue. Seek to bring the children in, and to bring them to Christ. The danger is imminent: the time is short.

OUR MOTTO.

"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 Corinthians xv. 58.

My beloved Fellow-Labourers,

I feel that the above verse has a special and an important application to us, as workers for God amongst the dear children, and that in a twofold manner. It at once exhorts and encourages us, and surely in these days of lukewarmness, half-heartedness, and discouragements, we need, while not relaxing our efforts for one moment, to stay our hearts upon God and His unchanging word, as the comfort for our souls, and the warrant for our actions. And is not that word a touchstone too, which discovers to our consciences the way and manner we are doing our Master's work, whether it is to His glory and worthy of Him, or through our own half-heartedness, we are bringing disgrace upon His name? My beloved fellow-labourers, let us see to it at once, that we are whole-hearted for Christ, and consequently true-hearted to His interest down here. I desire for us to look at this verse, first, as to its inward effect upon our souls, and then, secondly, as to its outward results upon our actions.

The apostle commences "*Therefore*, my beloved brethren," thus referring us to the great principles he has brought out in the whole of this marvellous chapter, and more particularly in the last few verses. I ask, are we practically living in and enjoying this wondrous fact that "in the twinkling of an eye" we may be with the Lord? If so, with what sweetness do the words, "be ye sted-

fast" fall upon our hearts; "*stedfast*," yes, but only for a little while, "for He that shall come will come, and will not tarry;" "*unmovable*," yes! "My Lord is at hand:" "*always abounding*," yes! for when He shall appear "a cup of cold water which has been given in his name shall not lose its reward:" "*not in vain*," no! "for God is not unmindful, to forget your work of faith and labour of love." Dearly beloved, do we want incentives to whole-heartedness for Christ? If so, surely we have them here, but God forbid that I should hold them out as such, or that you should require them; are they not to us simply grace upon grace?

Do not these precious words, "He loved me, and gave himself for me," set our hearts in a blaze and keep them so? May God write these blessed words upon the fleshy tables of our hearts, so that our joy and love may be always going forth to Him, because we know that "He first loved us." Do we want power to endure stedfast, unmovable unto the end, what power to our souls do His own words bring, "I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also"? Surely when we think of our absent Lord and of His coming again, it knits up all the affections of our new nature and binds up in holy stedfastness our every thought and desire to Him and His interests. May the Holy Spirit, dwelling ungrieved in us, reveal more and more of the coming One, and of His love to our souls; then shall we continue stedfast, unmovable in our inner man, and manifest the same also in our service among the dear children whom He has committed to our care.

Now shall we look for a moment at the practical

result these truths should produce upon us, as teachers? The Lord has given me a class, am I stedfast? Am I regular? Am I punctual? Am I stedfastly holding on to my work, irrespective of difficulties, discouragements, or hindrances, calling to mind that soon I shall meet my Master, and that to Him I must stand or fall? What shall I say to Him when I meet Him face to face if I have neglected my children or allowed others to draw me aside from work which He gave me to do? How shall I meet my Lord, and tell Him I know nothing of those to whom He sent me with His wondrous message of love; that I have never sought to take them one by one and lovingly and faithfully point them to Him; that I have never agonized in prayer even for one hour, either over them, or with them; that I had neither won their hearts myself nor sought to win them for Him? I ask you, beloved, yea, I implore you by the day of "His appearing," that ye neglect not these matters, but that ye be "*stedfast.*"

Would to God that you and I more fully entered into that fearful question of our Lord, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" If we were constantly alive to these awful, eternal realities, we should be more in the spirit of the apostle Paul when he says, "Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men."

Think, I pray you, in the presence of God, and weigh well the value of one immortal soul. "And be ye stedfast," "unmovable." Yes! beloved, I have found in this word, of late, a new (to me) and most precious thought; it turns me to God Himself, and His own word. I may through His grace have been enabled to stand stedfast against

all assaults from without, and He may have given me a deep love for the souls of my children, but, as I look around and do not see any apparent results, am I not apt to be discouraged, to lose interest, and to faint? Circumstances seem to say that my labour is vain; friends tell me that I have mistaken my work, and my own evil heart of unbelief would gladly echo it all. How, then, can I be unmovable? It is only as I think of Him who changes not and whose word shall abide for ever sure, that by faith I look right over and beyond all human thoughts and circumstances, and rest my soul upon the firm, unchangeable statements of my God: "your labour is not in vain in the Lord." And even more than this, I know through grace that the written word is the sword of the Spirit, and by that same Spirit I grasp this soul-strengthening fact, "My word shall not return unto me void, but shall accomplish the purpose whereunto I sent it."

By faith I know, own, and carry out, that my trust is in the living God and in His imperishable word, and thus shall I stand unmovable amidst all the shifting things of time and sense; yea, I shall rise above them all, and looking right up into heaven, I shall with calm assurance in Him, wait for that day, when every man's work shall be made manifest; when many things done now in weakness, shall receive praise of Him who seeth in secret. My beloved fellow-labourers, God is pledged to use and to bless His own word, let us stand unmovable, sustained by this unchanging truth. "Abounding in the work of the Lord:" oh! with such a God, such a Saviour, such a hope, shall we not seek to abound on the right hand and on the left hand? shall we not run over with

desire? shall we not seek how much we can do for Him? Shall I not visit my children and their parents? thankfully pray for and with them? Joyfully! Shall I not invite them one by one to my house and tell them of my Lord and Saviour? Certainly! Speak to them in season and out of season, of Him who fills all heaven? Assuredly! Bring them to Him, and never be satisfied until I know that they are lambs of His flock? Undoubtedly!

God grant that you and I may be always abounding in the work of the Lord until He come; and then when He shall see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied, you and I shall find that our labour has not been in vain in the Lord; and with joy shall we cast down at His feet the crowns His own hand has bestowed, saying throughout the countless ages of eternity, "Thou, thou art worthy."

"He loved me, and gave himself for me."

WATCHWORD FOR 1877.

SAW THE TRINDLE.

We propose to adopt as our Watchword for the New Year the above words, which are borrowed from the shipwright. For the purpose of fastening the outer planking to the ribs of a timber-built ship, a number of wooden pins called treenails (corrupted into "*trindles*" in the North of England yards) are used. Trindles are made of the heart of oak or other hard and tough wood, and are driven into auger-holes which are much smaller in diameter than themselves. When a trindle has to be driven into its place, one of the shipwrights

holds the pointed end to the hole, while another deals a blow with his heavy long-handled mall which secures the entry, and then blow quickly follows blow, as three or four shipwrights swing their malls in concert. When the trindle refuses to be driven further, and the malls rebound without effect; then, if the foreman shipwright deems that more should be done, he takes his saw and cûts off an inch or more from the top, when the blows of the malls may be renewed with fresh effect.

Taking care not to weaken in our minds the teaching of Zechariah iv. 6, "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts," let us make our application. Striving together in the same work, in one spirit and of one mind, let us, like gospel shipwrights, seek to urge our message, looking to the Lord to give it both an entry and reception in the hearts of the children. And if we discover a period of the lesson or address when the willingness of the children to listen is dying out, let us use the saw and shorten our address; then with a few loving earnest words, the message itself may be sent "*bowce-home.*" *Verbum sat sapienti.* Sunday-school teachers in class and address, editors of magazines, writers of articles, corresp— but I must saw the trindle.

NOTES ON SCRIPTURE.

MATTHEW XVII.

VERSES 9–13. As Jesus, with Peter, James, and John descended from the mount of transfiguration He bade them tell no man the vision until the Son of man had risen again. As we saw in

chapter xvi. it was now too late to make Christ known to the people of Israel as their Messiah. This transfiguration was to be kept a secret until the foundation for all future blessing had been laid by the cross and the resurrection.

This drew forth the question from the disciples, "Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?" The prophecy alluded to is, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." (Mal. iv. 5, 6.)

Our Lord replied that "Elias truly shall first come and restore all things." This must not be taken out of its connection. It in no way refers to the coming of the Lord for His saints, which belonging to the church is overleaped here. The prophecy refers to the coming of Christ to the earth in its aspect towards Israel. Before this event takes place, Elias—or one in his spirit—will come and restore all things. This "restoration" too must not be taken out of its connection. As we see by the prophecy, it is turning the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers. This will no doubt be the preliminary work, and greater blessing will follow, still it is confined to the Jewish nation. It is still future.

But our Lord goes on to say that Elias had already come, but instead of their listening to him, they did to him what they listed: as we know John was put to death. When he was asked whether he was Elias, he said, No. He was only Elias to faith; and as the people had not faith, he

could truly say that he was not that prophet. It seems to be a contradiction; for John gives an emphatic No, whereas our Lord says here that Elias had come; but one expression makes the matter quite clear: our Lord said, "*If ye will receive it* this is Elias which was for to come." (Chap. xi. 14.) If they had had faith he would have been the Elias, but they did not receive it, and therefore he was not Elias. The disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.

Verses 14–21. This scene of the lunatic is in strong contrast to the transfiguration on the mount. While Christ is with His three disciples on the mount surrounded with glory, below sin is reigning, and immediately on the descent of our Lord, there is brought to Him one sorely vexed, one who often fell into the fire and into the water.

But there were not only the sad ravages of sin in the unbelieving multitude, there was failure in the disciples. This poor lunatic was brought to Christ's disciples, but they were not able to cure him. We find by verse 18 that this was not simply a case of *disease* or mental disorder, but the child was possessed by a demon. And this momentous state of things was brought to light, that the disciples attempted to displace the demon, and he refused to depart. There is no doubt that, in this instance, as in other cases, the disciples used the name of Jesus, and yet the cure was not effected.

Our Lord exclaimed, "O faithless and perverse *generation*, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer [or bear with] you?" He does not expose the disciples before the multitude, but

he speaks of the "generation" as unbelieving and perverse.

But when the disciples were alone with Jesus they asked how it was that they had failed. He told them plainly that it was their unbelief. If they had faith, nothing should be impossible to them. But then He adds this important passage, "Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."

There is surely an important lesson here for all Christians. Here were true disciples, going about a right work, using the name of the Lord Jesus, and all ends in failure. The explanation is that they lacked faith; and such power as was needed for such a case as that before them only went by prayer and fasting. Let us all pause and inquire how much of our failure has resulted from like causes. We can easily understand that the disciples might have fallen into a sort of routine, and not have been exercising faith in every case, until sad failure was the result. So surely may we, in presenting the gospel or in any other service, fall into a mere routine without faith and waiting upon God—without prayer and fasting.

EXAMPLES OF SCRIPTURE LESSONS.

I.—THE TWO BOY-KINGS.

2 Chronicles xxxiii., xxxiv.

THIS is a subject which may easily be made both interesting and instructive.

The fact of Manasseh and Josiah being made kings when they were so very young, should be dwelt upon, and turned to advantage in gaining the attention of the scholars—especially those about eight or twelve years of age.

Without going into the whole of their histories, enough subject-matter will be found for more than one lesson. Draw special attention to the striking contrasts between them.

Manasseh had a good father; Josiah, a very bad one. Manasseh did that which was "evil;" Josiah, that which was "right." Manasseh grew up a wicked man, and did such wickedness as was not done by any king before; Josiah grew up a good man, and kept such a passover as was not kept by any king before.

There are other points of contrast in their histories which would suggest themselves to the teacher's mind.

Call attention to the fact that what they did was "in the sight of the Lord." There are two ways of looking at this. First, that the Lord saw all they did; and, secondly, that it was that which has "evil" or "right" in *His* sight. This is important when men call evil good, and good evil.

Then notice the contrast between their ends.

Manasseh, after his life of evil-doing when he was in affliction repented and humbled himself before the Lord, and the Lord heard his supplications, and brought him back to Jerusalem. Josiah, after all his life of right-doing, when he was in prosperity, disobeyed the word of the Lord, and was killed in battle. Manasseh began badly, and ended well; Josiah began well, and ended badly.

From Manasseh's case we should learn that although up to the present we have been sinning against God, if we repent, and cast ourselves as sinners upon His mercy through Christ Jesus, we may be forgiven, and be taken to a better place than Jerusalem. And from Josiah's case we

should learn that those who have already begun well need to be very careful as to their walk, keep close to the word of God, and never go contrary to it, or else, although they cannot lose their eternal life, they may bring dishonour upon the Lord, and trouble upon themselves.

Impress upon the scholars what is the *first right thing to do,* if they desire to avoid Manasseh's evil way, and to walk in Josiah's right way. John vi. 28, 29, will give you what you need here.

Then it might be well, in order to fix the subject in the scholars' minds, to relate the following or any other anecdote to the point.

Two country lads came at an early hour to a market town, and arranging their little stands, sat down to wait for customers. One was furnished with fruits and vegetables, and the other supplied with clams and fish. The market hours passed along, and each little merchant saw with pleasure his store steadily decreasing, and an equivalent in the shape of little silver bits shining in his money cup. The last melon lay on Harry's stand, when a gentleman came by and placing his hand upon it said, "What a fine large melon! How much do you ask for it?" "The melon is the last I have, sir; and though it looks very fair, there is an unsound spot in it," said the boy, turning it over. "So there is," said the gentleman, "so I think I will not take it." "But," he added, looking into the boy's fine open countenance, "is it very business-like to point out the defects of fruit to your customers?" "It is better than being dishonest, sir," said the boy, modestly. "You are right, little fellow, always remember that principle, and you will find favour both with God and man. I shall remember your little stand in future."

"Are those clams fresh?" continued he, turning to Ben Wilson's stand. "Yes, sir, fresh this morning: I caught them myself," was the reply; and a purchase being made, the gentleman walked away.

"Harry, what a fool you were to shew the gentleman that spot in your melon! Now you can take it home for your pains, or throw it away. How much wiser is he about those clams I caught yesterday? Sold them for the same price as I did the fresh ones. He would never have looked at the melon until he had gone away." "Ben, I would not tell a lie for twice what I have taken this morning. Besides, I shall be better off in the end, for I have gained a customer, and you have lost one." And so it proved, for the next day the gentleman bought nearly all his fruits and vegetables of Harry, but never spent another penny at the stand of his neighbour.

Thus the season passed; the gentleman finding he could always get a good article of Harry, constantly patronized him, and sometimes talked with him a few minutes about his future prospects. To become a merchant was Harry's great ambition, and when the winter came on, the gentleman, wanting a trusty boy, decided on giving the place to Harry. Steadily and surely he advanced in the confidence of his employer, until having passed through various posts of service, he became at length an honoured partner in the firm.

NOTES OF LESSONS FOR A BIBLE CLASS.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

LET us begin to-day to consider the book of Job. I know this is an unusual book to take up in a

Sunday school; but the whole word of God is open to us, and no part of it is to be overlooked. I think you will be interested in the contents of the book, and by the blessing of God we shall all be profited by its study.

Let us read the first five verses, and this will give us an introduction to the book and to Job himself.

Does anyone know to what time this book refers?

I have heard that it was written very early.

It comes in, as we see, between Esther and the Psalms; but it is judged to refer to a much earlier time. Do any of you see in the verses that we have read an indication of its early date? [No one knows.]

Well, one thing is that we find Job acting as a priest. Lest his sons and daughters in their feasts should have sinned and cursed God in their hearts, he continually offered up burnt offerings for them. The patriarchs used to act as priests, as we know; this was before the law and a special priesthood was set up. Now because we find Job acting as a priest, as the patriarchs did, is one reason why it is judged his book refers to their times.

Another reason is that there is no reference in the book to the law, nor to Israel. Some of the learned believe it dates about the time of Solomon; but if such were the case, I believe there would be some reference to the law, or to Israel, especially when they are speaking of God and His ways with man. The dealings of God with Israel are never referred to by Job.

Another point is the length of Job's life: he lived a hundred and forty years after his trial, and

at that time he was not a young man, for he had had ten children.

Again, his riches are counted by his cattle; not by gold or silver.

He also speaks of the most ancient kind of writing by sculpture in the rock. (Chap. xix. 24.)

So that for these and other reasons we may conclude that Job lived in patriarchal times.

Is it known, teacher, where Job lived?

Not exactly. He is spoken of as the greatest of all "the sons of the East." By comparing this with other passages, it would seem to be east of Palestine, somewhere between Egypt and the Euphrates. There is a passage in Lamentations that refers to Uz. Read chapter iv. 21.

"Rejoice, and be glad, O daughter of Edom, that dwellest in the land of Uz."

This links Edom with Uz, which agrees also with the east of Palestine.

Is it not strange, teacher, that it speaks of the possibility of the sons *cursing* God in their hearts?

We know that people in their feasts foolishly drink too much, and then there is no telling what they might not do.

But as Job was so rich, would not his children be well off, and why should they think of cursing God?

Ah! many a rich man curses God. Some want to be richer, and some through habits of indulgence and indolence have not good health to enjoy their riches. And some because of their comforts are ruffled by the least thing that crosses them.

But let us notice what four things are said of Job's character.

He was perfect, upright, feared God, and hated evil.

It is important to notice that this was God's description of Job. In looking at God's dealing with him we must remember that he is not dealt with as a wicked man, but as a righteous man.

It was because Job feared God that he was anxious lest any of his sons should sin against their Creator, and he sent to sanctify them, and rose up early in the morning and offered burnt-offerings according to their number. And he did this not once or twice, but continually.

What is meant by Job sending to sanctify his sons and daughters?

Job doubtless understood that along with offering a sacrifice there must be a corresponding putting away of evil. We find in Genesis xxxv. when God told Jacob to go to Bethel and make an altar for God, Jacob immediately called upon his household to put away their strange gods, and *be clean*, and change their garments.

This is an important principle that those who seek to worship God must put away evil. Anything less than this is a solemn mockery of God. You will remember that in the New Testament where Christian's are told to pray for all men they are told to lift up holy hands. (1 Tim. ii. 8.) This is for those who fear God. For those who do not fear Him there is no worship expected from them. They are exhorted to accept forgiveness that they may become worshippers. No one ever merits forgiveness by going through any form of worship. All are sinners and need forgiveness. Having this, they become worshippers; and then as worshippers they must, like Job, associate sanctification along with the offering—to us the one offering for all sin—Jesus Christ.

OBSOLETE WORDS AND MEANINGS OF WORDS IN SCRIPTURE.

Abjects, Psa. xxxv. 15. Literally 'outcasts.' The word is obsolete as a noun.

Acre, 1 Samuel xiv. 14; Isaiah v. 10. It does not point out what we understand by an 'acre;' and it is doubtful if it refers to any *very definite* measure. The Hebrew word is elsewhere 'yoke,' and the portion of ground pointed out is supposed to be what a yoke of oxen could plough in a day. 'Acre' literally is 'field,' from Anglo-Saxon *æcer*, a field.

Admiration, Rev. xvii. 6. This is used in its *literal* signification, 'wonder;' from the Latin *admirari*, 'to wonder at.'

Advisement, 1 Chron. xii. 19. Upon advising together, or taking counsel, or deliberation. In Prov. i. 4, *marg.* it is 'discretion' in the text.

Agone, 1 Samuel xxx. 13. Same as 'ago,' from *ygone*, the old past participle of 'to go.'

Affect, Gal. iv. 17. The literal interpretation here is 'they are zealous after you.' The word 'affect' is retained from the Latin *affectare*, to aim at, strive after.

Aliant, Job xix. 15; Psa. lxix. 8. Now put alien.

Anon, Matt. xiii. 20; Mark i. 30. Old English word *onane* 'at one' [moment], at once, immediately.

Answer. This is used in various senses. Cruden gives the following: 1, To reply to a question, Prov. xxvi. 4. 2, To begin to speak when no question is asked, Dan. ii. 26; Acts v. 8. 3, To witness, Gen. xxx. 33. 4, To obey, Isa. lxv. 12; Jer. vii. 13. 5, To grant what one desires in prayer, Psa. xxvii. 7, lxxxvi. 7; Isa. lxv. 24. 6, To give account, Job ix. 3; xl. 2. 7, To punish, Ezek. xiv. 7.

Artillery, 1 Samuel xx. 40. This was of old applied to any weapons of war.

Astonied. This is retained from the Old English *astony*, astonish.

Attendance, 1 Tim. iv. 13. This is used in its lit-

eral meaning here, 'to stretch or tend to'; from the Latin *attendo;* hence 'attention.'

Attent. Same as 'attentive.'

Audience. This is used in its literal meaning, 'hearing,' from *audire*, 'to hear.'

Await, Acts ix. 24. This word is obsolete in the sense of 'ambush.'

Away with, Isa. i. 13. Obsolete in the sense of 'endure.'

A MEASURE OF WHEAT FOR A PENNY.

MR. EDITOR,

Is it clear that the passage in Revelation vi. 6—"a measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny"—is meant to describe *scarcity?* I presume that the seals generally describe the judgments of God upon the earth, and its inhabitants; but this sentence is followed by, "see thou hurt not the oil and the wine;" and this would seem to be the reverse of judgment. M.

Without doubt the word "scarcity" properly denotes the meaning of the passage. We know from Matthew xx. 2 that a penny was the wages of a man for a day's work. The word in the Greek in both places is the same (*denarius*) and would be equal to about 7½d.

The word used for 'measure' is *chœnix*, and Suidas states that a chœnix of wheat was the daily portion for a man's consumption. Herodotus also makes a calculation of how much corn was needed for the Persian army, and here again a chœnix of wheat is set down for each man per day.

Now these two things put together would shew

that a man could only earn enough per day to support himself, leaving absolutely nothing for his family, clothes, &c.

Or if the workman resorted to barley for his bread, he would obtain three times as much, and would perhaps be able just to support his family on the commonest food.

And this agrees well with the concluding sentence, that the oil and wine are *not* to be hurt. It does not describe a famine, and the luxuries of life are not to be touched; but there is to be a scarcity of the common necessaries of life.

This is further borne out by seeing that the judgments of the seals are of a progressive character. Here is scarcity, and not such a scarcity as would touch the few, but one that would touch the mass of the people; but when the next seal is opened, among other judgments is this, that the people shall be killed by *hunger*. This goes much further than the third seal, and certainly betokens famine even unto death.

It is also confirmed by the introduction to the passage. The vision presents a black horse, and he that rides it has in his hand a *pair of balances*. Why a pair of balances? To point out doubtless the same scarcity; for when there is plenty there is no need to be restricted to a certain quantity; but in times of scarcity everything is eked out by weight or measure, as we read in Ezekiel iv. 10, 16, "And thy meat which thou shalt eat shall be by weight . . . . thou shalt drink water by measure. . . . I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem, and they shall eat bread by weight and with care." With such a passage, how forcible is the symbol of a pair of balances in the hand of the rider of the black horse!

NOTES ON SCRIPTURE.

MATTHEW XVII. 24–27.

THIS passage gives us the history of our Lord paying the tribute money. Two interpretations have been given to this: one, that the tribute referred to is that which was paid to Cæsar; and the other, that it referred to the tribute paid for the temple.

What has given rise to the former has no doubt been the question of our Lord, "Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute?" Some have failed to see how this question can refer to the temple, while it seems to agree well with the tribute paid to Rome. Another difficulty is, as to how Christ and His disciples can be said to be 'sons' in reference to the temple; whereas they *were* in their own land, and not strangers.

In the first place we must look at the word 'tribute.' There are three Greek words translated 'tribute' in the Authorised Version. One, *phoros* (from *phero*, to bear, carry), strictly a tax or tribute laid upon a dependent and subject people. This word occurs Luke xx. 22; xxiii. 2; Romans xiii. 6, 7. Another, *keensos*, census, assessment, both of people and of property; and hence, poll-tax, tribute: occurs Matthew xvii. 25; xxii. 17, 19; Mark xii. 14. Thirdly, *didrachmon*, two drachmas: occurs only twice, in verse 24 of our passage.

Now this goes a great way to settle the question at issue. We find a word used here which is not used elsewhere in the New Testament, and is not applied to the tribute to Rome, and is not used

by our Lord in verse 25, where He asks, "Of whom do the kings of the earth take tribute?" If the word 'tribute' in verse 24 referred to the same as in verse 25, there is no reason why a different word should have been used. If fact, the word *didrachmon* does not really mean 'tribute,' but is a definite sum of money. It is here used in this way. Suppose a sum of money is fixed on for every one in a city to pay, say a shilling each, the question might be asked, "Do you not pay the shilling?" when it would at once be known *what* shilling was referred to. Here the question was to Peter respecting Christ, and it is in both places "*the* didrachmas" (in the plural).

The value of the *didrachmon* was about fifteen pence half-penny; which agrees with the half-shekel tribute which was paid to the temple (see Exod. xxx. 13); and without doubt this is what was referred to. The piece of money found in the mouth of the fish was a *stater*, of the value of half-a-crown, which just paid for our Lord and Peter.

There has been some questioning as to whether this contribution of the half-shekel to the temple was continued down to the time of our Lord. At times it might not have been needed when the wars brought in large subsidies (1 Chron. xxvi. 26, 27); but it was collected again when needed, as in 2 Chronicles xxiv. 6, 9; and Josephus records that it was collected annually in his day, and that Vespasian, on the destruction of the temple, diverted it to Rome. It is also mentioned by heathen writers as being allowed to be transported by Jews out of Jerusalem for the support of the temple.

There can be no doubt then that this contribution for the temple was collected at that time, and that this is referred to in our passage. We must

consequently look upon our Lord's question simply as an *illustration* bearing on the question. And this is elicited: that kings of the earth took tribute of strangers and not from sons. "Then are the children [sons] free." Our Lord immediately added, that rather than give offence they would pay the money.

The only difficulty is, in what sense were our Lord and Peter 'sons' in reference to the temple, so that strictly speaking they ought not to have paid? As to our Lord, we know that He called the temple "my Father's house," therefore He was a son of the Lord of the house. In grace He associated His disciples with Himself, not then as the body of Christ, as was afterwards revealed; but, as we constantly find in the Old Testament, Christ associates Himself with the remnant and the remnant with Him. "Then are the sons free." It was a declaration of His relationship with Him who owned the temple, in which He identified His disciples with Himself.

Here too shines out the poverty of our Lord. He had to work a miracle to pay this half-crown! He who was rich for our sakes became poor; but it was that we through His poverty might be rich.

We must not omit to notice also that our Lord here submitted to those in authority, who sat in Moses' seat. There might have been many reasons urged why our Lord and His disciples should not have helped to support that which He Himself declared to be a den of thieves; but it was still His Father's house, and the half-shekel had been ordered through Moses. He would pay it. In relation to ourselves we have to submit even to worldly authority, as "the powers that be." It is

for us to submit; they—and they alone—are responsible for the use made of the money. This saves us discussing hundreds of questions, and mixing with politics and all sorts of worldly topics. Our Lord said, "Lest we should offend them;" and the word to us is, "Obey the powers that be." Our precious Bible answers every question that we need to ask, even as to paying a tithe-rent or a church-rate! In strictness we too should not pay, for all things are ours, for we are Christ's, and Christ is God's. Nevertheless the powers that be are ordained of God, and it is our duty to obey them. A time will come when this world, now out of course because of sin, will be set right; and Christ our Lord shall reign in righteousness.

EXAMPLES OF SCRIPTURE LESSONS.

II.—THE TEN LEPERS.

Luke xvii. 11—19.

THIS is a very different subject from our last. In that we sought specially to bring the truth to bear upon the moral conduct of our scholars. In this we shall dwell more upon the gospel, or how to be saved.

Perhaps some may think this should have come first; but all must admit that both sides of the truth are necessary. In this day, when the simple and blessed truths as to salvation are so largely dwelt upon, it is very necessary to point out to our scholars what is and what is not according to God's will, that their *consciences* may be affected thereby. But now to our subject.

In this portion there is much that may be made thoroughly interesting to the scholars.

The word "leper" suggests a great deal. What is leprosy? How does it shew itself? Where do we first read of it? Who alone could cleanse the leper? How was he cleansed? And other such questions might be asked, and the scriptures turned to where the answers might be found—especially Leviticus xiii., xiv.

Then it should be noticed that leprosy is a striking type of sin, and that although the scholars may not be lepers, yet they are all sinners. And as the leper could only be cleansed in God's way, so they can only be cleansed from their sins in God's way.

There were ten lepers, and although the disease may not have reached the same stage in all, or any two of them, yet there was but one word to describe them all—they were *lepers*. So it may be that we have not all sinned alike, or to the same extent, but there is only one word to describe us—we are *sinners*.

They "stood afar off." They were lepers who knew their condition, and so took their proper place. They did not pretend to be anything else, nor try to pass themselves off as having nothing the matter with them. So the sinner should take his proper place as such before God, for although he might deceive others, he cannot deceive God.

"And they lifted up their voices and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." They were not content to remain lepers, but wanted to be cleansed. So the sinner should not be content while he is still in his sins, but should come to Jesus to be cleansed. How sad to hear scholars owning that they are sinners, and yet find them still going on in sin and refusing to come to Him. Surely such cannot know what a dreadful thing sin is.

Then follows a most beautiful example of how to believe. "Go, shew yourselves unto the priests." That is, they had asked Jesus for what they needed, and were to believe they had what they asked for (Mark xi. 24), not to wait until they felt a change, or saw a change, but to go, *as cleansed men*, and shew themselves to the priests. Like the leper in chapter v. 14, where it is said, "and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them." They received His word and acted upon it. "And it came to pass that, *as they went*, they were cleansed." Jesus says to the poor trembling and burdened sinner, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And also "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." So that the sinner has to come to Him for whatever he most needs—and if his sins are not forgiven surely that is his greatest need—and believe that he has it. "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life."

The following little incident would serve to illustrate this point.

"Please, sir, will this take me to Union Street?" said a little girl to a gentleman one evening, as she pointed to a street which led in that direction.

"Yes, it will," he replied. "But what part do you want to go to?"

"I want to go by St. George's Church in the Borough."

"O, well, I am going that way, if you like to come along with me I will shew you where it is."

So they went on together, her little hand in his, and the following conversation commenced:

"So you did not know your way," he said.

"No, sir," she replied.

"And do you know your way to heaven?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you really? Then will you please tell me the way?"

"Believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, sir."

"And do you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, do you know what Jesus says of such? He says, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath—'"

"Everlasting life, sir," she said, taking the words up before he had time.

"And have you everlasting life, then?"

"Yes, sir."

"How long have you known this?"

"I was blessed last Sunday night, sir."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Why I was listening to Mr. —— reading and speaking about Jesus dying on the cross, and I believed on Him then, sir."

"And what did you believe?"

"I believed that He died for me, sir."

"But how did you know it was for you that he died?"

"*Because I'm a sinner, sir.*"

"And has He cleansed you from all your sins, and made you fit to go to heaven?"

"Yes, sir."

"What, to go to heaven at once?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then why has He not taken you there? What has He left you in this wicked world for?"

"To tell other people about Him, sir."

"Are your father and mother converted?"

"Mother is, sir, but father is not. But we pray for him, sir."

Dear little girl! Would that all those who hear of Jesus dying on the cross would believe on Him as simply as she did!

Then in the one who came back to give thanks and worship we see an illustration of what all should do who believe in Jesus, and receive forgiveness from Him. They should not be content with getting what they need, and then go away and mix with the world as before, but should learn to own Jesus as their Lord, and take their place at His feet, "giving him thanks."

The teachers will doubtless find many other points to press upon the scholars, we merely suggest the foregoing as examples. But we would say in closing, let all your words be the simplest you can use to convey your thoughts. Never use a word of four syllables where a word of one syllable would do as well. May the Lord grant you that help and blessing without which all your labours will be fruitless.

NOTES OF LESSONS FOR A BIBLE CLASS.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

Chapter i. 6—22.

In this portion you have read we have one of the most wonderful statements in the whole word of God. It is, as it were, drawing aside the curtain that hides from our view the great unseen world. It tells us what took place in heaven; and it relates to us a conversation that God had with Satan about the righteous man Job.

But is this what actually took place, or is it a sort of vision?

No; there is not a word about its being a vision. It is what actually took place.

But how is it possible for Satan to be admitted into God's presence in heaven?

Well, let us notice that heaven is not actually mentioned, though it is implied by the reply of Satan to God's question, "Whence comest thou?" His answer is, "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." As he had come *from* the earth, we may conclude that the interview was in heaven. But we must remember that there are more heavens than one. Paul, for instance, was caught up to the *third* heaven, and in another place we read of "the heaven of heavens." Therefore the interview may have been in the lowest heaven, so to speak, and not in the heaven of heavens.

But is it not strange that Satan should be admitted to any part of the heavens?

It may seem strange to us, but we must believe all that scripture tells us. One thing is worthy of remark, that while heaven is said to be God's throne (Isa. lxvi. 1; Matt. v. 34) yet the term 'heaven' is used in various inferior connections. Thus we read of the "stars of heaven," then the "dew of heaven," the "clouds of heaven," the "winds of heaven," and the "birds of heaven." So that Satan's having access to heaven may be in these lower heavens, and not in the heaven of heavens. Do any of you remember any passages in the New Testament that speak of Satan in connection with heaven?

In one place Christ said He saw Satan as lightning falling from heaven.

Yes; it is in Luke x. 18. Turn to it and let us look at its connection.

It was when the seventy returned and told our Lord that the demons were subject unto them through Christ's name.

Yes, it may be that when Satan saw his kingdom thus assailed, he hastened back to earth to try and protect his interests.

Another passage is in the Revelation, where it is said that there will be war in heaven; Michael and his angels will fight with Satan and his angels. Michael will be victorious, and Satan will be cast out, and then it is declared (chap. xii. 8) that he will not find any more place in heaven. So that it is quite clear from scripture that Satan has access to some portion of heaven, and from the time mentioned in the Revelation he will be finally cast out and have no more place there.

All this teaches us that Satan is a real person. There may be many demons, but only one devil or Satan. He goes about, as we know from scripture, as a roaring lion, and none but God can keep man from his power and devices.

But this book of Job shews us that God uses Satan to work out His purposes concerning His people. This is very wonderful, but we find that it was God and not Satan who first spoke about Job. "Hast thou considered my servant Job?" said God, and declared plainly the character of Job as a perfect and upright man.

Satan, who is called in Revelation "the accuser of the brethren" is ever ready to falsify the character of any of God's people. Here he says that Job only served God because of what he got. "Put forth thy hand now and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face," said Satan.

God gave Satan permission to touch all that Job had, but he was not to touch his person.

Then follow the calamities that Satan brought about.

In the first, the Sabeans suddenly fell upon the oxen and asses, and carried them off, killing all the servants but one. This was the usual manner of attack in Arabia. A hostile tribe would suddenly make their appearance, and unless prevented by an equal force, carry off all the cattle. We are not able now to say who the Sabeans were.

What was the second calamity?

The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and all the servants but one.

You will see that it reads in the margin "a great fire," so that we must not conclude that God immediately sent this from heaven, but it was Satan's work. It may have been lightning which ignited the pasturage, and consumed the flock before any could escape, as is the case even now in the prairies of America and the jungles in India. Or it may have *rained* fire as in the destruction of Sodom.

What was the third calamity?

The Chaldeans rushed upon the camels, and carried them off, killing all the servants but one. The Chaldeans being the attacking party confirm the situation as being somewhere to the east of Palestine. The attack in *bands* was also an ancient mode. In Genesis xiv. 15 there were *two* at least; in Judges vii. 16; 1 Samuel xi. 11, *three;* and in Judges ix. 34, *four.*

What was the fourth calamity?

Job's sons and daughters were eating and drinking in their elder brother's house and a great wind blew down the house, and all were killed, with all the servants except one.

In the East they have terrible winds. The famous traveller Bruce says, "At four o'clock in the afternoon we set out from the villages of the Nuba, but we had scarcely advanced two miles into the plain when we were inclosed in a violent whirlwind. The plain was red earth, which had been plentifully moistened by a shower in the night time. An unfortunate camel seemed to be nearly in the centre of its vortex; it was lifted and thrown down at a considerable distance and several of its ribs broken. Although, as far as I can guess, I was not near the centre, it whirled me off my feet, and threw me down upon my face, so as to make my nose gush out with blood; two of the servants likewise had the same fate. It plastered us all over with mud almost as smoothly as could have been done with a trowel. It took away my sense and breathing for an instant; my mouth and nose being full of mud when I recovered. It demolished one half of a small tent, as if it had been cut through with a knife, and dispersed the materials all over the plain, leaving the other half standing." Such a wind would bring down the house in which Job's sons and daughters were assembled.

Thus Satan had done his worst, and he had arranged these calamities so that the knowledge of them should fall in rapid succession. He would not give Job time to recover from the effects of one class of evil tidings before he brought another: while one servant was speaking another arrived. He also kept the worst to the last: if the death of Job's children had been announced first, the other calamities would have been comparatively trifling. Satan doubtless thought by the weight of these accumulated calamities he would crush Job and

destroy his faith. How did Job receive these evil tidings?

"Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground and worshipped."

Ah, is not that beautiful? He was not a stoic without any feeling; but in his grief he turned to God and worshipped. He said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." This was true piety. It referred everything to God: "The Lord hath taken away." And this was true; for though Satan was the messenger, yet God had permitted it. It is only those who through Christ Jesus are brought to God who can thus bear such calamities. They know God is *for* them, and they take everything, good or bad, as from Him. May we all know what this is through faith in the Lord Jesus.

"THE WATER OF LIFE."

How few of us really catch the force of the words "water of life!" We know more of the uses of water in our every-day life for refreshment and cleanliness than in its connection with 'life;' but those in the East who have to pass through the burning deserts, know water in connection with life, and the absence of it with death. A vivid description given by a traveller of a scene witnessed by himself well illustrates this.

The locusts, after they had devoured everything at last perished themselves. The immense numbers of dead locusts corrupted the pools, from which, for want of springs, the traveller was obliged to

draw water. A Turk was observed, with despair in his countenance, hastening down a hill. He said, "I am the most unfortunate man in the world! I have purchased at a prodigious expense two hundred girls, the most beautiful of Greece and Georgia. I have educated them with care and now I am taking them to Bagdad to sell them to advantage. Ah! they perish in this desert for thirst, but I feel greater tortures than they." The traveller immediately ascended the hill: a dreadful spectacle here presented itself to him. Surrounded by about a hundred camels were these beautiful girls, of the age of twelve to fifteen, stretched upon the ground, exposed to the tortures of a burning thirst and inevitable death. Some were already buried in a pit, which had just been made; a greater number were lying dead, their leaders having no more strength to bury them. On all sides were heard the sighs of the dying, and the cries of those, who having still some life remaining demanded in vain a drop of water. The traveller hastened to open his leathern bottle, in which there was a little water. He was about to present it to one of these unhappy victims, when his Arabian guide called out, "Madman: wouldest thou also have us die from thirst?" He immediately killed the girl with an arrow, seized the bottle, and threatened to kill anyone who should venture to touch it. He dragged the traveller away. As they were retiring, those unhappy victims, seeing the last ray of hope vanish, raised a dreadful cry. Even the Arab was moved with compassion; he took one of them, poured a drop of water on her burning lips, and setting her upon his camel, with an intention of making a present of her to his wife, they proceeded on their journey. The tra-

vellers' small stock of water was nearly exhausted when they found a fine well of fresh and pure water; but their rope was so short that their pot would not reach the surface of the water. They cut their cloaks in strips, and tied them together, and drew up a small quantity at a time, trembling at the idea of breaking their weak rope and losing their pot. After such dangers they at length arrived safely at the first station in Syria.

All will be able to use this as an illustration of the necessity of the water of life for the soul.

OUR AIM.

MR. EDITOR,

I think the question as to what is the primary aim of the Sunday-school teacher is one worthy of consideration, and has not yet been exhausted.

To me it is not definite enough to say simply that our aim should be "the glory of God." Of course all we do—even eating and drinking—ought to be to the glory of God; but suppose an evangelist, instead of preaching the gospel to a mass of unconverted hearers, was to engage them with dispensational truth, and then reply that he did it to the glory of God. I never met with a christian worker yet that did not profess to be seeking the glory of God in his work; and yet if he is not doing the work God has set him to do, surely it is in vain to talk thus.

I take it therefore that we must be more definite and have a plain and definite aim before us; and I think, in reference to the great mass of work in the Sunday school, it is pretty much confined to two points. One is the gospel of the grace of

God; the other, storing the minds of the children with scripture itself and Bible truths.

Now I believe the minds of many teachers fluctuate between these two points. Some would place the gospel in the *first* place, and others would put storing the minds as the primary thing. I doubt not that the former of these would not neglect Bible truths; any more than the latter would neglect altogether the salvation of the children. What I advocate is that each for himself and herself should have some plain and definite aim, and then seek aid from God to own and bless our labours—and by all means let it be not to our own glory, but to the glory of God.

That there is danger in not having a clearly defined aim I am further convinced from a fact that came under my notice a short time since. A young man who had been very active in the gospel, attending out-door services and the like, was missed from the work, and on inquiries being made he was found to have imbibed a sort of idea that seeking for the conversion of souls was a *low* sort of thing for a Christian. He should have the glory of the Lord before him, he was told, and this was more connected with the church than with the world. He should seek the instruction, edification, and helping-on the church.

Now, surely two things here had been confounded. What did Paul mean when he said, "Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel?" Was that a *low* thing for Paul to say? One shudders almost to ask such a question. Not that he stopped here, as we know, for he had the most earnest desire to present every Christian as a chaste virgin to Christ. (2 Cor. xi. 2.)

It has pleased God to raise up evangelists as

well as pastors and teachers, and if each would keep to his own legitimate work, all would be well done, and each would be able to say that he sought the glory of God in what he did.

But certain it is that there need be no confounding of the evangelists' work with the pastors' and teachers'. If there are no evangelists, where are the pastors and teachers to get their *material* on which to work?

I am aware that a difficulty arises in the minds of some as to whether the Sunday-school teacher is an evangelist or not; but certain it is that many, by the help of God, are doing the work of the evangelist, without calling themselves evangelists; and are owned and blessed of God in their work. Is not this enough?

I remember once hearing the question asked as to what characterized an evangelist. The answer was that the first and great trait was *love for souls;* the gift of speaking or preaching was a secondary thing, though of course in itself desirable. Where there was a love for souls God could and had given His blessing, where there was but little gift in preaching.

Now if this is true, what good evangelists Sunday-school teachers will be where there is this love for souls. And it seems to me that the first desire of such a teacher will be the *conversion* of the souls he loves. I cannot conceive of such a teacher going on week after week, month after month, and it may be year after year, without looking for and expecting the conversion of his scholars.

It is true that where this is not the aim of the teacher, he may be storing the minds of the scholars with biblical truths which God can bless

at a future day. But how do we know there will be any future day? God's word is TO-DAY—NOW. Who can say that the scholars will see any future days, or even to-morrow? *We* too are expecting the Lord at any moment; and what will be the position of those we leave behind?

I am surprised and grieved to hear teachers with these facts before them talking of future days in reference to the unconverted. And as to seeking the glory of God, is there no glory to God in the salvation of a soul? Let Luke xv. answer: "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

Let Sunday-school teachers then see to it that they have a clearly defined and scriptural aim; and if it is scriptural, it will be to the glory of God. And once having it—getting it from God in answer to prayer—let them not permit any to turn them from it. Let them work *from* God and *to* God and *for* God; and He will not let His own word return unto Him void.

C. S.

THE EATING OF BLOOD.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

Is the injunction in Acts xv. as to abstaining from blood in any way binding on Christians now, or was it given only to suit the transitionary state of things then present, when Jewish prejudice was strong?

The same command we find was given by God to Noah (Gen. ix.) long before the time of Moses.

The eating of the blood, as also that of the fat, appears to have been forbidden on account of their

typical characters, not that they were unclean as were certain other meats. The types of the law having now been fulfilled, and the christian dispensation being fully established, is the command still binding?

Yours in the Lord,
W. R. C.

We consider that the passage in Genesis ix. 4, gives the key to the solution of this question. Whatever restrictions there were under the law as given by Moses do not touch this injunction, that "flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof" must not be eaten. This, observe, was not an injunction for the godly simply, but the life belonged to God as Creator, and must not be eaten.

Now when the question arose in the Acts, it should be noticed that they decided for what was "necessary." (Ver. 28.) The Gentile Christian, still surrounded with evil and evil principles, must submit to that which was for godly order; but that which had been brought in by Moses was now left aside, and only that which was *before* Moses was insisted on.

This is an important principle, and we see it well exemplified in the instance of the disciples asking our Lord if they might put away their wives for every cause (Matt. xix.) even as Moses himself had said. But our Lord shewed that Moses *relaxed* the order of God because of the hardness of their hearts, and permitted them to put away their wives readily. This was *not* God's order, and was not as it was at "the beginning." (Ver. 8.) Therefore what God had instituted at the beginning was to be their guide.

Now, so it was as to eating blood. This was long before the law, and still remained; while the law was not to be binding on the Gentile Christians. The only practical difficulty is in the words "things strangled" and these are doubtless forbidden, because as a rule, things strangled contain blood. And we have known Christians, for instance, habitually refuse to partake of any sort of poultry unless they could be assured that it had not been strangled.

But we believe another passage of scripture meets this difficulty. "Whatsoever is sold in the shambles [markets] that eat, *asking no questions* for conscience sake." (1 Cor. x. 25.) This is in reference to things sacrificed to idols, but the same principle would apply to things strangled. I do not know how they are killed, and so I can buy and eat them, asking no questions. If I am asked if I eat blood? I say, no; God has forbidden it, and knowingly and advisedly I would not eat it; but further than this I do not go. I can buy meat or poultry, asking no questions, and eat it, giving God thanks. We believe that Paul's persuasion that nothing was unclean of itself (Rom. xiv. 14), and his assertion that all things were lawful for him (1 Cor. x. 23), would not over-ride the passage in Genesis as to the blood. In Romans it is in contrast to one eating herbs, and in Corinthians it is connected with things sacrificed to idols. We are to have a good conscience in all these things; but we are not to have a scrupulous conscience, and to avoid any difficulty on such a point we are to ask no questions. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof."

NOTES ON SCRIPTURE.

MATTHEW XVIII.

VERSES 1–6. At the close of chapter xvii. there seems to be a decided break in the gospel, and chapter xviii. commences to go over the great principles that rightly belong to the new order of things introduced by Christ.

And first is the spirit that should be cherished. The disciples here brought on the subject by asking, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" But by comparing this passage with Mark ix. 33–37, it would appear that the disciples had been disputing as to who should be the greatest, and our Lord first asked them what they had been reasoning about? The question we have here may have followed.

Our Lord enforced His lesson by taking a little child, and, setting it in their midst, plainly told them that they must humble themselves as that little child. He said to them, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." "Converted," as is well known, is not used in scripture in the sense of "being born again;" but is "changed," "turned," from one thing, or state, to another. Here it was addressed to the disciples, who were already believers (except of course Judas), and because they were seeking to be something great, they must be converted or changed into humbly taking the place of little children, and whosoever should do this in reality, should be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. If they would become great, they must reach that eminence by becoming little; and whosoever thus

humbled himself should be exalted. Compare Philippians ii. 5–11.

Verse 5 declares that whosoever should receive one such little child in the name of Christ, received Christ; and whosoever should offend one such little one who believed in Christ, it were better for him to be drowned in the sea with a millstone round his neck. The word for "offend" here is in the sense of "being a snare to, or causing one to be ensnared or to fall."

This forcibly sets forth the value of the name of Christ, and the jealousy with which Christ looks upon His own, lest any should turn them aside. The world may in no way heed this solemn word, but surely God's people should be very careful lest they cause one of God's sheep or lambs to stumble. It was the sin of Balaam. (See Rev. ii. 14.)

Verse 7. Speaking of offences, or causes of any one's offending, our Lord turns to the poor world and pronounces a woe upon those who were engaged in causing others to offend. It is indeed Satan's work.

Verses 8, 9. It would be far better for anyone to be revenged on *himself*, and cut off a hand or foot, or pluck out an eye, that caused him to offend, rather than to spare himself, tolerating that which was a snare to him, and be lost eternally.

Verse 10. This verse has given rise to much discussion. It reads, "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." Who are the little children referred to? Children like the one Christ set in their midst, or to believers in their character of little children, or to both? And then,

what is meant by "*their* angels?" Has each an attendant angel?

If we review the former part of the chapter, we find "little children" referred to several times. In verse 3, the disciples were to become "*as* little children." In verse 4, they were to humble themselves "*as* this little child." Verse 5, "Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me." Verse 6, "One of these little ones which believe in me." Here there cannot be a doubt that believers are meant. Verse 10, "One of these little ones." What little ones? May it not be the little child Christ had been describing? and the one last described was the one that believed in Him. It is a question how far Christ is speaking of children, except as an illustration of what His disciples were to become like. He placed a little child in their midst, and said they must become *like* that child (vers. 3, 4); but having done this, did He further refer to that child, or to children in general (except in ver. 5), or did he drop the illustration, and refer to His disciples as little children?

We are inclined to the latter thought, without, however, dogmatically saying that it is so. There is nothing said about the little child being a believer, or anything that would distinguish it from *any* and every little child; why then should the reference here be different from that in verses 3, 4, and 6? A good deal of stress has been laid upon the omission of the word "seek" in verse 11: "For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost;" that is, that Christ came to save the children, but had not to *seek* them, as they had not as yet wandered practically.

But the "saving" is exemplified by the parable of the lost sheep (which immediately follows and is

evidently connected), wherein it distinctly says that the owner of the sheep *seeketh* that which is gone astray. Besides this, some of the most ancient Greek manuscripts and versions omit verse 11 altogether. We do not see why verse 11 should be linked with verse 10, to the exclusion of verse 12; and if the verses are taken together, there is no force in the absence of the word "seek" in verse 10, for it is enforced in verse 12.

Now if we take verse 10 to refer to believers in their character of little ones, all difficulty is removed as to the angels. Hebrews i. 13, 14, distinctly shew us that angels are "all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation;" and Christ said of the little ones, "their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." All were to take heed how they despised such. We have here the principles of the kingdom; and to suit the kingdom, all must be humble, and confiding as a little child. God would take care of such, their angels were in his presence. Woe be to the man who should cause one of them to stumble or fall. We must always however remember that many of Christ's own *are* little children.

EXAMPLES OF SCRIPTURE LESSONS.

III.—THE DISOBEDIENT KING.

1 Samuel xv.

THE case of king Saul has often been taken up as an illustration of disobedience, and no doubt God has sometimes used it as a warning to others. And it is a subject which needs constantly to be brought before children, both at home and in

school; and, as many of those who come to our schools have parents who neglect their duty in this particular, it becomes all the more necessary for us to press it upon them.

The history of Saul is a very striking one. Its opening is as remarkable as its close; but what a contrast between them! Who could have begun better, (chap. xix. 21; x. 21–24; xi. 13), or ended worse? (chap. xxxi. 3–6.) His first act of disobedience seems to have been in offering a burnt offering at Gilgal (chap. xii. 9), but from that moment he commenced a downward career, which ended in self-murder.

It would be well for the teacher to glance at the whole life of Saul, before going into our particular chapter, because the scholars will then be better prepared for it. And it would also be well to point out that it was through disobedience that sin entered into the world, and that it is that which lies at the bottom of most or all other sins.

The chief points in the chapter seem to be,

1st,—The clear and emphatic directions given to Saul, with reference to the errand on which he was sent. (Ver. 3.) The reason for this terrible judgment is given in verse 2.

2nd,—The apparent sincerity of Saul (vers. 7, 8, 13), but the positive disobedience. (Ver. 9.)

3rd,—His being betrayed by the bleating of the sheep, though of course God knew all about it.

4th,—The vain excuse he makes, besides trying to shift the blame from himself to the people. (Vers. 15, 21.)

5th,—He is reminded of the time when he was *little in his own sight* (ver. 17), and was exalted; but now he has exalted himself, he is to be brought low.

6th,—Then comes that grand passage: "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to *hearken* than the fat of rams."

In connection with each of these points, the teacher will doubtless find much to press upon the scholars. It should be specially noted that Saul's disobedience was mainly in religious things; and in this day of so-called religious "liberty," it is necessary to put before our scholars the fact that if they would serve and worship God, they are not at "liberty" to do it in their own way, but must listen to what God *says*. Obedience is not doing what we think right, even to please God, but doing as we are *told*. But besides this it would seem as though Saul was only using his religion to hide his disobedience. And surely children need to be warned against this.

The teacher should also put before the scholars the great wickedness there is in disobedience to parents. God has stated His mind on this point most clearly, and we should be doing good work in calling our scholars' attention to those passages where disobedience to parents is spoken of.

Of course we need hardly press upon the teacher the importance of frequently alluding to the perfectly obedient One, who did always those things which pleased His Father, and who could say, "I *delight* to do thy will."

The difference between obedience, and doing what we think best, has sometimes been illustrated to children in the following homely way:—

Supposing that a boy has been naughty, and by way of correction his mother puts him in a corner of the room, she then goes out, leaving him strict

orders not to move from his place until she comes back. After a while he gets tired of standing there, and wishes his mother would come back to release him. As she does not come, he feels inclined to change his position, but remembering his mother's orders, is afraid to do so. At length, however, an idea strikes him. He thinks if he were to get the tea ready by the time mother came, she would be so pleased that she would pass over his disobedience. Well, with such an excuse, he ventures out of his corner, and busies himself with his new work. He succeeds in getting all ready before his mother returns, and waits with mingled feelings of hope and fear.

At last she comes. One glance makes her acquainted with how matters stand. But instead of looking pleased, as he had hoped, she orders him back to his corner, and then severely reproves him for not obeying her word. And when he urges that he thought she would be pleased with all that he had done, she repeats our text, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

NOTES OF LESSONS FOR A BIBLE CLASS.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

Chapter ii.

LET us read the chapter, and notice as we read, anything on which you may wish to ask any questions.

Who are the sons of God among whom Satan comes to present himself before God?

Without doubt they are angels. This we learn from chapter xxxviii. 7, where, referring to the

time of the creation, "all the sons of God shouted for joy."

Jehovah again asked Satan about Job, and again asserted his righteous character, and declared that Job had held fast his integrity, although Satan had moved Jehovah to destroy him without cause.

Is "destroy" the right word here?

You will see that it is "swallow him up" in the margin: that is, overwhelm him with the weight of the accumulated calamities.

Satan now wickedly intimates that Job had not been sufficiently tried, and declares that if God touched his bone and his flesh, he would curse God to His face.

What is meant by "skin for skin?"

It is supposed to be a sort of proverb; its meaning is that a man will risk all to save his life. Thus, as we may say, a man will attempt to take another's skin (or life) to save his own; "yea," adds Satan, "all that a man hath will he give for his life."

God then gave up Job into Satan's hands, but his life was to be spared. And Satan went forth and afflicted him with sore boils from head to foot. Job scraped himself with a potsherd and sat among the ashes.

What is a potsherd? and is it not strange that a man should *scrape* himself when covered with sores?

A potsherd is merely a piece of pottery, any broken piece of pottery. We must remember that many sores cause an incessant itching, and scratching them would in some measure allay this, and would allow the pus, or matter, to escape, and this would give relief.

Now Job has another trial. His own wife be-

comes his tempter. She said, "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God and die." But Job, through the grace of God, rebuked her and said, "What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

We must notice the word "evil" here. Of course it does not mean in any sense that which was "wicked," but it simply means "calamity." A person says, I bring you bad news, or evil tidings, simply meaning that some calamity has happened, which is the reverse of that which is good and pleasant. But it is important to remember that evil in this sense is often sent or permitted by God for some wise purpose.

This trial of Job proves that God is stronger than Satan. God can and does put that into the heart of man which Satan can never destroy. Here Job had faith in God, and in true piety received the evil from God as well as the good. And here you see it was really Satan who brought the evil; yet Job turned his eyes to God and took everything as from His hand; and this is true piety. Satan was foiled, and we read nothing more of him throughout the book.

But how was it that God permitted Satan to do all this to Job, who was a righteous man, and not a wicked one?

That is the lesson we have to learn in the remainder of the book of Job. We must remember that it was not Satan who first spoke to God about Job, but it was God Himself who spoke to Satan. Therefore God had some important lesson to teach Job, and we must try to discover it. We are quite sure that God would not first put all the goods of a righteous man, and then the health of the man,

into Satan's hands without some deep and wise purpose. And this will explain what we sometimes see, namely, a true Christian laid upon a sick bed for years, or brought into some sore trial; whereas the unconverted often go on in health and prosperity all their lives. God is educating and chastening the one for his benefit, and He is allowing the other for a time to go on his own course, forgetful of his Maker. This is one of the things that shew us the value of the Bible. The farthest that Philosophy ever reached was that virtue brought its own reward; but no one ever could explain how it was that an evil man was in health and prosperity, while a God-fearing man was in ill-health and constant adversity. As the Psalmist says, he was troubled and perplexed as to this difficulty, until he learnt to look to God, and also at the *end* of the wicked, and then all was clear.

We must observe that Job's three friends came to visit him. Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. There is nothing known, with certainty, as to who these friends were, or to what families they belonged.

Job was so altered by his sorrows and his disease that his friends did not know him. They rent their mantles, and threw dust towards heaven, letting it fall upon their heads in token of their deep distress at what they saw. For seven days and seven nights they sat gazing upon the afflicted one, not knowing what to say; for they saw that his grief was very great.

Ah, there is many and many a problem that comes before a righteous man in his lifetime, which he can only solve in God's presence, and by God's word. Remember this, you who are believers in the Lord Jesus; and you who are not, remember

you have no guide; even your own prosperity may be used by Satan as a snare to you, a snare to lull you asleep, until you awake up when too late, to find that you have have been forgetful of God and a despiser of His mercy. May it not be so with any one of you, for His name sake.

THE DANGER OF DELAY.

In a part of Switzerland, immense mountains bordered the valley in which was situated the village of Goldan. In that village lived an old man who would look up to those mountains and declare that he believed one day those mountains would come down, and crush the whole village. This prediction he repeated more than once or twice—yea, he often expressed it as his firm conviction.

Well, in the summer of 1806, says one who lived in a neighbouring village, there had been much rain, and on the first and second of September it rained incessantly. New crevices were observed in the flank of the mountain; a sort of cracking noise was heard internally, stones started out of the ground, detached fragments of rocks rolled down the mountain: at two o'clock in the afternoon of the second of September, a large rock became loose, and in falling raised a cloud of black dust. Toward the lower part of the mountain the ground seemed pressed down from above; and when a stick or spade was driven in, it moved of itself. A man who had been digging in his garden ran away from fright at these extraordinary appearances. Soon a fissure larger than all the others was observed; insensibly it increas-

springs of water ceased to flow; the pine trees of the forest absolutely reeled; and birds flew away screaming. A few minutes before five o'clock, the symptoms of some mighty catastrophe became still stronger; the whole surface of the mountain seemed to glide down, but so slowly as to afford time for many of the inhabitants to get away. A young man, as he made his escape, called out to the old man named above, who had so many times predicted the catastrophe, that the mountain was falling.

The old man was quietly smoking his pipe; he rose and looked out, but again entered the house, saying, "I have time to fill another pipe." The young man continued his flight, and though thrown down several times, escaped with difficulty. He looked back after the old man, and to his horror, saw the house carried off, with its inmate, in the general entombment. The whole village disappeared under a heap of stones and rubbish, a hundred feet in height, and the whole valley for miles presented nothing but a perfect chaos.

The reader will easily see how this may be applied to the passage, "Flee from the wrath to come!" How many who have warned others will themselves perish! and how many for the sake of a little present enjoyment risk the salvation of their precious souls!

OBSOLETE WORDS AND MEANINGS OF WORDS IN SCRIPTURE.

All to, Judges ix. 53. 'Altogether' or 'entirely.' This will be plain if it is observed that it is followed by the word *brake* and not *break*. It 'entirely broke 's skull.'

Barbarian, 1 Cor. xiv. 11. Any 'foreigner,' applied by the Greeks to any one whose language they did not understand. Said by some, to have its origin from *bar, bar*, an imitation of unintelligent sounds.

Because, Matt. xx. 31. 'That.' In Mark x. 48, the same Greek words are translated, "charged him that."

Beeves, 'cattle, oxen;' from the French *bœuf;* Latin, *bos, bovis.*

Besom, broom made of twigs. From Anglo-Saxon *besem, besmas*, twigs.

Bestead, Isa. viii. 21. 'Situated;' from Anglo-Saxon *stede*, a place. "They shall pass through it distressed."

Bewray, Prov. xxvii. 16; xxix. 24; Isa. xvi. 3; Matt. xxvi. 73. Literally 'to accuse,' to point out, betray. From Anglo-Saxon *be* and *wregan*, to accuse.

Bibber, 'drinker;' from the Latin *bibere*, to drink.

Blain, Exodus ix. 9. Sore or blister. Anglo-Saxon *blægen.*

Blow up, Ps. lxxxi. 3. Same as 'blow.'

Bolled, Ex. ix. 31. 'Swollen, round heads, podded.'

Bonnet. Confined now to women, except in Scotland.

Botch, Deut. xxviii. 27. Swelling on the skin.

Bray, Prov. xxvii. 22. 'To pound, break;' from French *brayer.*

Brigandines, Jer. xlvi. 4; li. 3. 'Light armour;' probably from 'brigand.'

Bunch, Isa. xxx. 6. The 'humps' of the camels.

Business, Rom. xii. 11. This is not in itself *secular* business, but must be associated with *being busy*, diligence.

By-and-by, Matt. xiii. 21; Mark vi. 25; Luke xvii. 7; xxi. 9. The words thus translated are in other places 'immediately;' not 'presently,' but 'at once.'

Carriages. In Acts xxi. 15, and in some parts of the Old Testament, the meaning is "baggage." The *act*, and the *cost* of carrying we call 'carriage:' it is here extended to *what* is carried.

Cast, Luke i. 29. 'Cast in her mind,' in the sense of 'to turn it over' in the mind.

Cast about. Jeremiah xli. 14. In the sense of 'turned round.'

Cauls, Isaiah iii. 18. The margin gives the right meaning, 'net works.' Perhaps from the French, *cale*, a small cap.

Challengeth, Exodus xxii. 9. In the sense of 'claim,' from the French *challenger*, to claim, &c.

Champaign, Deuteronomy xi. 30. In Ezekiel xxxvii. 2, we have the same word in the margin, and 'valley,' in the text; from French *champ*, and Latin *campus*, a plain.

Chapiter. The head or 'capital' of a column. From the French *chapiteau*, head or capital.

Chapmen, 2 Chronicles ix. 14. 'A dealer;' from Anglo-Saxon *ceap-man*, a man who buys.

Chapt, Jeremiah xiv. 4. 'Cracked,' as is commonly used of the hands.

Charger. 'A dish.' From the French *charger*, to load.

Cieled. Panelled or Wainscoted.

Clouted, Joshua ix. 5. 'Patched.' From the Anglo-Saxon *clut*, a little cloth or patch.

Colour, Acts xxvii. 30. 'Pretext.' From the Latin *color*, pretext.

Constantly, Acts xii. 15; Titus iii. 8. The sense is not 'repeatedly,' but 'firmly.' From *con* intensive, and *stare*, to stand, to stand firm.

Convenient. 'Fitting, becoming, suitable.' From the Latin *con*, together, and *venire*, to come, to come together.

Conversant, 1 Samuel xxv. 15. From the Latin *conversare*, to turn round frequently, hence, 'to abide.'

Conversation. 'Path or conduct.' From the same as 'conversant.'

Convert. 'To turn round.' From the Latin *convertere*, to turn round.

Cote. Same as 'cot,' hence, 'hut, shed.' Anglo-Saxon, *cote*.

Countervail, Esther vii. 4. Compound of *avail*, and *counter*, avail against.

Craft. Originally 'strength,' hence that in which strength is put forth, 'trade.' Anglo-Saxon, *craeft*, to seize.

Crisping pins, Isaiah iii. 22. 'Curling irons.' From the literal meaning of 'crisp.' But the word in Isaiah is by some translated 'purses,' which were highly ornamented; it is the same word that is translated 'bags' in 2 Kings v. 23.

Cruse. 'An earthen pot.' From the French *creuset*.

Cunning. In its literal meaning, 'knowing.' Anglo-Saxon, *cunnan*, to know.

Curious. In its literal meaning, 'careful.' From the Latin *curiosus*, with care and skill.

SIN AND SINS.

Mr. Editor,

I am desirous of putting before your readers a few thoughts on the subject of "sin and sins."

I suppose we all recognize that scripture makes a difference between "sin" as the root of evil in our nature, and "sins" as evil things actually committed; not that the word "sin" will always refer to the former of these, but may at times refer to the *principle* of evil, &c. The context will always give its meaning.

My object however now is to inquire how far the above distinction should be, and is regarded in our Sunday-school teaching. I doubt not that teachers often speak of the evil actions of men, as well as of men being evil by nature; but I fear whether we may not shoot over the heads of our scholars. If a man is referred to as a thief, for

instance, no doubt all the class would be able to see that *that* man is a sinner—does that which is evil—and then go on to think what a good thing it is that they are not thieves. Thus we may often describe a person as being a worker of evil which has no other practical effect on the minds of the scholars, than to lead them to think that *they* are *not* such people at all.

On the other hand, we may endeavour to teach the scholars that all are alike by nature; we may tell them that a crab tree *is* a crab tree, and nothing else, whether it produces no fruit at all, or the tree be full of fruit.

Of course the children may believe either or both of these statements and yet fail to see that *they* are as bad as is represented. I believe many such statements are made which do not touch the conscience in the least.

I was once struck with a remark made by a missionary among the heathen. He had long laboured among them, and had preached to them from many passages of scripture. He had spoken to them of what he called "original sin," and declared that it affected every man, woman and child. He had referred them many times to the law given by God to man, and declared that every one had broken that law. But to his grief and dismay he found that not one believed himself to be a sinner, and so needed not that great salvation of which he was constantly telling them.

On pondering over his failure the thought struck him that he had not as yet reached their *consciences*. He had spoken of sin in the abstract, and of sins in general; but he had not attempted so to fix the commission of sin upon them that they could not deny it. It did not take him long to find out

the common sins they were actually committing, and these he charged home upon the people. For instance, he found that in their dealings one with another each endeavoured to cheat the other. This he boldly charged them with, and declared that they were not only doing wrong, but *they knew it was wrong.* And while they cheated others they did not like to be cheated themselves. Now there was no escape. They had not a word to say. It reached the conscience, even where it did not lead to repentance.

We have some remarkable instances in scripture where a definite sin is described, and on the hearer declaring such to be worthy of punishment, he is told, "Thou art the man."

Now, in dealing with children ought there not to be an endeavour to reach the conscience in a similar way? It is of little use, I believe, to talk to them of sins which children do *not* commit; why not speak of sins which they do commit, and which they know to be wrong, while they commit them? I do not mean, of course, that the evil nature is never to be mentioned. This comes in needfully when we are enforcing the uselessness of 'turning over new leaves,' as it is called. Here the crab tree may well be referred to. If I pluck off a branch, or do anything that prevents its producing as much fruit as hitherto, does that in any way alter its nature? Is it not a crab tree still?

I commend the subject to the consideration of Sunday-school teachers, believing that it is desirable that we should reach the consciences of our scholars, and not talk of sins in such a general way that it passes them as words spoken of others, but *not* of themselves.

S. A.

THE UNJUST STEWARD.

LUKE XVI. 9.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

Please explain the meaning of this verse, "And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations" (Luke xvi. 9); and say how is it that the Lord commended the *unjust* steward? F.

It is important in dealing with parables (and we suppose this is one, though not called so) to take them *as a whole*, and from thence gather the lesson to be learnt, without enforcing too much any one of the details. If this were done, many a difficulty which now troubles people would disappear.

Now the last three verses which close this subject in Luke are on the subject of being faithful in that with which we are entrusted, which, as far as words go, is the very reverse of commending an unjust steward. And on closer inspection it will be seen that the unjust steward was not commended for his dishonesty, but because he had a keen eye as to what was conducive to his welfare. He was commended because he had done *wisely* or prudently; "*for* the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." (Ver. 8.) Their thoughts go not further than this present world, and they are keen to perceive what will be to their advantage here.

The Christian is often not wise, in the use of this world's goods. The verse quoted above says that in this respect the children of this world are wiser than the children of light. These latter often do not use the goods God has entrusted to them in a

way that redounds to God's glory and is associated with an abundant entrance into His presence by-and-by.

It must be observed that the lesson all through is not touching salvation, but service. Am I doing service, and especially in the use of this world's goods, here called "the mammon, or riches of unrighteousness"—in such a way that will meet with God's approval? and am I sacrificing my own *present* ease for that approval by-and-by?

Now with this before us, let us look at the verse in question: "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness," or rather *by* the riches of unrighteousness, "that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations"—that when you have done using them, ye may be received into everlasting habitations. Here the *temporary* use of the riches is in contrast with the *everlasting* period that awaits the faithful steward. We say the *faithful* steward; for, as we have said, verses 10, 11, 12, and 13, all speak of the faithful servant. Therefore the unjust acting of the steward is not commended. His *wisdom* is commended that sacrificed the present for the future; and this is the lesson of the parable.

REWARDS IN SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

Will you allow me a corner in the "Worker," to ask a question on the above subject, as I and many others would be glad to know the thoughts of others, as to whether or not it is a right and good thing to give Rewards to diligent scholars.

In the school where I am engaged, and which has an average attendance of 300 scholars, we

have given Rewards once a year for several years past, and as far as I have been able to judge, with good results, if increased numbers, a more diligent learning of scripture, and an apparently greater interest on the part of the scholars, is to be a criterion whereby to judge.

My object in desiring to know the thoughts of others upon this subject is that I find many of those engaged in the work do not feel happy in giving Rewards, as children, they say, ought not to need such encouragements. It is also urged that it is impossible to discriminate *who* ought to receive Rewards, as such differences exist in the capabilities of the scholars. T. S.

GO WORK IN MY VINEYARD.

Believest thou, O Teacher, that the varied stores of earth,
With all its golden treasures, its gems of richest worth,
Are less than nothing, when compared to one immortal soul,
Since that must live, in joy or woe, while endless ages roll?
And canst thou rest, while souls unsaved within thy class are found?
Or coldly, carelessly proclaim the Gospel's joyful sound?

Believest thou, O Teacher, that the work thou hast to do
Is work for Jesus—work for Him who died for me, for you?
Oh! as thou musest on *His love*, will not thy spirit glow,
To think that thou may'st *win for Him* some trophies here below:
Wilt thou not brave the summer's heat, or winter's piercing cold,
To bring some little wandering one into His peaceful fold?

Believest thou, O Teacher, that a bright reward is thine?
That those who turn to righteousness, bright as the stars shall shine?
O, art thou listless at thy post, are murmurs heard from thee,
Because thou hast *so long to work*? *Oh, no!* it cannot be,
For faith beholds the rest He gives, laid up in worlds of light,
And easy is the hardest toil when He is kept *in sight*.

NOTES ON SCRIPTURE.

MATTHEW XVIII. 12–14.

THIS is the oft-repeated parable of a man having a hundred sheep and losing one of them. He leaves the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and goes into the mountains and seeks that which had gone astray. And when he has found it, he rejoices over that sheep more than over the ninety and nine which had not gone astray. And then follow these words, "Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish."

We do not think that these closing words refer primarily to children, but to His disciples in the character of "little ones" which He had been enforcing upon them in the preceding verses.

Neither do we think that the salvation of the lost is the primary thought in the above passage. Notice the words 'gone astray' are used three times; and this will be the more striking by comparing the passage with Luke xv., where the lost sheep there described is spoken of as 'lost' three times.

We do not of course mean that this passage, and similar ones, may not be legitimately used to preach the gospel from; but we think it is of great importance in the study of the word to seize the teaching meant to be conveyed by the Spirit of God in each passage. We are too apt to take the *words* up, and begin to apply them either to ourselves or to others, without first seeing the scope and connection of the passage. Where this is done, we are in great danger of entirely missing the teaching of the Spirit of God in that parti-

cular passage. Thus each of the Epistles is a letter written to a particular assembly, person, &c.; and by taking a single sentence out of any of these letters, we are in danger, unless we first have seen the character and scope of the Epistle as a whole, of using the words of that sentence in a manner quite foreign to that which was intended by the Spirit of God.

A Gospel being much longer, it is not always easy to see its divisions into subjects; but it is divided into subjects, each more or less connected, and the whole following is a divine moral order.

When this is seen and in some measure grasped, then we may apply a passage at times to more than one point. But we should ever distinguish and keep distinct what we may call its *interpretation* from its *application*. The danger is, as we have said, in using the latter to overlook, and lose the former altogether.

Thus in our passage we believe that the great principles of the kingdom form the subject in hand. The great and good Shepherd goes after those who go astray. One—each one and every one—is too precious in His eyes to be allowed to stray away, without His going after them.

The good Shepherd goes into the *mountains*. May there not be some teaching in the word "mountains?" This too is not named in Luke. How many of God's people have gone astray in thinking they could attain to some height above the plain trodden path of Christianity? Take for instance, the warning in Colossians ii. 18: "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed his fleshly mind." The good Shepherd will

go into the mountains to rescue His strayed ones.

The shepherd rejoices more over the strayed one when restored than over the others who went not astray. He rejoices more, not *loves* more. Like a mother rejoices over a sick child as she sees its health returning, so our Lord rejoices over the recovered one; for it is not the will of our heavenly Father that one of His little ones should perish.

EXAMPLES OF SCRIPTURE LESSONS.

IV.—THE TEN VIRGINS.

Matthew xxv. 1—13.

We advise teachers, before bringing this subject before their scholars, to make themselves acquainted with the Eastern customs in connection with marriages. It may strike the scholars as being strange that the marriage should take place at midnight, instead of about mid-day, as with us; and other points may seem equally strange. Therefore the teacher will need information, to be in a position to answer any questions raised. The following quotation may be of assistance.

"At a Hindoo marriage," says a missionary, "the procession of which I saw some years ago, the bridegroom came from a distance, and the bride lived at Serampore, to which place the bridegroom was to come by water. After waiting two or three hours, at length, near midnight, it was announced, in the very words of scripture, 'Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.' All the persons employed now lighted their lamps and ran with them in their hands to fill up

their stations in the procession; some of them had lost their lights, and were unprepared; but it was then too late to seek them, and the cavalcade moved forward to the house of the bride; at which place the company entered a large and splendidly illuminated area, before the house, covered with an awning, where a great multitude of friends, dressed in their best apparel, were seated upon mats. The bridegroom was carried in the arms of a friend, and placed in a superb seat in the midst of the company, where he sat a short time, and then went into the house, the door of which was immediately shut, and guarded by sepoys. I and others expostulated with the doorkeepers, but in vain. Never was I so struck with our Lord's beautiful parable as at this moment. 'And the door was shut.'"

But now let us turn to the scripture. Of course this is a parable, and must be spoken of as such, and it will be well to explain the meaning of the word "parable." It may also be well to explain the word "bridegroom," for we must not take it for granted that all the scholars know its meaning. Recently we were speaking to some children on this subject, and saw by the expression on many faces that the word was not understood, and were delighted to see the change of expression after the explanation had been given.

The ten virgins represent all who profess to be Christians, and the position of all such is that they have taken their lamps and gone forth to meet the bridegroom.

The wise represent real Christians, the foolish represent mere professors. They all took lamps (profession), but the wise also took oil in their vessels (the Holy Spirit). Then they all slum-

bered and slept, wise and foolish alike, just as the mass of professing Christians have done, so that as a whole they have ceased to look for His coming.

But when the cry was raised, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him," it was made manifest who were wise and who were foolish. They all arose and trimmed their lamps, but the lamps of the foolish virgins would not burn, because they had no oil, so they turned to the others and said, "Give us of *your oil*, for *our lamps* have gone out." However, this the others could not do, so they went to buy, and while they went the bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage, and the door was shut. When the five foolish virgins came back, they said, "Lord, Lord, open to us," but He replied, "Verily, I say unto you, I know you not."

Now it should be the teacher's aim to bring all this to bear upon the scholars, who for the most part are in this position of professing to be Christians. For that which the parable sets forth at the close has yet to take place, and must take place, and the scholars should be solemnly warned against being content to be mere professors, and consequently not ready to meet the bridegroom. And as when the bridegroom came, those that were ready went in with Him, and the door was shut, so when once Christ comes those who are ready will be taken and the door will be shut.

How solemn to think that after Christ has taken all who believe in Him, there shall be found those who were but mere professors who, finding out their mistake when it is too late, shall call out, "Lord, Lord, open to us." But more solemn

still that He—the gentle, loving, gracious One—shall then have no answer but this, "I know you not." Mark these words, "*I* know *you* not," implying that there must be a personal acquaintance with Him: religious profession will not do. "I know my sheep, and am known of mine."

The blessed truth of the Lord's second coming may be thus brought before the scholars. It is a most important truth to bring before them, and while some may think it is too high for children, we are of opinion that if stated simply the very youngest scholar may be able to understand it.

Of course there are the two aspects of His coming; first, to take away those who are ready; and secondly, in judgment, upon those who are only professors.

No doubt there are in most of our schools some scholars who do believe in Christ, and these should be instructed in this truth, and surely it would find a response in their young hearts. The fact of His soon coming again for them would be a "blessed hope" to put before them. Most teachers will be able to find illustrations to help their young minds to grasp it.

Perhaps it may help some if we refer to a little circumstance that came under our own observation recently. A father had been away from home for a few weeks, and on his return his little boy (just over three years of age), was so delighted that he could scarcely take his eyes off his father, but stood looking lovingly into his face, thus shewing how he welcomed him home. But the father having been away so long made such an impression on the child that for some time afterwards, whenever the father was going out, the little fellow would go up to him and ask, "Where are you

going, papa?" and having received a reply, would then ask, "And then are you coming home again, papa?" On one occasion he followed his reply saying, "Don't go and live anywhere else, papa, but come back soon."

How blessed it would be if our scholars were earnestly looking out for the return of the Lord Jesus. Well, it is our privilege to tell them of it, and also to let them see that we are really waiting for Him ourselves.

NOTES OF LESSONS FOR A BIBLE CLASS.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

Chapter iii.—x.

In chapter iii. Job breaks the long silence, and curses the day of his birth, and longs for death: "there the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary be at rest." (Ver. 17.) He remembers too his former fears: "The thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come upon me."

Now it is plain from this speech that Job's faith was failing him. As day after day passed and no relief arrived, Job took his eye off God as the sender of the calamities and he bewailed his lot.

Eliphaz answers Job. (Chaps. iv., v.) And here we may observe that while Job's friends make a great many remarks that are true and good, yet as they entirely fail to understand Job's case, so therefore they do not say the *right* thing. We will endeavour to grasp the purport of each of the speeches, and then look at any of the details that seem to call for remark.

Eliphaz reminds Job of the excellent advice he

had given to others; but now that calamity had come, he had fainted. Verse 6 of chapter iv. is rather obscure in the Authorized Version. It reads much plainer without the word 'this,' which has been added: thus, "Is not thy fear thy confidence, and the uprightness of thy ways thy hope?" That is, was not Job trusting in his integrity? Whereas, Eliphaz contended, it was only the wicked that were punished and cut off. This shews how entirely Eliphaz misunderstood Job's case: for here was a *righteous* man being disciplined, and this was altogether beyond the speaker's wisdom; although he did direct Job unto God and say, "Happy is the man whom God correcteth; therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty." (Chap. v. 17.)

What is meant by being in league with the stones of the field? (Chap. v. 23.)

The stones should not hurt them or injure their prosperity. They were often the means of a person falling (see Ps. xci. 11, 12); and 2 Kings iii. 25 shews us that stones were cast into the fields by the enemies to render them unproductive.

Job does not offer any direct reply to Eliphaz; but begs of God one thing, and that is *death.* His sorrow has overwhelmed him, and his eye is off God, and he lets out the repinings of a crushed spirit. "My soul chooseth strangling and death rather than life." (Chap. vii. 15.) He confesses that he has sinned, but longs for death to be out of his misery.

What is the figure used in chapter vi. 15, "My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the stream of brooks that pass away."

The following verses explain it. In winter the melting blocks of ice darken the water, and in

summer the brook is dried up and yields no refreshment: so the varying love of Job's brethren is inconstant. It goes on to say that the caravans of Tema and Sheba were confounded at finding the brooks dried up.

In chapter vii. 2 we read "as the servant earnestly desireth the shadow." This is doubtless in allusion to the measuring of time by the shadow on some sort of sun dial. Thus in 2 Kings xx. 11, we read that on the prayer of Isaiah the shadow went "ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz." The servant had to work until the shadow had arrived to a certain point. If he was in a field, it might have been the shadow of some tower, or wall, or even the length of his own shadow; and as he earnestly desired this, so Job earnestly longed for the end of his appointed days.

How does chapter vii. 6 agree with verse 4? The one speaks of the *slowness* of the night passed in tossing about; but the other says, "My days are *swifter* than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope."

Verse 1 in this chapter speaks of the slowness of the days in passing; "are not his days also like the days of an hireling?" that is, long and tedious. Then he speaks of the nights also. Verse 6 is in another connection: his whole life was passing on and away, like a weaver's shuttle, without any hope of relief.

Thus Job pours out his soul in bitter cries and lamentations. The expression in chapter vii. 19: "Let me alone till I swallow down my spittle," is an Eastern proverb, equivalent to, "Let me fetch breath, give me a moment's rest."

In chapter viii. Bildad makes his first speech.

He also attributes Job's afflictions to his sins. "If thou wert pure and upright, surely now he would awake for thee and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous." The ungodly he compares to a water-reed that soon perisheth, and even to a spider's web. Bildad ends by declaring that God will not cast away a perfect man, but will bless the upright; while the wicked shall come to naught. These things were true in themselves, but this line of things did not apply to Job's case.

Job answers Bildad in chapter ix., and asks the important question, "How should man be just with God?" He seems to be taking up the question apart from himself: how shall man—any man—be just with God? He shews that man as such cannot stand before God; first, because of God's greatness, and then, because of man's defilement. "If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt thou plunge me in a ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me." He then refers to the need of a daysman betwixt the sinner and God who could lay his hand on both.

What does 'daysman' mean?

In the margin you will see it is 'an umpire,' that is, an arbitrator, who judges between two; but by the clause that follows the thought seems rather to be of a mediator, one who could lay his hand upon both. Jesus Christ is declared to be the mediator between God and man; and this is just what Job was asking for. The sinner cannot approach God except through Christ: He is the mediator, and now all are invited. We must remember that in Job's days redemption had not been wrought out, and was not even fully revealed,

so that we must not expect to find in Job the same light and liberty which Christians now enjoy. Still God was educating him, and using his affliction to this end.

It is clear that Job, though a god-fearing man was self-righteous. See chapter x. 7: "Thou knowest that I am not wicked." Who that knew his own heart could say this to God? And he even goes further than this, and charges God with wrongly afflicting him. "Thine hands have made me, and fashioned me together round about; yet thou dost destroy me." (Ver. 8.) So that it is quite clear that Job had some very important lessons to learn as to his own inward corruption; and until he learnt this, all was darkness and perplexity. And he again longs for death to deliver him.

What are meant by "Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades" in chapter ix. 9?

By Arcturus is understood the constellation of the Great Bear; Orion and the Pleiades being also constellations, or imaginary figures in the heavens, formed in the main by the position of the stars. They still bear these names. The three are again named in chapter xxxviii. 31, 32, where God is speaking and demanding of Job if he can bind, loose, or guide these stars. Man sinks into his own insignificance when compared even with the works of the Almighty.

The most important of our day's lesson is the solemn question, "How shall man be just with God?" and the need Job felt of a mediator between God and man. Through mercy such a mediator is now revealed in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and through faith in His blood, guilty men are declared to be just by God Himself. May this be the happy portion of us all!

THE HERODIANS.

WHO were the Herodians mentioned in the New Testament? is a question often asked; but is not so easily answered satisfactorily. We will gather up what we can on the subject.

They are only mentioned three times in the New Testament. Matthew xxii. 16: The Pharisees sent to our Lord "their disciples with the Herodians" to tempt Him concerning the lawfulness of paying tribute to Cæsar. This is also recorded in Mark xii. 13. In Mark iii. 6 we read, "And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him." All we gather from these passages as to the Herodians is that in both places they were united with the Pharisees: in the one to tempt our Lord, and in the other to put Him to death.

In Mark viii. 15, we read that our Lord charged the disciples saying, "Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod." If the Herodians are here referred to we again find them named with the Pharisees; but seeing the word 'leaven' is repeated, their error would be different from that of the Pharisees.

There can be little doubt that the name 'Herodian' is derived from the name of the king, and thus the 'leaven of Herod' would well describe the character of this sect. They would be Jews who were for some purpose playing into the hands of Herod.

Josephus does not mention the Herodians by name, but passages from his Antiquities (xv. 10, 4)

throw light upon what may be referred to as the 'leaven of Herod.' He says, for instance, "The king took occasion at this time to ingratiate himself with his people, by easing them of a third part of their taxes, under pretence of a tenderness for their sufferings by the distress of the famine, but in effect to sweeten their ill humours: for they were so disgusted at many things the king did to the scandal of religion and good manners, that everybody's mouth was open against him for it. So that he was fain to make use of other ways yet to keep his subjects quiet, by tying up every man to his own business; prohibiting cabals, clubs, and other public meetings; planting spies upon all companies, and officers everywhere at hand to take into custody all offenders against these orders; as there were several committed to the fort Hyrcania publicly as well as privately, and there punished with the utmost rigour. The very roads, streets, passes, and avenues were all beset and waylaid. All meetings upon what account soever were watched and observed: nay, such was the care he took that he would many times slip out by night himself in a disguise among the rabble, to find out what opinion the multitude had of him. Wherever he met with any man who was bitter and malicious, he had no mercy on him; and for the moderate sort, he put them to the oath of allegiance, and so dismissed them. By this means, he brought the majority, out of fear, to a compliance with him: and for those who had the courage to stand upon their terms and to dispute the point, he never failed of some device or other to remove them out of the way. This oath was put to Pollio the Pharisee, and to Lameas, with their disciples, as well as to the rest; but they

refusing it, Herod, out of respect he had for Pollio, pressed them no further to the taking of it, and he was as kind to the Essenes too, a sect somewhat like the Pythagoreans among the Greeks."

Again, the Pharisees, "an arrogant, crafty sort of men that in the pride and vanity of their hearts made no conscience of affronting kings, and trampling royal authority under their feet. As for instance, when the whole nation of the Jews were called upon to swear allegiance to the king and to Cæsar, these were the only refusers, to the number of about seven thousand. And condemned after in a sum of money for this refusal, the wife of Pheroras [Herod's brother] laid down the fine. These people having gotten to themselves the reputation of the spirit of prophecy, and the special direction and assistance of divine revelation gave it out in requital for the good office of paying the fine, that God had determined the transferring the kingdom from Herod and his line, to the princess and her husband Pheroras, and their issue. Salome [Herod's sister] gave the king notice of this, and of the bribery and corruption that had been practised at court in favour of this interest. Upon a strict search and inquiry, there were several of the Pharisees taken up, and put to death, as the principal authors of this seditious presage." (Ant. xvii. 2, 4.)

Now all this will lead one to expect that Herod would seek to make some among the Jews to be especially devoted to himself, to watch over his interests, and to acquaint him with anything being broached to his detriment. And such persons may well have been called Herodians.

They may have thought that inasmuch as Herod

was a Jewish proselyte, to have such a king was far better than being immediately under the Romans. Herod was in reality an Idumæan, but since the conquest of the Idumæans they had been attached to the Jewish religion, and accounted themselves Jews. Herod, when he restored the temple spoke of what had been done by "*our* forefathers at the return of Babylon," clearly evincing that he accounted himself to be a Jew.

As far as swearing allegiance to Herod, the Herodians would stand in direct opposition to the Pharisees; and when we read that Pharisees and Herodians were united to oppose Christ, it shews that those the furthest apart could unite when it was to oppose the One who came to save them! He came unto His own, and His own, no matter what their bias or tendency otherwise was, received Him not.

SEPARATION.

MR. EDITOR,

I desire to say a few words to my fellow-workers on the subject of separation. I suppose we have all bowed, at least in measure, to the exhortation to follow Christ "outside the camp," and having done so, ought we in any way to go back again? This day is characterized by organization and confederation; combinations are springing up everywhere for all sorts of objects—from the union of churches down even to buying our food and clothing.

It is quite natural that the Sunday school should be embraced in these combinations. For this purpose, as is well known, there are Unions and Associations, which all are invited to join.

"Union is strength," it is said, and much help may be derived from being united with the various other Sunday schools around you.

Now it seems to me that wisdom is needed in declining such a solicitation so as, while maintaining our separation on a clear definite ground, to be able also to state this in a way that shall not needlessly offend those who invite us, but rather be a setting of the truth before them in a way that, under the blessing of God, may *draw* them, and lead them to consider a subject which, I fear, many have never once thought of.

With most Christians, to go outside the camp referred, they think, to going outside Judaism, and as there is no such danger now, the exhortation has ceased to have practical force. Thus Delitzsch says, "The meaning is, therefore let us no longer continue in their society who have rejected the Lord Jesus, but go forth unto Him outside the camp. . . . Why should the earthly Jerusalem have for us any attraction? Our franchise and our home is above."

But that this is not the full meaning we think is evident by turning to Exodus xxxiii., where Moses pitched the tabernacle outside the camp, because *evil* was there, but remained of course an Israelite just as much as he was before. And when he did so "it came to pass that every one which sought the Lord went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp." (Ver. 7.) Here it was not leaving Judaism, for they retained it just as much as before; but it was leaving the camp because evil was there.

Others take the passage in Hebrews xiii. 13, to refer to the world; but this is surely farther from the truth than the former thought; for in this

passage there is doubtless a reference to Judaism, being written to the Hebrews. Christ had suffered outside the gate of the literal Jerusalem, and the Hebrew believers were exhorted to go forth without the camp of Judaism—not merely outside the city—bearing the reproach of Christ.

But we cannot believe that the exhortation lapses because *that* camp has passed away. Is there not another—even Christendom—which is as verily guilty as was the earthly Jerusalem? But this is perhaps best illustrated by the action of Moses in Exodus xxxiii. Without ceasing to be Christians, and indeed because we are Christians, is not our true place outside the camp, that great system which we call Christendom and which must never be confounded with Christianity?

We cannot really go outside Christendom; but we can separate *in spirit;* and like the reference to a great house in 2 Timothy, we can separate from the vessels to dishonour, that we may be meet for the Master's use.

Now if we are separate from the camp in Christendom, we *must* keep ourselves separate. Painful as it is to decline association with other Christians, if we are to bow to the word of God, we must purge ourselves from the vessels to dishonour. And here comes in a point that I have found very helpful: namely, that I am compelled to look upon the camp as a whole, though in dealing with cases to consider it as consisting of several parts. For instance, if I meet with a Christian in the Establishment he entirely repudiates anything done in Dissent, and *vice versa;* so that I am obliged to deal with each differently. It needs but little knowledge to prove that the Church of England so-called is a great corrupt system. Every

parishioner who has been baptized and confirmed and leads a moral life is a member without the least pretence to his being a Christian. And that doctrinal evil is allowed, is proved by the Essays and Reviews, and Dr. Colenso 's writings.

If I turn to Dissent, its own writers reduce the church to a mere human system, and declare that because every human society elects its own officers, &c., therefore the church must do the same. They also entirely disown the unity of the body, but claim authority to break it up into as many sections as they please. And besides this it has lately become painfully evident that some of their most able ministers are holding evil doctrines, the denial of eternal punishment being now the most popular.

Now I do not allude to these painful things for the sake of doing so, but that each of your readers may know intelligently why they separate from "the camp" of the present day. And, as I said, it is important to see what it is as a *whole*, because I may meet with a godly Christian in either Church or Dissent that does *not* hold evil doctrine, and is most consistent in his walk. From such a one it may seem to be inconsistent to separate; but you must deal with "the camp" as a whole, and he is a part of it; the inconsistency is in him remaining associated with manifestly what is human organization, if not positive evil. Moses when he went outside the camp with the tabernacle did not stay to inquire whether there were any who did not take part in making the golden calf. He went outside and those who "sought the Lord" went out to him.

Still, ought we not to consider the welfare of our fellow Christians? I fear some are roughly repulsed, who ought to be dealt with tenderly and

lovingly. We should remember that it has taken some of us *years* to learn these lessons, and we ought not, therefore, to be surprised if others cannot see them all at once.

And further, we ought not to *assume* to be more holy or more devoted than other Christians: on the contrary, the godliness and zeal of others ought to put some of us to shame. If God has given us more light, He will surely require more *from* us; and it is for us to walk humbly before those from whom we differ, and in *love* seek their welfare and blessing; but, as has often been said, if one has fallen into a ditch, we can the better rescue him by remaining on the solid bank than by going down into the ditch ourselves.

One other point, and I have done, namely, we ought to be very careful how we speak to our scholars respecting these things or of other schools. A scholar perhaps tells us that "father has joined Mr. ——'s chapel, and he wishes me to go to that Sunday school." Here an incautious word may be carried to the parent, and being misunderstood, may do great harm. Far better to visit the parent, looking to the Lord for wisdom to say the right thing and that only.

I urge therefore upon your readers these things. First, in going forth outside the camp unto Christ, let us remain there with Him. But then let us not assume to be a superior sort of Christian, and despise others, but remember that we share in the common shame of an apostate Christendom. What have we that we have not received? And have we been faithful to the light God has given us? We should also cherish love to *all* God's saints, and while we are ready to give to every man a reason of the hope that is in us, let it be with fear and

trembling; lest by putting forth the high and holy truths of God, we shew by our ways or our spirit, how far, it may be, we come short of our confession. M. S.

BOOKS FOR THE LIBRARY.

To the Editor,

I look forward with great pleasure to the monthly issue of your useful magazine, and finding that its pages are open for inquiry, I will, with your permission, take advantage of them to ask for advice and assistance.

We have here, in connection with our Sunday school a small library of about 95 volumes, which is opened to the children every second Sunday. We started it about two or three years ago with 60 volumes and have added the rest since that time; but we now find that many of the scholars, having had all the books which they care to read, are compelled, Sunday after Sunday, to go away disappointed.

Now, thinking other schools amongst us may be in the same predicament, we have thought that some plan might be suggested by yourself by which a change could be effected.

Say, for instance, two libraries send each other a certain number of books, each paying the carriage of their own parcel; and we think if this scheme were judiciously carried out, it would be just the thing to keep up a continuous supply, for it need not be confined to two gatherings and need not be a permanent change.

In furtherance of this, I as Librarian should be most happy to forward a list of our books to any who would communicate with me upon the subject, and thanking you, in anticipation of your esteemed reply,

Yours sincerely, J. B. R.

[We fear the books in different schools would be found to be too much the same to carry out this plan, but it can be tested. Why not ask the assembly for money for new books ?—Ed.]

NOTES ON SCRIPTURE.

MATTHEW XVIII.

VERSES 15–20. We have here still the principles of the kingdom. And first is the case of one brother trespassing against another. Notice the word 'thee'—"trespass against *thee*." You are to tell the fault to the offender privately; and if he hear thee, the end is accomplished: the brother is gained, and the matter need be named no further.

If he will not hear thee, one or two more must be taken to the offender, and another attempt be made to gain thy brother. And connected with this is a remarkable clause: "that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established." It will be obvious that those two or three taken with you cannot be witnesses of the *first* act, still they are here called witnesses. They become such; for in some instances they may judge that *you* are wrong in bringing the charge on a mere suspicion, while charity should hope all things; or, in other cases, they may witness the spirit and deportment of the accused and the accuser; and they are also witnesses of every word that is spoken. In many cases an accused person convicts himself, by attempting to hide his fault; his statements do not agree.

If the accused shall refuse to hear these (and it supposes that they shall all be of one judgment in the matter), then it must be brought before the assembly; and if he refuse to hear the assembly, he is to be accounted a heathen man and a publican.

Here again it supposes the assembly to be of one judgment, so as to be bowed to. Of course

that could not be if some were saying one thing, and some another.

The question naturally arises whether such a one is to be put out of the assembly. We believe that thus far it is left open. For some offences the person would be put out, but in others he might not; but to this latter class there might be a strict internal discipline; as we read in Romans xvi. 17, some are to be marked and avoided.

It is clear from verse 18 that true discipline is recognized in heaven. What is bound on earth shall be bound in heaven; and what is loosed on earth shall be loosed in heaven. If an assembly declares a man is guilty, his sin is bound upon him; and if rightly, it is recognized in heaven. And if the offender is penitent and restored, he is *forgiven* by the assembly (see 2 Cor. ii. 7, 10), and is loosed in heaven. This marks out the vital union between the assembly on earth and God in heaven.

It is worthy of remark that this course of action in the case of failure is not put as an optional thing: "Go and tell him his fault," is a plain injunction to one and all. It is much easier to tell another of it than the one offending; but here is God's rule; and the assembly, or even the two or three, are not at liberty to entertain such a matter until the first step has been taken. And there is no doubt that where this first step is taken in dependence upon God for His grace and help, many a one is "gained" to the path of righteousness, and the offence is not known by others: charity covers a multitude of sins.

On the other hand, this passage has often been misapplied by offenders, as if this course of action applied to all cases. It is clearly here a personal

and private offence; but a person may do a public act that calls for united action at once, yet still always giving space for repentance and self-judgment.

The mention of 'the church' or 'assembly' here is remarkable, seeing it is not mentioned in any of the other gospels. We get it as an existing fact in the Acts after Pentecost, and doctrinally explained in the writings of the apostle Paul. A person might think that because any one injured was to tell his injury eventually to the assembly, the assembly must have existed at the time our Lord spoke. And this would have been difficult to answer, were there not another passage in this same gospel that spoke of the assembly as a future thing. "I will build my church," our Lord had said in chapter xvi. 18, and now in chapter xviii., "Tell it unto the church"—that assembly which He had told them He was going to build in a future day. The former passage paved the way for the mention of that assembly here. It was important that it should be named here because of verse 20, which speaks of the Lord's presence with the twos and threes.

Verse 19 is a remarkable promise that, "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."

It has been thought by some that this is only to be taken in connection with cases of discipline, such as is named in the previous verses; but we doubt if it has any such restriction, and this because of its being introduced by the words, "Again, I say unto you." In cases of discipline difficulties often arise and here is a blessed promise to any two who can agree to ask anything. We

doubt if it can be taken as an absolute promise apart from other passages that speak of prayer. For instance, we must ask for things that accord with the will of God (1 John v. 14), and we must ask in faith. (Mark xi. 24.)

This is not too much to suppose; for we must remember that verse 18 supposes that our *acts* shall be such that heaven can ratify them; verse 19, that we shall request such things as heaven can give. The acts must be right, or heaven will not ratify them; and the requests must be right, or our Father cannot grant them.

Verse 20 is the memorable promise of our Lord that "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Three things are to be noted: there need not be a sanhedrim of seventy; two or three (the smallest number that can be gathered) is sufficient: and then it must be in the name of the Lord Jesus: and then the Lord Himself is there. It will be seen that it does not say for what purpose they are gathered. It may be for discipline, or for breaking of bread, or other purposes. From other passages we know it refers to *all* being gathered, or open to all. In 1 Corinthians v. 4, it is, "When ye are gathered together," that is, the assembly, men and women. Not two or three *of* an assembly (unless open to all), but two or three may *form* an assembly if there be no more.

God foresaw the ruin of the church as a testimony for Christ, and in His grace has made provision for the assembling of His faithful ones in twos and threes. And the Lord has given us His word that there He will be.

EXAMPLES OF SCRIPTURE LESSONS.

V.—"FILTHY GARMENTS."

Zechariah iii.

THERE are five points in this vision of Zechariah's which are well worth the attention of teachers, and may easily be made clear to the scholars.

Joshua the high priest is seen standing before the Lord, with Satan at his right hand to resist him. What a picture! The sinner, the accuser, and the Saviour!

The five things we notice about Joshua are these: first he is convicted, then he is cleansed, then clothed, then crowned, and then charged, making five points, each beginning with the letter C. (This will help the scholars to remember them.)

1st. He stands as a convicted sinner in the light of the Lord's presence, clothed in filthy garments, and without a word to say for himself. And notice that the Lord can say nothing for him either, except that he is "a brand plucked out of the fire;" but this He does say, and rebukes Satan at the same time. However, this He says in the sovereignty of His own grace, "The Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem." Now this is very blessed to notice. He might have rebuked Joshua, but He does not. And from this we may learn His dealings with souls now. When a sinner is brought to know himself as such in the light of God's holiness, and owns his guilt, without trying to excuse himself, but taking the place given him in Romans iii. 19, where it says, "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God"—then he is privileged to know

"him that justifieth the ungodly," and who is "just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

2nd. He is cleansed. (Ver. 4.) His filthy garments will not do for the presence of the Lord. They must all come off. Taking off part would not do—no improving, no half and half work will be sufficient. So with the sinner now, nothing short of absolute cleansing in the "blood of Jesus Christ his Son," which "cleanseth from all sin," will meet the case. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." And yet how slow people are to see this, and instead of submitting to be cleansed in God's way, try a variety of ways of their own, and only make matters worse. We have sometimes illustrated this point by supposing a little child who has been sent out by its parent, with clean white frock and pinafore, falling down in the dirt. The little one is covered with dirt, but instead of going home at once, begins trying to wipe some of the dirt off, and only makes itself worse, for its hands being dirty, they add dirt to other parts instead of removing it. And at last the poor child has to go home all the worse for its "own efforts."

3rd. He is clothed. It is not enough that his filthy garments are taken from him, he needs other garments, such as will suit the divine presence—"change of raiment." His own garments might have seemed all right in the eyes of his fellows—for we must remember he was high priest—but he needed such as will be all right in the eyes of the Lord. So is it with the sinner. He needs not only to be cleansed from his sins, but also to be clothed, and this clothing God has provided for him—even Christ, who is the righteousness of all who are cleansed in His precious blood. And this clothing

God has provided not only that the believer might be able to stand in His presence, but so that His eye could rest with complacency upon him.

4th. We see him crowned. (See ver. 5; vi. 11, and Ex. xxix. 6.) As we read down this interesting portion we feel inclined to ask, "Where will God stop when He commences to bless the sinner?" A polluted, convicted sinner stands cleansed, clothed, and crowned, "to the praise of the glory of his grace." Well, all this is blessedly true of souls now who are cleansed in the blood of Christ. (See Rev. i. 4; v. 10.)

5th. He is charged. (Ver. 7.) Now this is a very important point. Nothing is said to him about walking in the Lord's ways or keeping His charge until the other four things are true of him. All that he has received has been unconditional. No "if thou wilt walk," &c., until he has been made fit for the Lord's presence. And this is equally true as to every sinner saved. He has not to "walk" or "keep" in order to fit himself. Indeed until he has been made fit for the divine presence he is not able to walk, nor is he expected to do so. But still the walk is enjoined on those who are fit, and should follow as a matter of course. Besides there are special blessings promised to those who do walk in His ways and keep His charge. (See ver. 7, and John xiv. 21, 23.)

We might further notice that it is after all this that the Lord begins to unfold His mind to Joshua about events yet to come, and more particularly respecting the "branch," from which we may surely learn that in order to know the Lord's mind, we need to be not only fit for His presence, but walking in His ways. (Ps. xxv. 14.)

We fear we have not been so simple as we could

wish in this lesson, but trust the Lord will enable teachers to make it all simple to their scholars, and add His own rich blessing.

NOTES OF LESSONS FOR A BIBLE CLASS.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

Chapter xi.—xiv.

CHAPTER xi. gives us Zophar's first address to Job. He is what we may call severe with poor Job, asking if his much talking is to be allowed to go without an answer. In verse 3 the word 'lies' you will see is 'devices' in the margin: others translate it 'vain talking' and 'fictions.' It evidently marks out the contempt Zophar had for what Job had been saying.

This friend also takes the ground that Job had sinned, and that he was being punished for his iniquity. See verse 6: "Know, therefore, that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth."

As I have told you, we find in these addresses of Job's friends, some statements true and good. Thus in verses 7 to 9 we have a description of the greatness of God. Read the verses.

"Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea."

Such a God must know everything: therefore he exhorts Job to put away iniquity from his heart, and God will surround him with blessing.

This speech of Zophar arouses Job. In chapter xii. he utters that cutting satire, "No doubt ye

are the people, and wisdom shall die with you." He declares that he has as much understanding as they have; yea, he charges them with being "forgers of lies; ye are all physicians of no value. O that ye would altogether hold your peace! and it should be your wisdom." (Chap. xiii. 4, 5.)

This is very severe, yet, as we have seen, Job's friends did not understand his case; they did not get beyond the thought that Job was being punished as an evil doer. This Job resented; but he was also wrong; for instead of being humbled under the hand of God, he rather took his stand upon his righteousness. Read chapter xiii. 15–18.

"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him; but I will maintain mine own ways before him. He also shall be my salvation; for an hypocrite shall not come before him. Hear diligently my speech, and my declaration with your ears. Behold now, I have ordered my cause: I know that I shall be justified."

Towards the end of the book, Job speaks of himself as quite different from this. However mistaken his friends might have been, Job also had yet to learn what he was in himself altogether apart from what he did merely.

Now look through this answer of Job, and see if there are any questions you would like to ask.

What is the meaning of verse 5? (Chap. xii.) "He that is ready to slip with his feet is as a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease."

The verse has been translated literally thus: "A torch—despised in the thoughts of the secure—is prepared for those that slide with the feet." This makes it quite plain. A lamp is provided for those ready to slip, but it is despised by those who

think themselves safe. As we know from other passages, the word of God is the true lamp for the feet of man; but man thinks he is able to walk alone, and he despises God's word.

Verse 6 seems to say that the wicked are blessed by God with prosperity.

It does. We find the prosperity of the wicked in Psalm lxxiii. 3–12 a puzzle to the Psalmist until he saw their end. Outward prosperity is no proof that those enjoying it are the Lord's people.

What is the meaning of "Thou settest a print upon the heels of my feet?" (Chap. xiii. 27.)

I think this must have some reference to the feet being confined in the stocks, which may have hurt the heels or 'roots' of the feet, as it reads in the margin. We read of Joseph that his "feet they hurt with fetters." The meaning of the whole is plain: that Job's friends not only falsely charged him, but he now said they treated him as a criminal.

Chapter xiv. is a beautiful description of the frailty of man's life: his days are few and full of trouble; and also the depravity of man: "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one. But again, Job longs for death to relieve him from his troubles. His eyes are still away from God, and we do not now hear the expression of a pious soul: "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good." It is a beautiful thought that all Christians are on earth as being at school, God having some important lesson to teach each one. It is for each to know what the lesson is, and seek to learn it. This is quite different from *punishment;* it is education, training, discipline. One important lesson is, what we are in ourselves, apart from our doings.

DEPENDENCE.

ALLOW me to call the attention of your readers to the importance of really depending on God for a blessing.

It is one of the hardest lessons we have to learn *by heart*, that "God must give the increase." Of course we all believe it, but who is there that does not find himself at times falling into the snare of thinking that there would be more blessing if certain things were better arranged, or the school better managed, or such like?

Now we need hardly say that as God is not the author of confusion, so all that the Christian does should be characterized by order and regularity. But we must not depend on this. We may have the best rules, and be most punctilious in carrying them out, and yet be without blessing; and, on the other hand, in another school, without rules, or anything that can be called management, there God adds His blessing, and souls are saved; or sometimes it is in one class and not in another.

Now surely it is not the disorder (if there be any) that He blesses, any more than the order. But where all is ordered and arranged, we may be really depending for blessing on this order, or think that it will follow as a matter of course.

In some schools all goes on like clockwork. The door is shut at the minute, and opened again immediately the fixed time arrives. The superintendent takes care that his watch is right, and that the bell rings within a few seconds of the appointed time—he would not on any account have a teacher think he was too soon or too late—and indeed, everything moves on with a sort of mechanical

exactness that surprises a visitor not used to such punctiliousness.

In some classes too all may move on with more or less of the same mechanical motion. Anything like disorder is checked instantly, the children are, as it were, frozen into statues. A smile is checked by a frown.

Now there may be all this, and a great deal more, but no blessing. Surely it is far better for us to be able to see that God is blessing our efforts, than to pride ourselves that we are able to say that ours is the quietest or the most orderly school.

I hope none will think I am advocating disorder. Far from it. There ought to be order and there ought to be discipline. But all I say is, let us not depend on our order and discipline for blessing. Perhaps it will be said that no one does this. Not in intention perhaps, but may we not fall into the habit of caring more for the order than for the blessing? At the end of the school, we go home consoling ourselves that all moved on smoothly and without a ruffle. If we are asked, what sort of school we had, we are able to say we had a nice quiet and orderly school.

But alas! may it not be the quietness of *death?* The children are dead; and though the gospel was put forth, those who put it forth become a savour of death unto death because of no saving blessing being added thereto. Oh, to feel our dependence more! to hang upon the One who alone can give the blessing. We all know and believe that it is God, and God only, that can give the blessing; but I write to stir up our minds by way of remembrance. Five words with His blessing are better than five hundred without it. A disorderly school with His blessing is better than the most orderly

and the best regulated school in the world without His blessing.

Let us then look out for the blessing. Let us do our work by all means in the least possible way, but look not to *our* work or *our* anything; it is God, and God only, that can give the blessing. Oh, for more simple faith that will really depend on Him for a blessing, without which all our labours are of no avail.

C. R.

"HE BEING DEAD, YET SPEAKETH."

On the 3rd of May, 1868, F. G. K. was enrolled in our Sunday school, and on the 19th of February, 1877, he fell asleep in Jesus. These two short statements speak volumes to my heart and conscience, as a worker amongst the young. And I desire that all my beloved fellow-labourers may share the joy of my heart, and that they also should be stirred up by them.

About three weeks ago I was told that George was very ill and not likely to live long. With another brother, I visited him, and found that he was sinking from rapid consumption, and that while his "earthly house of this tabernacle" was fast dissolving, he was looking forward with peace and joy to the moment when he should be absent from the body, and present with the Lord; when faith should be changed into sight; and he, the ransomed one of the Lord, should see face to face for ever that glorified One, "whom unseen he adored, whom absent he loved."

We read Psalm xxiii. to him, and gave thanks to our God and Father for His sustaining grace

to dear George at a time when *nature* must faint. He was young, this life just opening before him, and he was surrounded by a loving family circle; but his eye, through God's grace, was fixed on brighter things above, and he was content and happy to leave all below. Before we left he asked us to sing,

"What cheering words are these!
Their sweetness who can tell?
In time and to eternal days,
'Tis with believers well."

With chastened joy we sang to him, and after a little conversation came away. I only saw him once again, but he was visited daily by a loving fellow-teacher, who tells me that his end was perfect peace; George's only fear being that he was selfishly anxious to be removed from the scene of suffering to the bosom of his Lord. "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Beloved fellow-teachers, shall you or I halt or hang back from our blessed, blessed work of pointing the dear young ones to Jesus, and Him crucified; of telling of Him, and of His wondrous love; of speaking of Him, and His great salvation? Shall opposition or neglect, coldness or indifference, chill our hearts, or be allowed to weaken our efforts? God forbid; but, on the contrary, may we be "stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." Shall petty jealousies or unlearned questions which engender strife, upset you and me, mar our work, divide our school, embarrass our superintendent, and last though not least, be allowed to damage the Lord's work amongst the young at large? "He being dead, yet speaketh," He says, '*Work* while it is called to-

day, for the night cometh when no man can work.' He says, 'Thank God for Sunday schools! Thank God for a faithful teacher!' He says, '*Go on*, dear teachers, with your work of faith and labour of love.' Let us *go on*, beloved, thankful for fellowship, grateful for help; but irrespective of these, *go on*: in season and out of season; through good report and evil report; pressing forward with God and for God, and soon we shall know the blessedness of that scripture, "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

Beloved fellow-labourers, do not you and I want to win jewels for our Saviour's crown? Yes! we do; I am sure we do. Then let us not be weary in well doing; but let us hold fast, fight hard, and like good soldiers who never know defeat, live and work *for Him* and *with Him*, WHO DEATH BY DYING SLEW.

In conclusion, I say, let that ransomed soul, now in the rest above, speak to you and me of *God's joy* over one sinner that repenteth; and of *the value* that God puts upon one immortal soul, since to have that *one* brought back to Himself, He must needs spare His only, His well-beloved Son. May we meet our children in the spirit of these two important truths, and with renewed joy, love and fervour, tell forth in the power of the Holy Ghost the old old story of Jesus and His love; of Jesus and His glory; so that again and again all heaven may ring with joy at the Shepherd bringing back His own that He purchased with His precious blood. And unto Him that gave His life that we might live, be the glory evermore. "HOLD FAST TILL I COME."

REWARDS IN SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

Could you allow me space for a few words in answer to your correspondent who asks for the thoughts of teachers on the subject of "Rewards in Sunday schools?"

I think that the majority of those who have had experience in this matter will agree with me in thinking, that any evil which may result is really from some mistake in the way of giving the rewards.

In our school we give a small ticket for punctual attendance to every scholar who is in his place when the school opens, and a second for good behaviour and attention in the class to those deserving it. When twelve are accumulated, this is reckoned as equal to one penny, and for them the scholar may have a book of that value, or, if he prefer it, an ornamental card. When twelve of the larger cards are gained they may be exchanged for a shilling book. In this way, Bibles, Testaments, and books containing the gospel in a simple form reach the children's homes.

So far from its being necessary to give rewards for ability, or natural capacity, every teacher knows that it is the "sharp" scholar who will be pricking his neighbour with a pin, or seeking in some way or other to interrupt the attention of others; when of course he will lose the reward.

Another use which may be made of these tickets, and which I have found answer very well when my class was not as large as I wished, is to offer a certain number to every scholar who will

bring another with him who has not attended Sunday school before.

One advantage in giving rewards every Sunday rather than only once a year, seems to be that it keeps the school more before the minds of the children and their friends. Besides, as the tickets have texts of scripture printed on them, the Lord may use them for blessing in the children's homes. I knew of a case some months since, where a boy saw on the wall of a room the text, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins," and his mind was so impressed, that it was used to his conversion.

F. P. S.

Dear Mr. Editor,

The question asked by T. S. in the March number of the "Worker" calls our attention to a very interesting subject. His question a little modified stands thus: Is it right to encourage our scholars in the practice and pursuit of that which is good by holding out to them the prospect of a reward? I have put the question in this wider form, as there are other virtues besides *diligence* mentioned by T. S. which we should seek to encourage by every legitimate means. And, if I mistake not, it is the general question of rewards which is now raised.

We may assume that there is no doubt in the mind of any teacher of the propriety of encouraging the scholars in the practice and pursuit of that which is good, and that the doubt, where it exists, is as to the propriety of doing so by the

use of rewards. We may suppose too, that none object to rewards on the ground of their inefficacy, for that would be to ignore the testimony of general experience. It will often be found, that in carrying out a system of rewards, some minor evils will present themselves, and these have been magnified by some into sufficient grounds for abandoning rewards altogether. Others look with disfavour upon rewards from the consideration that the scholars ought to love that which is good for its own sake. To the former I would submit that it is irrational to condemn what is good in itself because it is not without a certain admixture of evil, or else we must reject everything under the sun. And of the latter I ask the consideration of what follows.

A thing is good which is in accordance with the mind and will of God, who is good, and as such, is entirely independent of the minds and wills of those whom we seek to encourage in the practice and pursuit of it. We know even that by nature those minds and wills are in enmity against God, and that they do not appreciate those higher forms of good to which we seek to win them. Neither old people nor young are capable of persistently pursuing what they do not appreciate. So that the problem presents itself to every teacher: How can the scholars be induced to practise what they have not yet learned to love for its own sake? Perhaps those who object to rewards can furnish a solution.

A reward must be something which the receiver appreciates. It may be a tangible object, as a book; it may be the teacher's smile of approval, or even the scholar's own sense of conscious integrity. I see no difference between these but one of degree

or quality; they are alike rewards in their nature, neither of them is loving the good for its own sake. No one can love good until he be acquainted with it, and how repeatedly has this acquaintance been formed with the help of a reward! Let each teacher remember that he was not born into this world with an aptitude for loving good for its own sake, and let him seek to trace how much the ability to do so now has been formed and fostered by encouragements and rewards, at first perhaps, of a gross and material kind, but gradually assuming a more spiritual and elevated character.

But apart from every other consideration my own mind is set completely at rest on this matter from the fact that God in His dealings with man has used rewards habitually. I cannot now give a long list of passages, nor do I think it necessary. The impression on my mind is, that the precept or command is very rarely given unaccompanied by the promise of a reward, the threat of a punishment, or an appeal grounded on the fact that the consideration has been already bestowed. But either of these is in addition to loving the good for its own sake. The fifth commandment is a well-known instance of this mode of coupling the precept with a consideration. If the book of Deuteronomy be read through, it will soon be evident that the above is not a solitary case, but only an instance of the manner in which God seeks to encourage man in the path of good. Nor is this the case only in the Old Testament. The epistles to the seven churches serve as an instance in the New, the Sermon on the Mount affords another. Surely in this matter we may well be imitators of God.

This question has an aspect towards the giver as well as the receiver of a reward. If we ourselves

love that which is good, and seek to encourage the scholars in the pursuit of it, we shall be delighted if successful. And does not this feeling crave for an expression, and what shape will that expression take but one of reward? To avoid being misunderstood, I would repeat that a reward, as I have used the term, is not always a tangible object as a book, but something which the receiver appreciates, and because he does so he is beguiled into an acquaintance with the good which as yet he does not appreciate. And the hope of the teacher is the same as that of the gardener who places the stem of a flower in contact with the soil in the expectation of its taking root there. But although a reward is not necessarily a material object, yet practically it does assume a tangible form. And this is well. If it be a book, it will be readily understood that the book itself constitutes but a portion, perhaps a small portion, of the reward. The occasion on which it was received, the presence and approval of the teachers and of those who assembled to witness the distribution, not to speak of what passes between the child and his pleased parents at home; all this forms a considerable part of the reward, but the book serves to embody these subtler influences, and recall them to the memory long afterwards.

Much more may be said, but I wish to be brief. I have written this somewhat hurriedly, and if it does not meet the case alluded to by T. S., it may serve to stimulate further inquiry.

D.

NOTES ON SCRIPTURE.

MATTHEW XVIII.

VERSES 21, 22. Peter asked our Lord how many times he was to forgive his brother who sinned against him. Peter named seven times. Our Lord said, seventy-times seven. It was to be a constant and unlimited forgiveness, even as our Lord bears with and forgives us. Seventy-times seven would be perfection of perfection, as we may say.

Verses 23—35. This is the parable of the Unmerciful Servant. He was indebted to his lord ten thousand talents; and, when his lord commanded him, his wife and children, and all that he had, to be sold, he fell down, and begged his lord to have patience, and he would pay all. His lord had compassion on him and *forgave* him the debt.

Now this same servant also had one indebted to him a hundred pence; and when he demanded the money, his debtor, a fellow-servant, also fell down and begged for time, and he would pay all. But the creditor was inexorable, and cast his fellow-servant into prison until he should pay the debt. This coming to the ears of their lord, this hard-hearted creditor was summoned into his presence, and there reminded that he had been forgiven *his* debt; ought he not therefore to have forgiven his fellow-servant in like manner? His lord was angry and delivered him to the tormenter until he should pay all that was due.

We have our Lord's own interpretation of the parable in these words, "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your

hearts forgive not every one his brother, their trespasses."

There are two applications of this parable. One, to the Jews in a wide sense. They had been forgiven by God again and again—as we may truly say, seventy-times seven—and yet they were most inexorable towards the Gentiles. The Gentiles had served them in many ways. Look, for instance, at Cyrus sending them back to their own land; and yet they denied the grace of God to them in every way they could.

The other is, its application to the Christian. We have been forgiven the mighty load of our sins; should we not readily forgive any who may have trespassed against us? If we do not, our heavenly Father will not forgive us.

As has been often noticed, parables are not intended to be strictly applied in all their details: it is enough to take their broad and general teaching. The details of this parable have often been felt to be a difficulty; one question being, If a Christian has been forgiven his heavy debt of sins, and yet indulges a hard, unforgiving spirit towards a fellow-Christian, in what sense is he to be delivered to the tormenter until he shall have paid all that was due? One can see at a glance how this would suit the purpose of a Roman Catholic and be interpreted by him as applying to purgatory, where the failing one would be made to pay all that was due.

But this is a parable, in which one thing is said to be *like* another; and while the general teaching is plain, we doubt if this, or any other parable, could be strictly applied in all the details, nor is it so intended.

Still the question returns as to what way God

will mark His disapproval of such unforgiving conduct in one who has already been forgiven much.

Well, He may do it in discipline in this world. We doubt not that God often uses the world to discipline His saints. God says that if a man's ways please Him, He makes that man's enemies to be at peace with him (Prov. xvi. 7): how easy and simple the converse, that if a Christian's ways do *not* please God, He allows that man to be persecuted in various ways.

The Christian may also lose his reward in a future day; for there is such a thing, as we know, as a Christian suffering loss (1 Cor. iii. 15), and also losing his crown. (Rev. iii. 11.)

On the other hand, we must remember that in this parable it is the kingdom of heaven that is in question, and in this kingdom there may be mere professors—those who take the ground of being followers of Christ, but who are not; and these, though not strictly forgiven the heavy debt of their sins, take that ground, and perhaps declare that they are forgiven. Well, if these shall have a hard, unforgiving spirit towards those they call brethren, God will know how, if they die thus, to bring home to them this very parable; and make them declare how justly they have been dealt with, seeing they did not forgive those who trespassed against them.

The parable brings out a principle of the kingdom of heaven—and we may say of the assembly, though it is individual—As we have been forgiven so we *must* forgive those trespassing against us. And as God's forgiveness to us is *infinite*, so ours must be without limit—"seventy-times seven."

The different amounts named are worthy of

notice: one is ten thousand talents. A talent was worth about £190 of our money, and the whole sum is therefore £1,900,000. The other is a hundred pence, or denarii, each worth about 8d., and in all about £3 6s. 8d. When that which God forgives is alluded to, a sum of nearly two million pounds is named; but when that which we can be called to forgive a brother, a five pound note is too much! Alas, how different is our estimate! the wrongs against us seem enormous, whereas we forget that for the "eternal redemption" of us, silver and gold were corruptible things and of no value; it must be by the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without spot.

EXAMPLES OF SCRIPTURE LESSONS.

VI.—"THE LIFE OF CHRIST."

We have been feeling very much lately the great need there is for bringing the Person of Christ before our scholars. Infidelity is making rapid strides, and especially among the young. We have heard several teachers speak lately of their scholars having asked such questions as could only have arisen in their minds through contact with those who call in question the word of God, and deny the divinity of Christ. And even among professing Christians, there is so much talk about Christianity, but very little of *Christ*—and of salvation, but very little of the *Saviour*.

We have, therefore, thought it might be well to take up in consecutive order a few of the leading points in our Lord's history during His sojourn down here. We feel it to be a deeply solemn undertaking, and pray that we and all who may

attempt to follow it out may be given that spirit of holy reverence which becomes us.

We should first draw our scholars' attention to the fact that Jesus is the Son of God, and put before them the truth as to His divine power and majesty, or they will not be able to enter into the wonderful fact that the same blessed One was "made flesh" and became a man, in order that He might deliver us from sin, death, and judgment. (See John i., Col. i., Heb. i.) It may be well too to refer to the prophets who prophesied of His coming. (See Is. ix. 6, 7; Mic. v. 2.)

The first two chapters of Matthew and Luke will furnish the teacher with abundance of matter which may easily be taken up in such quantities and order as may suit the class of children to be taught. Especially should everything be said as simply as possible, even repeating over and over again the same truth but in different words, until the children's minds have been arrested and the subject understood. We feel it necessary to be constantly reminded of this.

Some few years ago we remember a teacher relating the following as having occurred in his own class. He had a class of small boys, from five to eight years of age, and had been speaking to them about the angel appearing to the shepherds, especially dwelling upon the angel's message, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy," &c. After dwelling upon it for some time he thought he would ask a few questions to see how far they had taken in what he had been saying. So he began by asking, "What was it the angel brought the shepherds?" "I know, teacher," said almost all together, holding out their hands to attract his eye; but one by one their hands were withdrawn,

as each found he had forgotten all about it. However, one little fellow again reached out his hand. "I know, teacher." "Well, what is it?" "*A new tie for a good boy*," was the reply. But now to our lesson.

Perhaps enough matter for our first lesson might be found in the name "Jesus,"

"Sweetest note on mortal tongue."

The following questions would naturally be suggested: What does "Jesus" mean? What does "Saviour" mean? Why was He given this name? How was He to save them? And then illustrations may be given of what it is to be saved? John Wesley was *saved* out of a burning house when quite a child. A little while ago a child was *saved* out of the river Thames by a dog named "Ready." A little girl who fell down a well was *saved* by her father, who was let down by ropes and then pulled up again. None of these could save themselves, so they needed to be *saved.*

The following extraordinary but true incident may be of service here. In one of the oyster districts a man who was employed as watchman had occasion to move a boat for the purpose of cleaning it. In order to do this he stepped out of the boat on to the mud, when to his surprise and terror he began to sink. His efforts to get out only caused him to sink deeper and deeper. His master having occasion to row down the river some hours afterwards found the man in this pitiable condition. He at once started off for the assistance of five men—the crew of a yacht. They took with them some ropes and tackle, which they made fast to a smack close by, and then placed the rope sufficiently near for him to twist it round his

body; but it took those five men three-quarters of an hour before they could draw him out, the mud held him so terribly tight. Had the water risen before he was discovered, it would have closed him up from the sight of man for ever. He would have sunk deeper, and with the tide closing in, the mud would not have left the slightest clue to his whereabouts. But he was *saved*.

It would be well to explain the meaning of the other names or titles of our Lord. "Immanuel," God with us. "Christ," anointed. "Messiah," the same, &c., &c.

Next month we hope (if the Lord will) to take up more of the details in the early part of the life of Christ, but at the same time we feel that we can do little more than throw out suggestions, leaving each teacher to supply the details as occasion may require.

NOTES OF LESSONS FOR A BIBLE CLASS.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

Chapters xv.—xxiv.

In chapter xv. Eliphaz again answers Job, but the question is not in any way solved. Man does wickedly, and is dealt with for his iniquity.

In chapter xvi. Job again replies, and again judges God falsely. Read verses 11 and 12.

"God hath delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked. I was at ease, but he hath broken me asunder; he hath also taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces, and set me up for his mark."

Now verse 17.

"Not for any injustice in mine hands: also my prayer is pure."

Poor Job: he seems to count himself more righteous than God! His only hope is the darkness of the grave.

In chapter xviii. Bildad again replies to Job, but in the same strain. He says many true things about the fate of the wicked; but nothing that touches on Job's case.

In chapter xix. Job answers. Evidently he is much disturbed in spirit: "How long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words? These ten times have ye reproached me." But he again charges God foolishly. Read verses 6, 7.

"Know now that God hath overthrown me and hath compassed me with his net. Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard; I cry aloud, but there is no judgment."

Also verse 11.

"He hath also kindled his wrath against me, and he counteth me unto him as one of his enemies."

In verse 22, he appeals to his friends to have pity upon him.

"Why do ye persecute me as God, and are not satisfied with my flesh?"

This is all very shocking that Job should thus speak of his God. But though his faith as to the present fails, his faith as to the future is bright. This is a common thing with many saints. They have no fears as to their eternal security, but entirely break down as to God's dealings with their souls in the way thither. Read the beautiful description he gives of the future, in verses 25–27.

"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 shall I see God: whom I shall see

for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me."

In chapter xx. Zophar again replies, and his whole speech is describing the ways and the portion of the wicked. As we have seen again and again, this did not apply to Job's case.

In chapter xxi. Job again answers. Zophar had said that "the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment." Job replies, "Wherefore do the wicked live, *become old,* yea, are mighty in power? . . . . their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them." And from verse 23, "One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet . . . . and another dieth in the bitterness of his soul and never eateth with pleasure. They shall lie down alike in the dust and the worms shall cover them." Then he declares, "Behold, I know your thoughts and the devices which ye wrongfully imagine against me. . . . . How then comfort ye me in vain, seeing in your answers there remaineth falsehood." Thus Job shews that the lives of the wicked are very varied, and that it was wrong to rank him with them.

In chapter xxii. Eliphaz answers for the last time. The first few verses give the gist of all their addresses to Job. First in irony he says "Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous? or is it gain to him, that thou makest thy ways perfect? Will he reprove thee for fear of thee? Will he enter with thee into judgment?" He shews it is altogether different: "Is not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities infinite? For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing.

Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink, and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry. . . . . Thou hast sent widows away empty; and the arms of the fatherless have been broken. Therefore snares are round about thee, and sudden fear troubleth thee." Grave charges these, and false, we fear. Job does not notice the accusations.

Other parts of this address are very fine: "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee. Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart. If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles." (Verses 21–23.)

In chapters xxiii. and xxiv. Job replies. He laments that he cannot find God, but still is self-righteous. Could he find God, "There the righteous might dispute with him: so should I be delivered for ever from my judge."

Verse 10 is very remarkable. It seems indeed a true prophecy. "He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." It would have been good for Job had he seen that it was God who was trying him, to shew what was in his heart and his nature.

Again Job argues that he could not be judged by outward circumstances, for sometimes the wicked prospered, at least for a time. He closes with "If it be not so now, who will make me a liar, and make my speech nothing worth?"

This is indeed true as to the wicked. God often permits a wicked man to prosper, but even his wealth is a snare to him: as we read in the New Testament, that it is easier for a camel to go

through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. He has the more to give up, and he, the same as the poorest man must come as empty and undone to a salvation which God has provided for the lost and ruined. The poor have the gospel preached to them; the rich—who will not count themselves poor—are sent empty away. May it not be so with any of us!

OBSOLETE WORDS AND MEANINGS OF WORDS IN SCRIPTURE.

Daysman. 'Arbitrator.' Probably from one who appoints the *day* on which a cause shall be heard.

Decently. 'Becomingly.' From the Latin *decet, decentis*, it is becoming.

Delicate. 'That which allures by delighting.'

Delicates, Jeremiah li. 34. 'Delicacies.'

Delicately, 1 Samuel xv. 32. We suppose the translators meant 'delightedly.' Coverdale had 'tenderly;' Ed. of 1608, 'pleasantly.' Agag came gaily, supposing his life was going to be spared.

Demand. Like the French *demander*, to ask simply, not always to ask with authority.

Denounce, Deuteronomy xxx. 18. In the sense of 'announce.' From the Latin *denunciare*, to announce, give notice, &c.

Desire, 2 Chronicles xxi. 20. In the sense of 'regret.' From a secondary sense of the Latin *desiderare*, to miss, feel the want of, regret.

Despite, 'done despite,' Hebrews x. 29. From the Latin *despicere*, to despise, treat with contempt.

Discipline, Job xxxvi. 10. In its literal meaning, 'instruction.' From the Latin *disciplina*.

Dispensation. In the sense of 'administration.' From the Latin *dispensare*, to weigh out, distribute.

Disposition, Acts vii. 53. From the Latin *disponere*, to place out, arrange.

Divers. Not in the sense of 'several' merely, but 'different.' From the Latin *diversus*, turned different ways.

Doctor. In its literal meaning, 'a teacher.' From the Latin *docere*, to teach.

Dote. Literally 'to be silly;' from the Dutch *doten*. So in Jeremiah l. 36, 'They shall be foolish.' In Ezekiel xxiii. 5, 7, 9, 16, 20, 'excessively, unreasonably, foolishly fond of her lovers.' In 1 Timothy vi. 4, 'unreasonably engaged with, sick after.'

Ear, to, Genesis xlv. 6; Exodus xxxiv. 21; Deut. xxi. 4; 1 Sam. viii. 12; Isa. xxx. 24. To till or plough. Probably from the Latin *arare*, to plough.

Edify. In its literal meaning 'to build up.' From the Latin *ædificare*, to erect a building.

Either, Lev. x. 1; 2 Chron xviii. 9; John xix. 13; Rev. xxii. 2. In the sense of 'both of two,' and not in the common sense of '*one* of two.'

Emerods. Now written 'hemorrhoids.'

Emulation, Rom. xi. 14; Gal. v. 20. Simply striving to exceed, either in a good or bad sense.

Enabled, 1 Tim. i. 12. In the sense of 'made me able' or 'strengthened me.'

Endamage, Ezra iv. 13. Same as 'damage.' From the French *endommager*.

Engine. Simply as an ingenious contrivance. From the Latin *ingenium*, skill.

Ensample. Same as 'example.' Literally 'to take one out as *a sample*;' mostly in a good sense, one to be followed; but in 1 Cor. x. 11, as samples to be *avoided*.

Ensue, 1 Peter iii. 11. To follow after. From the French *ensuivre*.

Eschew, Job i. 1; ii. 3; 1 Pet. iii. 11. To shy at or shun. From old French *eschever*.

Estate, Jude 6. In its literal sense of 'standing.' From the Latin *status*.

Evilfavouredness, Deut. xvii. 1. 'Evil thing' or that which favours of evil.

Excellent, Psalm cl. 2. In the sense of 'abundant.'

Express, Hebrews i. 3. Literally 'pressed out,' exactly represented. 'Express image,' that is, 'exact expression.'

Eye-service, Eph. vi. 6; Col. iii. 22. This is a literal translation of the Greek 'eye' and 'service.' In both places it is followed with 'as men-pleasers.' It is mostly interpreted as 'doing service only under the master's eye,' but the words 'as men-pleasers' seem to imply a service that simply satisfies the master's eye, instead of, as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.

Familiar spirit. Probably from the Latin *famulus*, a slave or servant who stood by to do what was bid.

Fain, Job xxvii. 22; Luke xv. 16. 'Gladly.' From the Anglo-Saxon *fægen*, joyful.

Faithless. In its literal meaning, 'without faith,' unbelieving.

Fat, Joel ii. 24; iii. 13. Now written 'vat.'

Fashion. The *make* or pattern of a thing, not necessarily the prevailing style. From the Latin *facere*, to make.

Favoured, well-favoured, ill-favoured. In the sense of having a good or bad appearance. From the French *faveur*, face, countenance.

Fervent, 2 Peter iii. 10, 11. In its literal meaning of 'burning.'

Fitches. Now written 'vetches.'

Flag. Used in the sense of 'weed.'

Footmen. In the sense of 'foot-soldiers.'

Furniture, Genesis xxxi. 34. In the sense of 'equipage.'

Gallant, Isa. xxxiii. 21. From the French *galant*, splendid, great.

Gin. A contraction of *engine*, an ingenious contrivance: hence, for an evil purpose, a trap to ensnare the unwary.

Glede, Deut. xiv. 13. From Anglo-Saxon *glida*, a rapacious bird.

Glistering. Same as glistening.

Go to. An interjection, as we say, 'Come now.'

Good, 1 Chron. xxix. 3; 1 John iii. 17. In the sense of 'goods,' 'substance.'

Goodman. From Anglo-Saxon *gummann*, *guma*, a man. 'The man or master of the house.'

Graff. Same as graft.

Greaves, 1 Sam. xvii. 6. From old French *grève*, the shin-bone; armour for the legs.

Grisled. Gray coloured. From the French *gris*, gray.

Grudge, Psa. lix. 15. In the sense of 'grumble,' or 'murmur.'

TARSHISH.

MR. EDITOR,

I have somewhere seen or heard it said that there is a probability that by Tarshish, in scripture, a reference is made to England. Is this so? or can it be said with any degree of certainty as to what land is alluded to? The "ships of Tarshish" would, I suppose, naturally point out some maritime country. C. R.

The first mention of Tarshish is in Genesis x. 4, as one of the grandsons of Japheth; and at the end of the list of Japheth's descendants we read, "By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations."

"The isles of the Gentiles" are generally referred to the islands and projecting lands on the north of the Mediterranean Sea, reaching from Spain to the Black Sea; and the natural question is, whether any one of these isles is called after the grandson of Japheth—Tarshish? and if so, does

that locality agree with the various things relating to Tarshish in scripture?

The nearest approach to the name has been found in Tartessus, at the mouth of the river Guadalquivir in the south of Spain, near the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea. At first sight the two names appear materially different, but they are declared by scholars to be the same: Tartessus being the Aramaic form of Tarshish. This is shewn by the changes in common words: for instance, the Hebrew name Bashan is Bathan in Aramaic, and Batanaia in Greek; the Hebrew *sheleg*, snow, is *telag* in Aramaic. As to the end of the word, the Greek language has no *sh*, and would substitute *ss* if the Greek had anything to do with the name.

It is certain from the writings of the ancients that Spain produced the four things named in Ezekiel xxvii. 12, as being brought from Tarshish: silver, iron, tin, and lead, so that Tartessus would suit thus far.

But there are two other passages that speak of "gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks." (1 Kings x. 22; 2 Chron. ix. 21.) Tartessus would not do for these; so that some have supposed that there were *two* places called Tarshish; one in Spain, and another in India, from the latter of which all the above things could be obtained.

What would seem to confirm there being two places with this name, is a passage in 2 Chronicles xx. 36, 37, which says that ships were built at Ezion-gaber to go to Tarshish. Ezion-gaber is declared to be "beside Eloth, on the shores of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom." (1 Kings ix. 26.)

Now building ships on the banks of the Red Sea would be the most direct course for reaching

India from Palestine; whereas it would not do at all to reach Spain. For this the ships would be built on the Mediterranean.

Neither can we confine Tarshish to a place in India *only*. Take, for instance, Jonah: he embarked at Joppa in a ship going to Tarshish. This would not point to India, but most probably to some place in or near to the Mediterranean Sea.

Some get over the difficulty by supposing that there was but one place, namely in Spain, and that the other passages do not mean that the ships built at Ezion-geber were going *to* Tarshish, but that they were ships *of* Tarshish; that is, large ships; in a similar way to our calling large ships East Indiamen, though many of them never went to India. There is one passage at least that seems to confirm this: "Jehoshaphat made ships of Tarshish to go to Ophir for gold; but they went not; for their ships were broken at Ezion-geber." Here the ships were *of* Tarshish (either in size, or manner of build) and yet went *to* Ophir for gold; but were wrecked at Ezion-geber on the Red Sea.

This explanation would do for 1 Kings x. 22, where it is "the navy of Tarshish," which might mean that the navy went to and from Tarshish, or that the ships were of some particular sort described as "of Tarshish." But in the corresponding passage in 2 Chronicles ix. 21, it distinctly says these "*went* to Tarshish;" and in chapter xx. 36, 37, other ships were made on the Red Sea "*to go to* Tarshish," but the Lord interposed, "and the ships were broken, that they were not able to go to Tarshish."

Now those who hold to there being but one Tarshish, and that in Spain, are driven to the conclusion that the above passages (which speak of

ships on the Red Sea going to Tarshish) are mistakes! They are called paraphrases of the passages in Kings, and the writer is supposed to have mistaken the meaning of "ships of Tarshish," and said that they were made to go there, when all that was meant was that they were large ships, as we used to speak of East Indiamen.

This of course cannot be conceded. We cannot allow of such mistakes in the word of God. It is far better to suppose two places called Tarshish. The place where the ships were made, what the ships went for, and the period of three years they took to complete a journey, prevent the place in India being confounded with the one in Spain.

Now all this will help us to answer the question asked as to England. In the first place, there is no resemblance in the name of Tarshish to any of the names given to England.

As to the ships built on the Red Sea, England is also quite out of the question; if there is any reference to our land, it must be to the ships on the Mediterranean.

The four articles mentioned—silver, iron, lead and tin—*may* do for England. There is evidence that the Phœnicians traded with Britain for *tin* long before the Christian era; but it is a question whether silver or iron were found here so early.

Again, it is not very probable that Jonah would embark for so long a journey as from Joppa to Britain *as a passenger;* it is one thing to go from place to place for trade, and quite another to go without such an inducement. He fled from the presence of the Lord, it is true; but what notions he had as to how to accomplish this, is not known.

But there are other passages that may help us. Take, for instance, the destruction of Tyre, and the

effect it had on Tarshish. Thus we read, "Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; for it [Tyre] is laid waste. . . . . As at the report concerning Egypt, so shall they be sorely pained at the report of Tyre. Pass ye over to Tarshish; howl, ye inhabitants of the isle." (Isaiah xxiii.)

Now is it at all probable that England would be thus affected by the fall of Tyre? Was it thus affected by the fall of Egypt? The fall of Tyre should have a similar effect to the fall of Egypt. We are now taking the prophecy to refer to the destruction of the city of Tyre in the past; for it was doubtless a prophecy of that event, although it may *also* reach on to the end in another sense.

The time mentioned is a difficulty—namely, seventy years; but verse 15 does not say that Tyre shall be *destroyed* for seventy years, but it shall be *forgotten* seventy years; and this may imply no more than that it should be brought from the high position it once held with its own king, and remain in obscurity and surveillance for the period named. And this would not at all interfere with its after destruction, which is also foretold; "never shalt thou be any more." (Eze. xxviii. 19.)

Its being forgotten for seventy years may come in under the land being subject to the king of Babylon for that period, as foretold by Jeremiah (xxiv. 11): "And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years;" though some cities were actually taken earlier, and some later.

In the attack on Tyre is the expression "Pass ye over to Tarshish." Now Tartessus is said to have been colonised from Tyre, as were places in the Mediterranean Sea; and it is recorded that when

the people of Tyre found further resistance was hopeless they gathered up their riches, embarked on board their ships, and retired to their colonies.

And this exactly agrees with some of the people passing over to Tarshish. But we cannot suppose that they thus passed over to England.

We doubt not that in some of the prophecies Tyre is used as typical of the glory of the world that is to be brought low, and in the same sense Tarshish and the ships of Tarshish may be used as typical of maritime glory, without referring to any particular country. Thus in Isaiah lx. we read that when God is blessing His people in their land the ships of Tarshish shall be first to bring their sons from far; their silver and their gold with them. (Verse 9.) "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents . . . . all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him."

Again, in a prophecy that takes up the judgments that are to introduce the millennium, we have this remarkable passage: "I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles." (Isa. lxvi. 19.) Now all the names here associated with Tarshish were placed around the Mediterranean Sea; would not, therefore, Tarshish also be in the same locality? and would they not all be used here as typical of any far-off places that had not heard of the fame of the Lord?

On the whole, we do not see any passages that point to England by any similar name nor to a country that agrees both by distance and direction with our country. Where maritime countries are

typically alluded to in a general way, then doubtless England would hold a prominent place among them.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

In the April issue of your magazine, I noticed a letter from a Librarian (J. B. R.) and also your remarks in answer to the same. It is my intention now to enquire as to the nature of the books that should comprise the library.

Several here, with myself, have had our minds exercised of late about this. Our library consists of over 180 books, and to give you an idea of them I will enclose a catalogue. Do you at all think it wrong to have what is generally known as (Religious) tale books—those calculated to interest the children, at the same time conveying some truth (in some cases the gospel) to their young minds?

My attention was drawn to this particularly when reading an article which appeared in the March number of "Things New and Old," on "What should I read?" which of course applied to Christians; but the question arose in my mind, Does the same principle hold good to the children? If so, what about many of the books in our libraries? Are they suitable ones to put into the hands of the children? It is evident there are too few published amongst ourselves (books we rely on) to comprise a library of any size, and we seem compelled to resort to others.

I have spoken to several brother Librarians and they consider the subject an important one, and this makes me more free to ask your permission to have the subject investigated. EBENEZER.

NOTES ON SCRIPTURE.

MATTHEW XIX.

VERSES 1, 2. Our Lord departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judæa beyond Jordan; and great multitudes followed, and He healed them. The word translated 'coasts' merely signifies 'borders' or 'confines.' There He continued His blessed work of healing their sicknesses.

Verses 3–12. The Pharisees ask if it is lawful for a man to put away his wife "for every cause." We can easily understand how this would be a *social* question among the Jews, but what does it mean by the statement that the Pharisees, in asking the question, were *tempting* our Lord?

It may be that our Lord, though he had left Galilee, had gone into the borders of Judæa, on the east of Jordan, and thus was in Perea, which belonged with Galilee to the jurisdiction of Herod Antipas; and this king having disgraced his wife, and married the wife of his half-brother, it was a very delicate question to raise in his dominions. The Pharisees may have thought that as the question of this marriage had been the death of John the Baptist, so an adverse judgment from our Lord might have been interpreted as an attack upon Herod, and if coming to his ears, and to the infamous Herodias, they might accomplish the death of our Lord also.

If so, our Lord entirely avoided the snare, by referring them to scripture, "Have ye not *read?*" The scripture would answer their question: would they find fault with that?

Or, the Pharisees may have had in their mind the damaging of our Lord in the eyes of His

followers, knowing how popular an easy divorce was with all the people.

This is brought out in the reply of the disciples themselves: "If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry." This clearly shews how strong a hold the practice of easy divorce had upon the best in Israel.

It had been a disputed point among two of the schools of the Jews as to whether a divorce could be carried out for every cause or not; but our Lord does not even refer to them, nor indeed to the law as given by Moses; but He goes at once to God's institution of marriage "at the beginning." God had made them male and female; and in marriage the *two* were one flesh; "what therefore *God* hath joined together, let not *man* put asunder."

They then asked why Moses commanded them to give a writing of divorcement and put away the wife.

Our Lord's reply is very pointed. He does not refer to the Jews in the days of Moses, but says, "Moses, because of the hardness of *your* hearts, suffered you to put away your wives." Notice the Pharisees say, Moses *commanded* them; but our Lord says he *suffered* them to do it, and this only because of the hardness of their hearts.

It has been held by some, that our Lord meant to imply that the law did *not* give such a command, but only that Moses permitted it, because of their hardness of heart. But on comparing the present passage with the corresponding one in Mark x. we think this cannot be pressed. In verse 3, our Lord there asks, "What did Moses *command* you?" using the same word as the Pharisees employ here. And the Pharisees reply, "Moses *suffered* to write

a bill of divorcement;" using the same word that our Lord uses here. And our Lord replies, "For the hardness of your heart He wrote you this precept" (or commandment—a kindred word to that in verse 3). There is this apparent difference between the passage in Matthew and the one in Mark, that in Matthew the words occur 'for every cause,' which are omitted in Mark; but in Mark the question appears quite as wide: "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?" And in both places the reference to the same direction of Moses is given, "to write a bill of divorcement and put her away."

There can be no doubt therefore that Moses gave such a command. (Deut. xxiv. 1.) Still it was a permission as to what they might do. But this is another remarkable instance of the impossibility of the law being "a transcript of the divine mind," as taught by theologians, nor is it a sufficient rule for a Christian under the present dispensation. Our Lord had to skip over the law to what was at the beginning to shew what God's mind was as to marriage.

There was only one case in which a man could put away his wife, namely, for fornication; and then the bond had been already broken by the wife.

This draws forth the remark of the astonished disciples already referred to, that if God's law was so strict, it was not good to marry; shewing how even God's favoured people had fallen below the requirements of God in such a matter, and which had not yet been recovered by those associated with our Lord. If it was thus in the green tree, what should it be in the dry?

Verse 11 presents a difficulty, inasmuch as it

seems to excuse the disciples: "All men cannot receive this saying, save those to whom it is given:" whereas it is required now in every country called christian, and required of those who make no profession of being Christians. It has become the common law of the various countries. Why be so strict now, it may be asked, if it was an exceptionable thing in the days of the apostles, and only given to some?

It is quite clear from scripture that God *requires* more now than He did. We read of a time when God winked at man's ignorance, but now God commandeth all men everywhere to repent. (Acts xvii. 30.) And as to the disciples of the Lord, when He quoted various things the law had said, He added, "But *I* say unto you" things far beyond. (Matt. v.)

On the other hand; although on the subject of marriage, God calls us back to His institution at the beginning, christian countries have relaxed the rule here laid down, and grant divorces for other causes besides unfaithfulness. And it is a fact that many do not attain to that which God requires, as testified by our law courts, and it is well-known that many more cases occur besides those which are made public.

In the reference to eunuchs, the last clause is thought to refer to those who abstain from marriage, as Paul, for the kingdom of heaven's sake—because of the words, "he that is able to receive it, let him receive it."

EXAMPLES OF SCRIPTURE LESSONS.

No 7. The Life of Christ (*continued*).

In our last we briefly glanced at the beginning of the sacred history of our Lord down here, and then dwelt a little on the meaning of the "name which is above every name." We shall now take, in consecutive order, the various details given of that history, still praying that we may be guided in all our thoughts and words.

In bringing this subject before their scholars, teachers should lay stress upon the following points:—

1. *The importance of the birth of Christ.*—Of all the wonderful events that had happened, from the beginning of creation down to that time, none were so important as this. For God to make the world, and take an interest in the creatures of His own hand, even when those creatures had sinned against Him, was wonderful indeed; for Him to bear with all the hatred and enmity of man, whom He created for His own glory, and whom He might as easily have consigned in a moment to eternal punishment; for Him to continue to supply that same sinful man with health, food, and raiment, was indeed wonderful; but for Him to send His own Son down here to dwell in a human body—"God manifest in flesh"—in order that He might give an expression of His love, and carry out all His purposes of blessing, and plans for their salvation. This was indeed the wonder of wonders.

"O 'twas love, 'twas boundless love!"

2. *It had been predicted* from the very first, by God Himself, and many of His prophets, and

there were those alive at the time, who were looking for the One who had been so fully set forth as the coming deliverer of His people. (See Matt. i. 4, 5; Luke ii. 25, 26, 28.) The place of His birth was also predicted (Micah v. 2), and other places connected with it. (Matt. ii. 15, 17, 18, 23.) It would be well here to refer to the genealogies in Matthew and Luke, noticing that the former traces him from Abraham, as connected with the Jews; while the latter goes back to Adam and to God.

3. *Its necessity.*—Here the teachers may explain the utter ruin and helplessness of man through sin, and that unless Christ had come as Son of man, to take our guilt, and suffer the punishment due to sinners, not one could ever have escaped the dreadful consequences, and must have perished eternally. It was absolutely necessary that Jesus the Son of God should be down here to work out, by His death, the plan of salvation by which alone God could save a single soul. He was the "Seed" of the woman who alone could "bruise" the serpent's head. He was the one offering to which all the sacrifices and offerings had pointed. "The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

4. *His lowly birth.* Explain the custom of taxing which existed at that time, and the necessity for Joseph and Mary to go to their own town to be taxed once a year, and that on this occasion the place was so full as to necessitate their lodging in a stable, where Jesus was born, and laid in a manger. What a wonderful sight! The Son of God, lying as a little babe in a common manger, in a common stable! (Luke ii. 7.)

5. *The angel appearing to the shepherds.* (Luke

ii. 8–16.) This is such an interesting portion, that the teachers can hardly fail to gain the scholars' attention. There is something so exceedingly simple and divinely beautiful, that whenever we read it we find ourselves transported in spirit, and almost hear the music of that song, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." "Glory to God" found its fullest expression in *Him*, as did also "peace, goodwill toward men."

6. *Herod's massacre!* What a contrast between this and the previous scene! Here, instead of "Glory to God," and "peace, goodwill toward men," we have Herod, who thought so much of his own glory, that he could slaughter hundreds of precious little ones in order to try and keep it: causing "great lamentation, weeping, and mourning." However, the object of his jealousy and hatred was preserved by God, while he himself died in a few short months, a million times worse off than the youngest and poorest of those dear little infants he had ordered to be slain. "The glory of man" is "as the flower of the grass" that withereth.

A good deal of additional matter may be gained by comparing the birth of Christ with that of Moses, John the Baptist, and others, each of them possessing some features of similarity and contrast, which serve to bring out more clearly the incomparable beauty and perfection of that blessed One.

We would again urge upon teachers the importance of laying before their scholars, as they go along, those scriptures which bear more particularly upon the divinity of Christ. The enemy seems to be summoning all his forces to this one point just now. Since we wrote our last paper we have

heard it publicly stated that Christ was not a divine Person at all, and in such terms as we would rather not commit to paper.

May the good Lord keep our dear scholars from such an awful soul-destroying delusion.

NOTES OF LESSONS FOR A BIBLE CLASS.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

Chapters xxv.—xxxi.

In chapter xxv. Bildad makes his last speech. He now approaches to the truth that no one is really clean in God's sight; but omits altogether what God does by His grace. "How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman? Behold even to the moon and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight: how much less man, that is a worm? and the son of man, that is a worm?" All true as to man in nature, but it omits what God does for a man in grace.

What is meant by "Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not?"

The whole passage is as to what man is in God's sight, and to illustrate this the speaker refers to the moon and stars, and if we read the two sentences as one, it would seem to mean that even the moon, which is so bright and pure to our sight, is not brilliant in God's sight, nor are the stars pure.

In the following chapters (xxvi.–xxxi.) Job makes a very lengthy, but final, reply to his three friends. He first declares that his friends have been no help to him. Then he speaks of God in

creation, ending with, "Lo, these are parts of his ways: but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can understand?" (Chap. xxvi. 14.)

In chapter xxvii. Job again complains of God, and declares his own righteousness. "As God liveth, who hath taken away my judgment; and the Almighty, who hath vexed my soul; all the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils, my lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit . . . . my righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live." (Verses 2–6.) Alas, for poor Job! he is as far off as ever as to what his nature is in God's sight; and he understands not God's dealings with him.

After speaking of his own righteousness, he again refers to the lot of the wicked. But in chapter xxviii. his thoughts take a higher range. He is conscious that there is a wisdom higher than anything that he has yet attained to: and although men have dug in the earth and found the precious and useful metals as well as the hidden stones, yet he concludes that, "There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen: the lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it." (Verses 7, 8.)

"I have heard this passage applied to church matters—such as meeting simply in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ—is that right? Its connection here seems to be as to men searching in the earth."

That *is* the immediate connection here; but it may be applied to any path God has provided which is beyond the scrutiny of man by himself. The vulture's sight is exceedingly strong, and yet

there is a secret path which that sight cannot discover, and the prowling lions pass it by. We must not separate this from what follows as to the value of the wisdom of God, and then notice this sentence (verse 23), "God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof." We must look at what he says of wisdom. It is very beautiful. Read verses 12–19.

"Where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof, neither is it found in the land of the living. The depth saith, It is not in me: and the sea saith, It is not with me. It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire. The gold and the crystal cannot equal it: and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold. No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls: for the price of wisdom is above rubies. The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold."

Then Job asks where then is it to be found, and answers, as we have seen, that God knows, and he declares that God's message to man is, "Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom: and to depart from evil, that is understanding."

In chapter xxix. Job refers back to his days of ease and prosperity, and then bemoans his present condition. He also answers more in detail the charges of his friends, and declares that every one did him homage, and the poor blessed him because of his care and consideration for them. He sat as chief among his neighbours. But his self-complacency is visible: "I put on righteousness, and it

clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem."

What is meant by, "I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil?"

It is a figurative expression to shew his great prosperity. We read of a land *flowing* with milk and honey, and the butter of the ancients is believed to be a sort of curdled milk rather than stiff butter as with us. In Deuteronomy xxxiii. 24, we read, "let him dip his feet in oil;" and in Job xx. 17, we also read of "brooks of honey and butter."

Chapter xxx. is a deep lamentation by Job, because all his prosperity is now turned into distress and grief. Because God had afflicted him, his friends had turned against him. "And now I am their song; yea, I am their byword. They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face." At the close of the chapter he says, "I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls. My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat." We must remember that all these speeches of Job and his friends were in poetry, which may account for the figurative language introduced, and which is common to this day in the East.

In chapter xxxi. Job at some length again declares his own integrity. But again his self-complacency and his self-righteousness is manifest. Read verse 6.

"Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity."

He then goes into many details as to his dealings with his servants, with the poor, and with mankind generally, expressing a wish that if in any case he had not acted in righteousness and the fullest integrity, might he be duly punished for

the same. He then declared that his words were ended.

It is very sad to see such a man as Job making such mistakes; but it is full of instruction for us. God was teaching him an important lesson, as we hope to see in the sequel; but Job, though he said at first, when the calamities came, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord;" yet when days and nights of pain and weariness followed, all became darkness: he saw not what he was in his nature, but made out himself to be more righteous than God. All of us who are believers in the Lord Jesus, will also have to be disciplined by God that we may be taught at least two important things among others: one, what we are in ourselves; and then what God is for us in Christ Jesus. It is very blessed to be a scholar in the school of God; but we must not forget that God also often speaks to the unbeliever in His providence, to turn their thoughts to Himself, besides the message of His grace that so many are constantly hearing. Remember it is God's message to man, and so to all and to each.

THE WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

BEWARE of using the *words* of scripture merely, without its meaning. We may resort to the *application* of scripture of course, but how shall we know how to apply it unless we first *interpret* it? Let us then always seek first its interpretation, with the connection in which God has used it; and the clearer we get this, the better we shall be able to apply it. It is better too to *state* the interpretation first—briefly if you please—but state it as God's

use of the passage; and then shew that it is right to apply it otherwise. If this is not done, scripture loses much of its power. An inquirer may go to the Bible afterwards, and find the passage used in quite a different sense or connection *there*, and be stumbled thereby. We must not use scripture as mere pegs upon which to hang our lessons, if we expect power and blessing to attend them. Every word of God is for our profit and use; but only in God's way. If I want to use a passage in a sense that would be destroyed by first giving its interpretation, be sure it is not a legitimate application of it. Nothing is to be lost, but much to be gained, by taking God's meaning along with God's words.

NOTES OF A SUNDAY-SCHOOL ADDRESS.*

TEXT.—JEREMIAH VIII. 22.

THERE was once a people who were spiritually sick and dying. While there existed in their midst a remedy and a physician, they neglected to apply for the one, and despised the other. This causes God, by the mouth of His prophet to ask this important question, "Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no Physician there? why then is not the health of my . . . . people recovered?"

The remedy, known as the balm of Gilead, was very valuable, and was procured from a tree called the Balsam, which had to be pierced, then the

* A Sunday-school address should contain the gospel, and be short, plain, and pointed. A sketch of such an address occasionally may contain useful hints, without any intention of the address being copied.—ED.

balm flowed forth; reminding us of the Lord Jesus Christ, who was pierced by the soldier's spear, and from whose side the life-giving blood flowed forth—God's remedy for sin.

The question asked by the prophet Jeremiah of the people of Israel, is the one I wish to speak to you upon this afternoon. There are three things in our text, I shall notice. The *Disease;* the *Remedy;* and the *Physician.*

The DISEASE is sin. Now sin is doing my own will or anything which is not according to the mind of God. Let us mark a few things about the disease. The *source* or spring of it is the human heart: "out of the heart proceeds evil thoughts," &c. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."

Sin is *universal;* that is, we find it everywhere. It is not confined to one part of the world, or to a few persons. Quite true, some are greater sinners than others, but it is equally true that "*all* have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Our first parents disobeyed God in the garden of Eden; their first son was a murderer, and all their children down to this day have sinned, and "so death passed upon *all* men, for that *all* men have sinned."

Sin is *infectious*; that is, it is communicated from one to another. [The fear of catching smallpox, fevers, &c., from others, may be referred to as an illustration.] You learn sin from one another: "one sinner destroyeth much good;" "a little leaven leaveneth the whole;" "evil communications corrupt good manners." You soon learn naughty ways, and go on from bad to worse. That bad boy who said that bad word the other day, and thought nothing of it, once shuddered when he

heard *another* boy say the same; and so it is of wicked actions. When it was told a certain man, that when he became king he would do some terrible things, he said, 'Am I a *dog*, that I should do them?' But soon after we find he did those very things. Be careful of the beginnings. "My son," my daughter, "if sinners entice thee, consent thou not."

Sin is *dangerous*. You all know what that means. You would not go on the ice, if you were not sure it would bear—it would be dangerous. You would not go near a wild beast, if it could get at you—it would be dangerous. May you act in the same manner in regard to sin. "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil; avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away." "Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death;" and after death cometh the judgment: for every *idle* word which shall pass your lips, as well as for wicked words spoken, and evil deeds committed, you will have to give account to God. I hope I have made the *disease* of sin clear to you, as being *universal*, *infectious*, and *dangerous*.

Now we will notice the REMEDY. "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, *cleanseth from all sin*." Jesus left the bright heavens above, and came down to earth, and lived down here for thirty-three years, but He did not come simply to live, but to *die*—to shed His precious blood, as the Lamb of God, who should bear away the sin of the world, and the sins of those who put their trust in Him. He came to open up a fountain for the cure of sin and all uncleanness; in short, to be the Remedy for the disease.

We noticed that the disease had its source in the heart of man; so we observe, now, that the remedy

had its source in the heart of God. The remedy is His: it is made ours by faith, God's gift, through grace. So that, as the disease is all our own, so the Remedy is all His own.

We notice now, that the remedy is *free*. "Ho, every one that thirsteth," &c. (Isa. lv. 1, 2.) Jesus says, "Come unto Me, and I will *give* you rest." "I *give* unto my sheep eternal life." Do you thirst for wine and milk? Do you wish for rest? Would you like to have eternal life? Then take them as gifts. Mark, you can have them in no other way. God is a great giver. Jesus says, "I will *give* to him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life *freely*."

Note again the Remedy is *ready* at hand, "Say not, Who shall ascend into heaven," &c. (Rom. x. 6—10.) You see the remedy is ready for you, Receive it, and be cleansed of your disease. So sure as you are suffering from the disease of sin, so sure is the remedy intended for you.

There was once a ship that had drifted about by storms, and had been delayed so long that there was no water left on board; as a consequence the people on the ship were dying from thirst. While in this condition another vessel approached, which they hailed; and after making known their distress, the answer came back, "You are now in a fresh water river, dip it up, and drink!" There they were dying, and the remedy so near. Oh, that this may not be the case with any one of you! but drink ye, every one, of the Living Water, and live for ever.

Now a few words about the PHYSICIAN. Who was it said, "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick"? The Lord Jesus Christ! Yes. Now I hope I have made it

plain, that you are sick, that you need a physician. If not, just look at Isaiah i. 5, 6; see a photograph of God's taking; see yourself there: may you be enabled to say "that's me;" like an old negro I once heard of, who was listening to some one reading the parable of the Pharisee and publican in Luke xviii., but got no comfort from the prayer of the Pharisee; however, when he heard that the publican "stood afar off," he exclaimed "That's me." "Would not lift so much as his eyes to heaven"—"That's me," he again cried out. "But smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner"—"That's me, that's my prayer." So he prayed, and God had mercy upon him too, and he went away a saved and happy man.

Can you answer to the description in Isaiah? Then go at once to the Good, the Great Physician, who will undertake to cure you. Don't try any others any longer; they cannot cure you. But Jesus can—go at once to Him; trust yourself in His hands. He has all the good qualities of a Physician; He knows the case thoroughly. He is skilful; He is kind. He loves his patients; He charges no fee, so that the poor can apply to Him as freely as the rich. He has no cases that are too hard; He invites the worst; He says, "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out." He came to seek and to save the *lost*. When down here He healed all kinds of diseases, and He is the same to-day. Won't you come to Him? And come *now*. Do not delay, the disease will only increase. No longer thirst, while water is near. No longer hunger while there is food in abundance. No longer suffer from the dreadful disease of sin, for the Great Physician *now* is *near*—the sympathising Jesus.

G. A. S.

A SUPERINTENDENT'S LETTER TO HIS TEACHERS.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

I enclose you a copy of a letter I have just written to my teachers, and as there are one or two points in it which I think might be useful to other workers among the young, I shall be glad if you will insert it in our magazine.

Yours faithfully,
In the Lord Jesus,
HOLDFAST.

"Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Revelation iii. 11.

BELOVED FELLOW-LABOURERS,

A few days ago I read an account of a large ship that was valuably laden being brought into port after a long and troublesome voyage. Her captain, with a bright and happy face, in full uniform, stood on the quarter-deck, and there received the praises and thanks that were due to him for his wise, watchful, and unceasing work during the voyage. Beloved, as I read, my thoughts turned to another scene, of which the foregoing was to my mind a vivid type, and I wish to present those thoughts to you now, for our mutual help.

I am the captain of the gospel ship, "School," a vessel heavily laden with precious, immortal souls; or in plain words, by the Lord's will and your kindness, I have the joy to be the Superintendent of our Sunday school; yet, while it is a source of joy to my heart to be thus favoured, I feel that my post is one of deep responsibility and great anxiety, and but for the Lord's goodness I should be over-

whelmed by it. I am feeling this more and more daily, and I ask you, my beloved fellow-labourers, to bear me up before the Lord by your constant prayers. I earnestly desire to bring my ship with all the crew and passengers safely into port; and surely, what I desire for myself, I earnestly desire for you also. Beloved, do not you and I want at that "coming day," to hear His *own* voice say to each one of us, "Well done!" Do we not want to receive then, from His *own* hands, a crown, so that with adoring hearts we may cast it at His feet, and thus help to crown Him, *the alone worthy One*, Lord of all?

Beloved, let us help one another; let us encourage one another in our most holy faith; let us pray daily for one another, so that we may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and then we shall not be found of Him, barren or unfruitful, but abounding in every good word and work to His praise; and I think I may add here, to my own joy and blessing as well, even now. I remember noticing in the account I referred to, that some of the passengers met in the saloon of the ship three times a day for prayer. Is there any example or lesson for us in this? I think there is; but of this I am sure, that in our case prayer and blessing are intimately connected.

Was it a little thing, think you, for that captain and his officers, *in full uniform*, to stand there safely in port, and with all that had been committed to their care brought safely home? No! But, beloved fellow-labourers, their joy was less than nothing to what our joy will be, when *we, displayed in all* HIS GLORY, shall have reached our home. Thank God! there is no question as to our reaching

home *ourselves* in safety, and in full uniform too. But what about those whom God has committed to our care? Are we faithful to our charge? Are we watching for their souls as those who must give an account, and who want to render it with joy and not with grief? I apply this principle not only to our scholars, but to ourselves as well. Are you and I, each in our own proper sphere, watching *for* and helping one another, praying for one another, and thirsting for one another's growth in grace? If so, beloved, as united, skilled (of God) officers, we shall watch, pray, and work for our scholars in such a manner, that victory shall be ours; and to use the words of another, we, as followers "of Him who came down in love and ascended up in victory," shall meet our scholars with His burning love within our hearts, and ere long shall ascend in victory with them—the trophies of His grace, like ourselves—to meet the Conqueror in the air.

One other thought as to our uniform. Are we keeping our *present* uniform clean, or in other words, Are we seeking to keep our garments unspotted from the world? Colossians iii. 2–4.

Beloved, who is sufficient for these things? I commend you to God and the word of His grace, (and I pray you to commend me,) *and unto Him* who is *able* to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever, Amen.

Yours affectionately,

In the Lord Jesus,

. . . .

EXAMPLES OF SCRIPTURE LESSONS.

VIII.—THE LIFE OF CHRIST.—*(continued.)*

We are told very little about the early life of Jesus; and there is no doubt a reason for this, though what that reason may be we do not profess to know; but it goes far to prove that those who wrote the sacred history, "wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," or else it would certainly have been more natural for them to give us a fuller account. Indeed, some seem to have thought this a defect, and have attempted to fill up the blank with traditions, even going so far as to describe miracles said to have been performed by Him when a child. All this, however, we must utterly reject, and fall back upon the assurance that the sacred record is perfect, and that its perfection is displayed in its omissions as well as in what it records.

However, what little has been written concerning those early years is very important, and will furnish teachers with much in the way of instruction for their scholars.

In Luke ii. 40, we are told "the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him." How divinely beautiful is this. Who but one, moved by the Holy Ghost, could thus speak of Him who was the perfect Son of God, as well as the child of Mary? He "grew" as a child—month by month, and year by year—the most natural and perfect development. And "waxed strong in spirit," here again we have the idea of development, "and the grace of God was upon him." What a lovely picture! Then follows the interesting account of His going with His parents to the passover feast,

and His being lost by them, and afterwards being found in the temple in the midst of the doctors. (Vers. 41–50.)

It will be an easy matter for teachers to gain the attention of the scholars here. It might have been no uncommon thing for children to be lost on such occasions as the feast of the passover, when large numbers would be brought together, and most of them strangers to each other. And all can understand how anxious the mother would be during those three days. We remember the feelings we had in our young days when we heard of any one being lost. And we remember a little circumstance which occurred, which may be of some use to teachers.

A little girl had been amusing herself by walking up and down in front of the house in which she lived, and looking out for her brothers who had gone to school, but who should be shortly coming home. As they did not come for some time, and her mother was busy in the house, she wandered further away than she had been before, and did not know her way back. Presently her mother missed her, and began to call for her, and look about in the most likely places for her, but to no purpose.

When her brothers came home they were sent out, each in a different way, but soon returned with heavy hearts and sorrowful faces, saying, they could not find her. Then they felt that she must be lost, and their tears commenced to flow. When her father came home he suggested sending for the town crier, which was at once done. After he had received a description of the little girl—her age, colour of her eyes, how she was dressed, &c., he started off in search, stopping at the corner

of each street, ringing his bell, and calling out, "Lost! lost! lost! a little girl with white frock, white hat, and blue ribbon," &c. This he continued to do until very late at night when as he was standing in a quiet street, a window was raised, and a lady called to him to come and see a little girl she had found wandering about, and had taken in, and put to bed.

The crier went in, and there was the little lost girl, fast asleep in a strange bed in a strange house. She was quickly dressed and then carried safe in the crier's arms home to those who were anxiously waiting for her. We need not describe the meeting, how the brothers laughed and cried for joy, how they kissed her, and thought she never was such a dear little sister as at that moment. But she was found, and as that little girl was our own sister, we have always felt sympathy for those who had lost one they loved.

But to return to our subject. How surprised they must have been to find Him sitting in the midst of the doctors. A child twelve years of age in the midst of so many learned and aged men. And what was He doing? "Hearing them and asking them questions." Not taking the place of teacher, but still so conducting Himself and saying such things as that all were "astonished at His understanding and answers." In verse 49 we have for a moment a glimpse of that which was hidden from those around, but which Joseph and Mary ought to have understood. Then in verse 51 we are told "he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was *subject unto them.*" Here we have *the* great example of subjection to parents, and we would again press upon teachers the great and increasing importance of bringing this to bear

upon their scholars. But our small space is filled up, and we must leave teachers to make their own application of what we have been considering, feeling certain the subject is well worth their prayerful study, and with God's blessing is calculated to counteract the evil influences to which our scholars are exposed. We hope to resume this subject next month, God willing.

NOTES OF LESSONS FOR A BIBLE CLASS.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

Chapters xxxii.—xxxvii.

We come now to an interesting part in the history of Job. Chapter xxxii. tells us that Job's friends ceased to answer him, "because he was righteous in his own eyes." Then another person comes upon the scene—Elihu the Buzite. His wrath was kindled against Job, and for this solemn reason, because Job "*justified himself rather than God.*" It was also kindled against Job's friends "because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job."

He first speaks of his own diffidence because of his age: but because great men were not always wise, neither did the aged always understand, and because the inspiration (or breath) of the Almighty could give understanding, he would speak. And in speaking he would not regard any man's person, nor utter forth flattering words.

He turns to Job, and first rehearses what he had heard Job say as to his own righteousness. "I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is their iniquity in me. Behold, he findeth occasion against me, he counteth me as his enemy,

he putteth my feet in the stocks, he marketh all my paths." This is exactly the point of Job's failure, as we have already seen. While he declared his own innocence, he judged that God had dealt with him unrighteously.

Elihu turns then to speak of God's gracious dealings with man. God speaks to man in His providence; in dreams in his sleep, and in sickness, to turn his eyes from evil, and to break him down. God also has provided a remedy. Where there was an interpreter to turn man's eyes to God, then God was gracious to such, and saith, "Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom." Read xxxiii. 27, 28.

"He looked upon men; and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; he will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light."

Mark the words, If anyone said, "*I have sinned*:" for such a one there was salvation. And Elihu goes on to declare that these dealings of God with man were to bring back his soul from the pit. It was God's gracious provision for fallen man. He had provided the ransom and made it available for those who owned themselves sinners. We know now that the ransom was the Lord Jesus Christ, who died upon the cross; but in those early days there was salvation for anyone who turned to God in faith and confessed himself a sinner.

Elihu in chapter xxxiv. proceeds to justify God against the charges of Job. He repeats what Job had said, namely, "I am righteous, and God hath taken away my judgment!" Yea, he had said, "It profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself in God!" Elihu declares this is not so: "Surely God will not do wickedly, neither will

the Almighty pervert judgment." If God did not regard man that He had made, but take away his breath, man would perish and turn again to dust. But He had their good at heart, and what He did was for their advantage; and He will not lay upon man more than is right. It was man's place to bear the chastisement, and to ask God to teach him, and to open his eyes to see his iniquity if such he had done. But Job had not done this. Elihu said of him, "He addeth *rebellion* unto his sin: he clappeth his hands among us, and multiplieth his words against God."

Elihu continues his speech, "Thinkest thou this to be right, that thou saidst, My righteousness is more than God's? For thou saidst, What advantage will it be unto thee? and what profit shall I have if I be cleansed from my sin?" (Chap. xxxv. 2, 3.) Elihu would answer him. He first shews that God is so far above man that if man sins, God is not touched by it; and if man is righteous, it does not benefit God. But God *was* interested in man, and taught him more than He did the beasts or the fowls, if man would but turn his eyes to Him; and true judgment was before God, therefore man should trust in Him.

Further (chap. xxxvi.) God did not despise any, nor deal with man indiscriminately. "He preserveth not the life of the wicked; but giveth right to the poor. He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous . . . . he doth establish them for ever, and they are exalted." If He disciplines them, it is for their good, and to turn them from evil of some sort. If they listen to His voice, He blesses them; if they obey not, they are cut off without the knowledge He would have them learn. The hypocrites heap up wrath to themselves.

Man should have confidence in God, and humble himself before Him; for God is so great that we cannot fully know Him. Even in nature His works are above us. "Hearken unto this, O Job; stand still, and consider the wonderful works of God." Elihu goes through the rain and the frost, thunder and lightning, cold and sleet, and asks what really does man know about even these. He ends his speech thus: "With God is terrible majesty. Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict. Men do therefore fear him: he respecteth not any that are wise in heart."

Job had been wise in his own heart, and thus had failed altogether to discern the purpose of God in dealing with his soul, and God had not replied to him. But he has now not a word to say in answer to Elihu. We may well suppose that light had begun to dawn upon him. Elihu had unfolded the ways of God in a manner that none of Job's friends had done; and instead of a hasty reply, Job is now silent. It is well thus to get into the presence of God, and be silent. These rebellious hearts of ours are ever ready to charge God foolishly; but when He touches us, it is our wisdom to know nothing, to be nothing, to have no answer; but to be silent and listen to His teaching, though that teaching may come through one of His servants, as Elihu surely was. "Let God be true, but every man a liar." Let us all learn this, and we shall prove its value many times. For any who are not yet the Lord's, let him remember that salvation is for those that confess their sins: such are to be delivered; for God Himself has provided the ransom.

NOTES ON SCRIPTURE.

MATTHEW XIX.

VERSES 13–15. This is the well-known incident of little children being brought to Christ. The account in Matthew differs from Mark and Luke, in that it says here, the children were brought to Him that He *might pray*, as well as touch them. They desired that a blessing might be asked for them. In all three gospels the disciples are rebuked for hindering the children; but "for of such is the kingdom of heaven" is in Matthew; and "for of such is the kingdom of God" in Mark and Luke. This shews that the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God are closely connected. Indeed we find in Matthew the kingdom of heaven likened to the same parables as the kingdom of God in the other gospels.

The subject is too full to be taken up here; but it may be noticed that "the kingdom of heaven" (or rather 'of the heavens') being only found in Matthew gives it a Jewish character. The Jews had of course long recognised God, and the expression "the kingdom of God" would not convey to them the same thought as "the kingdom of the heavens," seeing they were looking for blessing on *earth*. The kingdom of God might be on earth; but this was not the great lesson before them in the gospels: a time would come when there would be a kingdom of God on the earth in the millennium; but in the meantime their eyes must be turned away from earth to heaven: to *them* it was to be the kingdom of the *heavens;* to the Gentiles, who had been without God in the world, it was the kingdom *of God*.

Of such little children that were then before the Lord, was the kingdom. Children actually formed a part of that kingdom—a strong proof, we believe, of the salvation of infants. In Mark and Luke there is also added that each and every one must become *like* little children (in simple trust and helplessness) or they cannot enter the kingdom; but that part is omitted here: we had it in chapter xviii.

Verses 16–22. A young man comes to our Lord, and asks, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"

Our Lord first asks why he calls Him good? There is none good but one—God. Did the young man recognise Him as God? If so, all was right; but if not, why call Him good? Still, if the young man wished to enter into life, he was to keep the commandments.

The question gives the key to this answer. What shall *I do?* can have no direct answer but "Keep the commandments, without entering into the question whether anyone could keep them.

There is a little difficulty in the other part of the question, "What good thing shall I do that I may have *eternal life?*" But in the answer it will be noticed that our Lord does not use the word 'eternal:' He says, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." Still the question has been asked into *what life* would a person enter by keeping the commandments? But we doubt if it goes further than the broad principle of the law: "do this *and live;*" the contrary to which is "the wages of sin is *death.*" Of course no one ever did keep the law, so that the question is merely hypothetical.

The young man asked, which commandments was he to keep?

The answer of our Lord is remarkable. He quotes five of the commandments—duties to man, and then adds, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" but says nothing of "love to God." He was evidently leading the young man to a particular point.

He replied that he had kept all those commandments from his youth: what more did he lack?

Our Lord said, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me."

"But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions."

Now it may be thought strange by some persons that our Lord—after He had stated the commandments and heard that the young man had kept them from his youth—and was then desirous of knowing what he lacked, did not present the gospel to him.

But the young man was not in a fit state to receive the gospel. He began with the question as to what could *he do*, and then followed with what he *had done*. He was evidently a self-righteous person, or he would not have said that from his youth he had loved his neighbour *as himself*. In no sense was it the case of a poor sinner inquiring the way of salvation; we have Christ's own assurance that whosoever comes to Him shall in no wise be cast out. But here was a rich young man, a ruler, as we learn from the other gospels, and one whom Jesus loved; but self-righteous, and one who when it came to the test, *went away* from the Lord, sorrowful, because he had more riches than he could give up.

Whether we understand the line our Lord took with this young man, or not, we are quite sure He took the right line, and the best for this particular case. It may not be a line intended for every one to follow in dealing with souls; but in certain cases it may be the very best line towards a self-righteous one, where God, who knows the hearts of all, is looked to for every individual case. In a general way it is quite clear that we have to preach the gospel, and to preach it to every creature; but in particular cases the law is needed, and the law is good if a man use it lawfully. (1 Tim. i. 8.)

One word must not be overlooked: the young man went away 'sorrowful.' He was apparently one who looked for something higher than the old dispensation could give him; but alas, he had such a love for his possessions that he could not give them up, even for Christ.

BOOKS FOR THE LIBRARY.

MR. EDITOR,

Your correspondent "Ebenezer" has raised an important question as to what books we should admit into our Sunday-school libraries.

I suppose no one can doubt that in the subject of books, as in everything else, the professing church has degenerated greatly during the last fifty years. We can scarcely take up a single periodical—called religious—of the present day and connected with what is called the religious world, that does not contain what would have been called in by-gone days a *novel*. Religious of course, but still in naked truth nothing more nor less than a tale of *fiction*.

Now I hope none of your readers have any doubt that they ought to set their faces like a flint against such books for their own reading. Every-one who has tried the experiment, or rather fallen into the snare, knows full well that such books do not savour of Christ, nor feed the soul. The tales, or portions of them, force themselves upon our memories in the most inopportune moments when we would be rapt in devotion and worship. No matter what religious tinge may be given to such writings, it is surely our duty to turn away from them entirely.

But, as your correspondent says, is the same rule to apply to our Sunday-school libraries? Are all such books to be excluded from our rewards and libraries?

It seems to me that there is a principle in scripture that would answer this question—namely, "thou and thy house." If I refuse all such books for myself, am I consistent in bringing them into my house for my children? I apprehend that the above principle would forbid it. I am to bring up my children in the fear and admonition of the Lord, and I do not see how I can put into *their* hands books that I could not read myself. It may be that they are not all Christians as yet, but may I not have faith that they will be? and is it seemly in me to beget in them a taste for fiction and light reading that will become a snare to them when they are converted?

Another point too is of importance, namely, that all sorts of evil doctrine is now mixed up with what is called religion; so that a religious tale may be the means of spreading evil doctrine, and that too in the most dangerous way; not by plain out-spoken statements that might be at once

detected, but by insinuations and questions that are passed over, but which leave their seed behind, to fructify and bear fruit in after days.

Now if the one point is settled that I must not bring into my house any book that I ought myself not to read as a Christian—and that not because of any crotchet of my own, but because God has linked together the Christian and his house, and because He has given me instruction to bring up my children in the fear and admonition of the Lord—then I believe I ought not to put such books into the Sunday-school library. And for this simple reason, that my own children may thus bring into my house a book, by a sort of back-door, to which I should steadily refuse admission by the front door.

And not only into my own house, but into the houses of all the saints whose children go to the Sunday school. There is not one of those houses that may not be invaded in this way by books that I believe a Christian ought to refuse. Could the teachers of a Sunday school have a greater rebuke than one of the parents — a Christian— bringing back a book, and representing that it is an unfit book to enter his christian household? The taste for light reading has become so general that such a thing as this might never happen, but we ought not to judge by what a Christian *would* do, but by what he *ought* to do if walking in communion with God and obeying His word.

Besides, if we introduce such books into the houses of Christians, are we not placing temptation into the way of the *parents?* Theb ooks are lent to the children, and intended for them, but they are often read also by the parents, and thus we should be introducing to other Christians, books

which we should repudiate as unfit and improper for ourselves to read.

There is also another point. If we take it for granted that each book of this class is intended to teach some moral lesson, or indeed, as your correspondent says, it may contain the gospel, yet is it wrapt up in a garb that God will bless? Could we indeed ask God's blessing upon it? Is *fiction* a proper medium for God's gospel or His truth to be conveyed in? Suppose a person is preaching the gospel, would it be consistent in him to *invent* stories to illustrate that gospel? to declare that such-and-such things took place with such-and-such results, when there were no such results, for such things never took place?

And if such a thing would be inconsistent in preaching, is it less so when written? Or if in the one case I could *not* ask God's blessing upon it, how can I in the other? Scripture itself puts in contrast such things: "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty." The *facts* of the gospel need not the dress of fiction.

Still the difficulty returns, What books are we to have? Supposing enough books are not to be obtained—books which can be conscientiously distributed—what is to be done? Well, we have, I trust, long since learnt that we are not to do evil that good may come. And if any think that this may not be *evil*, then we are to cease from *man* in every sense of the word. This is surely man putting his hand to the plough. From my experience in such matters, I verily believe that many of the religious tales are written by those who are

not Christians: and where they are talented writers, they unquestionably produce the most attractive tales. Are we going to circulate such books simply because they have a religious tendency as it is called, or even set forth the gospel?

I think we had better have small libraries, even at the risk of the scholars exhausting the list. Or I would suggest that, as a last resort, we should select a few small and interesting scientific books, suited for children: such as natural history, things on the sea shore, insects' homes, &c., but have inserted in each volume a short and pointed gospel tract at the beginning, and another at the end. So that each book should carry the gospel with it; and it would easily be seen that the gospel is one thing, and the scientific book another.

If any object to this latter plan, then I see no help for it but to have small libraries, at the risk of their being exhausted. I believe we ought to set our face against books of fiction, and have only such books as we would admit into our own households, and on which we can ask God's blessing wherever they may go. F. P.

MOSES' FATHER-IN-LAW.

CAN you please help us in getting to a clearer understanding as to whether Hobab was Moses' brother-in-law or father-in-law? In Numbers x. 29, Hobab is evidently spoken of as the one, and in Judges iv. 11, he is spoken of as the other. Is there scriptural reason to believe that Moses had two wives? E. W.

There would be little or no difficulty if these two portions of scripture were all that had to be con-

sidered. For while the passage in Judges calls Hobab the father-in-law of Moses, the passage in Numbers can be read either way: the words "Moses' father-in-law" may be applied either to Hobab or to Raguel. In the one case it would read as in the Authorised Version; and in the other, without transposing the words, thus: "And Moses said unto Hobab (the son of Raguel the Midianite), Moses' father-in-law," and thus all difficulty would be removed. But there are other names which must be considered.

Thus some passages clearly point out *Jethro* to be the father of Moses' wife Zipporah, and as distinctly that he was Moses' father-in-law. Thus Exodus iii. 1: "Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law;" and chapter iv. 18, "Moses returned to Jethro his father-in-law."

Further, Exodus ii. clearly calls the father of Zipporah, Reuel. (Ver. 18.) And yet only a few verses further on he is called Jethro. (Chap iii. 1.) And then in Numbers x. 29, we have these two other names, Raguel and Hobab.

Now, the name 'Raguel' of Numbers x. 29, and 'Reuel' of Exodus ii. 18, are in the Hebrew the same name. So that the matter stands thus:

Exodus ii. 18, Reuel is Moses' father-in-law.

Exodus iii. 1, Jethro is the same.

Numbers x. 29, Raguel (Reuel) or Hobab is the same; or Hobab is Moses' brother-in-law.

Judges iv. 11, Hobab is Moses' father-in-law.

So that apparently Moses' father-in-law is referred to under three different names, if no more than one person is referred to.

Various have been the efforts to meet the difficulty. One method is to suppose that Raguel (or Reuel) was Zipporah's grandfather instead of

father. This would agree with Numbers x. 29, but not well with Exodus ii. It is true that the word translated 'father' sometimes signifies 'grandfather,' and the word 'daughter' sometimes signifies 'grand-daughter;' and there was evidently a long gap between Exodus ii. and Exodus iii., to allow for Reuel the grandfather to be the head of the family in chapter ii., and on his death his son Jethro to be spoken of in chapter iii., but the account is so circumstantial that this is hardly probable. Thus we read, "Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters . . . . and when they came to Reuel their father . . . . and he said unto his daughters . . . . and Moses was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter." Now surely this implies that Reuel was their father; the whole of the passage points to this, and the grandfather would not have given his grand-daughter in marriage without any reference to her father.

Another method of reconciliation is to take Reuel (or Raguel) and Jethro as the same person under two names. This would agree with Exodus ii. and iii.; and with Numbers x. 29, by making Raguel Moses' father-in-law, and Hobab his brother-in-law; but would only agree with Judges iv. 11, by supposing that by 'father-in-law' is meant 'brother-in-law.'

The word used here for 'father-in-law' is not restricted to that meaning, but refers to almost any relation of affinity or marriage. Thus in Ezra ix. 14, it is translated "join in affinity;" and in 2 Chronicles xviii. 1, Jehoshaphat "joined affinity" with Ahab; so that it is held that the passage in Judges iv. 11, may refer to Hobab as Moses' brother-in-law, and not his 'father-in-law.'

This latter view is supposed to be supported by the thought that Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, when he came to visit Moses returned back home again (Exod. xviii. 27); but that Hobab, Moses' brother-in-law, *remained* with him and entered the land with the Israelites. Numbers x. 29–32, does not actually say that Hobab remained with Moses. Moses asked him to do so, but he said he would not; then Moses pressed him, and though it is not said whether he remained or not, it is followed by "and they departed from the Mount," as if Hobab consented. Judges i. 16; iv. 11, shew that some of the family descendants entered the land with Joshua.

On a consideration of all the passages we do not think it is probable that *two* fathers-in-law are referred to. It seems clear from Exodus ii. and iii. that Reuel (or Raguel) and Jethro are one and the same person; and if Hobab was his son, he would be Moses' brother-in-law. This would agree with all the passages except Judges iv. In Numbers x. 29, Raguel would be Moses' father-in-law, and Hobab his brother-in-law; and in Judges iv. 11, we must, instead of 'father-in-law,' read 'relative by marriage' or (as some translate) 'brother-in-law.'

It will be seen that the subject is not without its difficulties, but the above, we think, may be the solution of it.

ENCOURAGEMENT.

I AM not now engaged in the work of Sunday-school instruction. A delicate state of health prevents me; but I love the work. Some time ago I

was privileged to be a teacher of Bible class at B——. I earnestly desired the conversion of my girls, but did not *expect* fruit to my labours. I went on this way for a year or two, sometimes encouraged, sometimes depressed. One week I determined to have a special season of prayer for my class, for I was very unhappy about them, and depressed. On the following Sunday I spoke very earnestly to each girl on the subject of *her own* salvation. Soon after this circumstances called me to another part of the country, and in new scenes and new labours, my class at B—— seemed well-nigh forgotten: but I was permitted to revisit the village, and calling on a friend, she asked me if I remembered Ellen C——. I could not recall the name. She vainly endeavoured to bring the girl to my remembrance. At last she said, "Do you not recollect a fair-haired, delicate little girl, who was so fond of you because you did not give her as long lessons as you gave the others, on account of her weakness?" I suddenly remembered the child. I seemed immediately to see her fragile form, and to look into her deep blue eyes. I eagerly asked, "What of Ellen?" "She is dead," said my friend; "and the poor woman, her mother, came to me a few days ago, to ask for your address, in order that she might write to you, and thank you on Ellen's behalf; but, as I told her you were expected here soon, she said she would then thank you by word. You will be a welcome visitor to her cottage."

Ellen had been seized with consumption; and when after some time she found that her illness was likely to prove fatal, she called her father and mother to the bedside and said, "I love Jesus, and I am going to heaven, because His blood was shed

for me. O how I wish dear Miss —— was here; but mother, you must tell her I shall be in heaven; and tell her that it was the solemn words to me that Sunday afternoon when she spoke to us all so earnestly that led me to my Saviour. Tell her how I thank her; tell her how I love her."

When her mother had finished, I was overpowered by the goodness of God in using *me* as the instrument of leading a sinner to Jesus. I was painfully struck with a sense of my ingratitude to Him. I had prayed for the conversion of my scholars, but had never expected an answer, yet here God had given me a clear evidence that my labours had been blessed. How many times since that day have I, when discouraged by seeing difficulties, remembered Ellen, and been invited to greater diligence. Fellow teachers, it *is* painful to see the wandering eye, the listless look, when you are endeavouring to shew children what Jesus has done for them. But be simple and clear; let the children see you are in earnest; and be not discouraged. Teach, Sunday after Sunday, as if each were to be your last opportunity of meeting your class. Pray much for them, and teach, expecting their conversion. "Be not weary in well doing, for in due season you shall reap, *if you faint not.*"

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech by us: we pray in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God." Think of it, teachers, you are "in Christ's stead," and as such you are to *pray* and *beseech* your scholars.

EXAMPLES OF SCRIPTURE LESSONS.

IX.—THE LIFE OF CHRIST.—*continued.*

It will no doubt help some of those who desire to follow out these examples, if we give a list of the most notable events in the gospel narrative, in something like chronological order. Of course, if teachers had time to take the word and make themselves acquainted with more of its blessed details, it would be better; but we believe there are many who are so engaged during the week that they have very little time for study, and therefore we desire to help them. It is of great importance that teachers should have before their minds the whole life of Christ, in order to speak rightly upon any one part. The following brief synopsis may help to this, beginning with the ministry of John the Baptist, and ending with the ascension:—

The ministry of John the Baptist.
The baptism of Jesus.
The temptation in the wilderness.
Testimony of John the Baptist to Jesus.
The marriage in Cana of Galilee.
Driving the traders out of the temple.
Nicodemus comes to Jesus by night.
The woman of Samaria.
Healing of the nobleman's son at Capernaum.
Healing of the demoniac in the synagogue.
Healing of Peter's wife's mother.
Healing of a leper.
Healing of a paralytic.
Healing the man at the pool of Bethesda.
Healing of the withered hand on the Sabbath.
The sermon on the mount.

Healing the centurion's servant.
Raising the widow's son.
John in prison sends to Jesus.
Anointing of the feet of Jesus in the house of Simon the Pharisee.
Parable of the barren fig tree.
Parable of the sower.
Parable of the tares.
Jesus stills the tempest.
Casts out a legion of devils.
Raises the daughter of Jairus.
Heals the issue of blood.
Gives sight to two blind men.
Casts out a dumb spirit.
Feeds five thousand miraculously.
Walks on the water to the disciples.
Heals the daughter of a Syrophœnician woman.
Heals a deaf and dumb man.
Feeds the four thousand.
Heals another blind man.
The transfiguration on the mount.
Healing of a demoniac whom the disciples could not heal.
The tribute money miraculously provided.
Jesus cleanses ten lepers.
The woman taken in adultery.
Parable of the good Samaritan.
Jesus in the house of Martha and Mary.
Heals a man who was born blind.
Raising of Lazarus from the grave.
Parables of the lost sheep, piece of money, and prodigal son.
Parable of the rich man and Lazarus.
Parable of the Pharisee and publican.
Jesus receives and blesses little children.
Heals two blind men near Jericho.

Zaccheus, the chief publican.
Parable of the wicked husbandmen.
Parable of the marriage of the king's son.
The widow's two mites.
Parable of the ten virgins.
Parable of the talents.
Jesus eats the passover with His disciples.
Treachery of Judas Iscariot.
Jesus washes the disciples' feet.
Jesus comforts the disciples, and promises the Holy Spirit.
Christ the true Vine.
Teaches them to love one another as He had loved them.
The Lord's prayer for His disciples.
The agony in Gethsemane.
Jesus betrayed and made prisoner.
Peter denies Him three times.
Jesus before Caiaphas: is condemned and mocked.
He is led away to Pilate.
Pilate seeks to release Him, but the Jews demand Barabbas.
Pilate delivers up Jesus to death.
He is scourged and mocked.
Judas repents and hangs himself.
Jesus is led away to be crucified.
The Jews mock at Jesus on the cross.
Darkness prevails. Jesus expires on the cross.
The veil of the temple is rent, and the graves opened.
The taking down from the cross.
The burial and watch at the sepulchre.
The morning of the resurrection.
Visit of the women to the sepulchre.
The vision of angels in the sepulchre.

Jesus is seen by Mary Magdalene.

Report of the watch.

Jesus is seen by Peter, then by two disciples on their way to Emmaus.

Appears in the midst of the apostles twice.

The apostles go away into Galilee.

Jesus shews Himself to them at the sea of Tiberias.

Appears to the apostles and five hundred brethren.

The ascension.

The promise of His coming again.

What a wonderful history! May our dear scholars be led to know Him of whom all this is true, as their Saviour and Friend, so that when He does come again they with us may be "caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

NOTES ON SCRIPTURE.

MATTHEW XIX.

VERSES 23–26. When the rich young ruler had sorrowfully departed from Christ, He said to His disciples, "A rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven." It was so difficult that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Some have supposed that instead of the word 'camel,' it should be 'cable' (there being in Greek a difference of only one letter between the two words). This word indeed is found in a few Greek manuscripts; but they are not of any weight as compared with the authority for the word 'camel.'

It has also been supposed that a small wicket gate is alluded to as the needle. It is a fact that, by some at least, the small gates in the East are called needles' eyes. They are large enough to admit a man, but not large enough for a camel; it being certainly a difficult thing for a camel to pass, if not an impossibility. Larger gates are opened for the cattle to pass into the courts of the Eastern houses. Nevertheless one lady traveller declares it possible. "Yesterday," she writes, "I saw a camel go through the eye of a needle, that is, the low arched door of an enclosure. He must kneel and bow his head to creep through, and thus the rich man must humble himself."

There is no evidence that we are aware of, that these small gates were called 'needles' eyes' in the time of our Lord on earth, and it *may be* the name has been given to them because of this passage; we cannot help thinking that the common needle is referred to. There was a proverb among the Jews very similar. Lightfoot gives two instances: "They do not shew a palm tree of gold, nor an elephant going through the eye of a needle." Another replies to an opponent, "Perhaps thou art one of those who can make an elephant pass through the eye of a needle."

Whatever may be the particular thing referred to, the meaning is plain, that what was pointed out was an impossibility: "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible." So it was impossible, under the natural order of things for a man to prefer Christ to his riches, but all things are possible with God: He could so work upon a rich man, that he would count his riches but very vanity for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus.

The declaration of the difficulty of a rich man's entering the kingdom made the disciples exceedingly amazed. Riches and prosperity are looked at in the Old Testament as blessings from God, and so the disciples would naturally feel the difficulty until they entered into the difference of the dispensation our Lord was bringing in. It was not blessing on earth, but the kingdom of the heavens.

Verses 27–30. Peter responds, "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily, I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

This is a difficult passage for those who *spiritualise* prophecy. Our Lord said of twelve men, that they should sit upon twelve thrones, and judge the twelve tribes of Israel, when He, the Son of man, should sit on His own throne of glory. Such a thing has certainly never yet taken place on earth; can it be supposed that it could refer to heaven?

Let us notice a few points. Peter said they had left *all*. Matthew had a lucrative office, others had fishing boats, and servants—they had forsaken all. They should have an abundant recompense.

The word 'regeneration' occurs only twice in the Bible: once here, and in Titus iii. 5. The word is now commonly used to imply the new birth; but it clearly cannot have that meaning here, and in Titus it is followed by "and renewing of the Holy Ghost," which is the new birth; so that regeneration there also must mean something else. We suppose there is nothing wrong in using

the word now in the sense of the new birth; only it is well to see that it is *not* so used in scripture. In our passage it is the new order of things that Christ, as Son of man, will bring in when He sits upon His throne of glory.

Then the apostles will sit upon twelve thrones (the successor of Judas taking his place), judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Then all those tribes will be found, and gathered, to their own land. The apostles will be their judges.

Verse 29 goes out to *everyone* who has forsaken relatives or property for Christ's name's sake. They should receive an hundredfold, and inherit everlasting life. Notice, that it does not say they shall receive anything *here:* they shall have a full recompense, but the Spirit of God does not speak of its being while they remained on earth; although both in Mark and Luke, it adds the present blessing: "Ye shall receive an hundredfold now in this time," is in Mark; and "manifold more in this present time," in Luke. The eyes of the disciples in Matthew must be turned from the earth to heaven.

The rich man could not give up his riches for Christ; the disciples were led to give up all, and to them, though they thought not of recompense, it should result in eternal blessing.

Verse 30. "But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first." This is true in many respects. The Jews were first; they became the last: the Gentiles were last; they became the first. So of many, who stood first for a time, because they continued not in God's goodness, became last. Peter who had given up all for Christ, denied Him before a maid! Paul, who had been a persecutor, became not a whit behind the chiefest apostle.

NOTES OF LESSONS FOR A BIBLE CLASS.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

Chapter xxxviii.—xxxix.

CHAPTER xxxviii. begins another division of the book of Job. Jehovah Himself now addresses Job out of the whirlwind, and begins by shewing him his nothingness. God asks Job where he was when the foundations of the earth were laid, and how is it kept in its place: "Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof?" Where was Job when the sea was shut up? Had the gates of death been opened unto him, and had he seen the doors of the shadow of death? Could he tell where light dwelt, and the place of darkness? Had he entered into the treasures of snow and hail? Had the rain a father, and whence came the frost? Did Job feed the lions and give the ravens their food? Thus did God go over His mighty works in creation, and of His power that sustained all things, and gave all its food in due season. And in comparison with God who and what was Job?

How does verse 6 agree with our present knowledge of astronomy? In what sense has the earth foundations or a corner stone?

We must remember that this is poetry which accounts for such expressions as the 'corner stone.' Of the 'foundations' of the earth we often read: the question here is, whereupon are they fastened? implying that they had no fastenings, or, as it reads in the margin, nothing to sink into, as a fixed building had. In another sense the earth has a foundation of solid rock, but which may be hollow, and filled with fire, or heat of some sort.

Upon that foundation of rock, other layers or coatings are laid unto the outer surface. But the question in the text is, How could man know or have anything to do with the forming of the earth?

What is meant by "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

In various places in scripture created things are personified. The whole creation *groaneth* because of sin. "The little hills skipped like lambs;" "the hills shall break forth into singing," &c. So here the morning stars sang together when they saw a new world come into being, or when it fell into shape and order. By 'the sons of God' is no doubt meant the angels: they shouted for joy when God put forth His power in creation; and the stars, as it were, partook of their joy.

Please explain verse 24: "By what way is the light parted, which scattereth the east wind upon the earth?"

The word 'which' makes the difficulty. You will see it is an added word, and may be left out, and then it reads, 'By what way is the light distributed: [and] the east wind dispersed over the earth?' There are thus two questions; one about the light, and the other about the east wind—could Job tell how they were distributed over the arth?

What is the meaning of, "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?" (Vers. 31, 32.)

Three of these names we have already considered as well-known constellations in the heavens; and

here you see they are immediately followed by "Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven?" It is considered by many that the word Mazzaroth refers to the twelve signs of the Zodiac, each with its appointed 'season.' The Pleiades coming into prominence into the heaven may have accompanied the spring, with its "sweet influences;" and Orion in the autumn as the harbinger of winter with "its bands." Arcturus, being near to the Pole-star, was easily seen to make its progress round it. Could Job influence or guide the stars?

In chapter xxxix. Jehovah continues His address and demands of Job as to the animal creation. Had Job anything to do in sustaining the animal world? The young of animals were brought forth and fed. The wild ass found its food on the mountains: God had made its house in the wilderness. Could Job bind the unicorn?

Is there really such an animal?

Of course *some* animal is referred to, the only question with us is, can any light be gathered up to determine what animal it is? The word in our English version was no doubt taken from the Latin Vulgate, which gives *unicornis* in five places, though here it has *rhinoceros*. 'Unicorn' simply means one horn; and though the unicorn is considered a fabulous animal, there are really quadrupeds with only one horn; but it seems plain that the word in the original does not refer to an animal of this description. Turn for instance to Deuteronomy xxxiii. 17, where the same word occurs, and there we read, "his horns are like the horns of unicorns," but it is really 'a unicorn,' as in the margin. Therefore horns in the plural are given to the unicorn, or whatever animal is referred to. If this had been noticed it would

have saved a deal of conjecture, for persons have concluded that no animal could be the right except it had one horn. Now turn to Isaiah xxxiv. 7 and read what animals are for the sacrifice of Jehovah in Bozrah.

"And the unicorns shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls; and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness."

There is a dreadful slaughter of Jehovah's enemies, called a sacrifice, and with lambs, goats, bullocks, and bulls, is placed the unicorn. It is clear therefore that it is one of the clean animals. Our passage also shews that it is some wild animal; and it has been supposed by some to have been the wild ox; and this seems to answer all the passages where the unicorn is named in scripture. Still there is no means of saying with certainty what animal is alluded to.

To return to Jehovah's address. He next mentions the goodly wings of the peacocks, and the wings and feathers of the ostrich—did Job make these? He alludes to the now well-known habits of the ostrich in leaving her eggs in the hot sands, and God declares that He had deprived her of wisdom: nevertheless she could outstretch the horse and his rider. The war horse next comes under review. It scorns all danger. Then the hawk and the eagle are named, each with its own habits and instincts. Jehovah demanded if they acted by Job's wisdom and by his command.

As I said, Jehovah was shewing Job his own nothingness. And this is an important lesson for us all to learn. We get into the habit of using the name of God, and are apt to forget who and what He is in His might and majesty, and that we are

but His creatures. He is the potter and we are the clay. The pride of man is perfectly shocking, and he supposes God is altogether such a one as himself. This is a fatal mistake which man will find out to his own loss by-and-by, if he does not now learn in grace. May God teach you all your true place as poor lost sinners, except you have learnt your true place, and been saved and exalted by Him.

OBSOLETE WORDS AND MEANINGS OF WORDS IN SCRIPTURE.

Habergeon. Literally a piece of armour to protect the neck, but made large enough to protect the breast.

Haft, Judges iii. 22. The handle. From the Anglo-Saxon *hæft*, from *hæftan*, to have, hold, handle.

Hale, Luke xii. 58; Acts viii. 3. From the French *haler*, to pull. Now written 'haul.'

Hap, Ruth ii. 3. That which happens to us. From the French *happer*, to snatch: that which seizes or comes upon us, happens.

Haply. 'Perhaps,' by *hap*, or as it happens.

Hardness, 2 Timothy ii. 3. In the sense of 'hardship.'

Harness, harnessed. Literally an iron dress worn by soldiers. From the Welsh *haiarn*, iron.

Heady, 2 Timothy iii. 4. Going headlong, rash.

Health, Psalms xlii. 11; xliii. 5; xlvii. 2. In the sense of 'salvation,' as it is translated in many places.

Helve, Deut. xix. 5. Handle. From the Anglo-Saxon *helf*, a handle.

High day, Genesis xxix. 7. Literally 'great,' the day had not begun to decline. Perhaps it was said to be 'high,' from the sun being still high in the heavens.

Hoar. Literally grey, or whitish grey. From the Anglo-Saxon *har*, gray.

Holpen. Now written 'helped.'

Honest. In its original sense 'honourable,' 'full of honour.' From the Latin *honestus*.

Hosen, Daniel iii. 21. The old plural of *hose*.

Hough, to. To lame, by cutting the hamstring of the hind leg. From the Anglo-Saxon *hoh*, the heel.

Ill-favoured, Genesis xli. 3, 4. Literally 'bad-looking.'

Impotent. Simply not potent, or without power. From the Latin *impotens*.

Incontinent, incontinency. Not able to contain, or restrain, the passions or appetites. From the Latin *incontinens*, not containing.

Inkhorn. Inkholder, formerly perhaps made of horn.

Inn. A house or lodging. Modern inns for travellers were not known in the East.

Inquisition. Inquiry. From the Latin *inquisitio*.

Instant, instantly, Luke vii. 4; xxiii. 23; Acts xxvi. 7; Romans xii. 12; 2 Timothy iv. 2. Literally 'to stand near,' hence pressing, urgent, continuous. From the Latin *instans*, present, &c.

Intelligence, Daniel xi. 30. Understanding.

Inward, Job xix. 19. Those friends who knew his inward thoughts: 'intimate.'

Jaw teeth, Proverbs xxx. 14. See Job xxix. 17, where the same word is translated 'jaws' in the text, but 'jaw teeth, or *grinders*' in the margin.

Jewry, Daniel v. 13. Simply Judah.

Kerchief, Ezekiel xiii. 18, 21. A square piece of cloth to cover the head. Old English *coverchief*, cover chef or head.

Kine. The old plural of cow; but it does not always point out *cows* in scripture. The Hebrew word in Deuteronomy xxxii. 14; 2 Samuel xvii. 29 is often translated 'oxen,' and is 'horned cattle' in common.

Knop. Now written knob.

Latchet. The diminitive of 'latch;' lace or fastening.

Leasing, Psalm iv. 2; v. 6. Lying. From the Anglo-Saxon *leasung*.

Lees, Isaiah xxv. 6; Jer. xlviii. 11; Zeph. i. 12. That which lies or settles undisturbed. Spoken of wine, "left to stand upon its lees, or sediment, after the first fermentation is over, and has been kept a long time, and which is filtered before drinking." Spoken also of men, who settle down undisturbed.

Let, to let, Isaiah xliii. 13; Rom. i. 13; 2 Thess. ii. 7. Hindrance, to hinder. It is curious to see how this word in these passages signifies the reverse of 'permission,' which it bears in other places. It has been thought by some to mean literally 'to slacken, or loose restraint upon;' and in these places 'to cause to slacken or give over,' and hence to hinder. But this would not agree with the use of the word in 2 Thessalonians ii. 7, where it is positive and active hindrance. It is otherwise derived from two distinct words: the one, the Anglo-Saxon *lætan*, to permit; and the other, *lettan*, to hinder.

Lien. Now written *lain*.

Like, Jeremiah xxxviii. 9. Likely.

Liking, Job xxxix. 4. 'In good condition.'

Liking, Daniel i. 10. Appearance. 'In worse appearance,' in the margin 'sadder.'

List, to. To desire, choose. From Anglo-Saxon *lystan*, to desire.

Lively, Acts vii. 38; 1 Peter i. 3; ii. 5. In the sense of 'living.'

Loaden. Now written 'laden.'

Loft. Any *upper* room; not restricted, as now, to out-houses.

Lucre. Gain. From the Latin *lucrum;* hence 'lucrative.'

Lust. Desire; not restricted to one passion, nor necessarily in a depraved or gross sense. The same Greek word is used for good desires.

Magnifical. Now written magnificent.

Mansions, John xiv. 2. Simply 'abodes;' not ne-

cessarily large places. From the Latin *mansio*, a staying.

Master-builder, 1 Corinthians iii. 10. In the sense of 'architect.'

Maul, Proverbs xxv. 18. Mallet, hammer. From the Latin *malleus*.

Maw, Deuteronomy xviii. 3. Stomach. From the Anglo-Saxon *maga*.

Meat. Food generally; not restricted to animal food. From the Anglo-Saxon *mæte*, food.

Mess, Genesis xliii. 34; 2 Samuel xi. 8. From the Anglo-Saxon *mese*, a table; or the French *mets*, a dish.

READING IN SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

MR. EDITOR,

I remember the day when it was considered to be a part of the duty of teachers in Sunday schools to teach their scholars how to read; but I suppose now, with the great increase of day schools and school boards, this is no longer considered necessary. But I cannot help thinking that even now some attention ought to be paid to the reading in our classes. You may sometimes hear the scholars reading the lesson in what I must call a most slovenly manner; and this too altogether unchecked by the teacher.

One will drawl out the words in a tone scarcely audible, and another will gabble through his verse in the most unbecoming manner. I should always check improper reading, and remind the scholars that it is the word of God that is being read, and that it should be read in a manner worthy thereof. I do not of course advocate any *display;* but merely clear, distinct, measured, and above all, reverential reading.

This may seem to be a small thing to speak of,

but I believe it is one way of securing attention to the character of the Book. I shew by example and by precept that the Bible ought to be even read in a manner totally different from every other book.

There is another reason which applies to all, but more especially to the lads. We hope all will become converted, and it may be all will become teachers in their turn; and if this early lesson is imprinted upon their memories by being repeatedly brought before them, it will not desert them when they grow up.

But when the lads are converted and take their place at the Lord's table, they may there be used to read a portion of scripture in the assembly; and who has not been pained at the irreverent manner in which the scripture is sometimes read? I do not suppose for a moment that any irreverence is intended; but one thing is certain, that it sounds so irreverent as to be positively painful to the hearers. Is not this worth avoiding?

The fact is, all acquire habits of reading, as of everything else, and when people are young is the proper time to correct bad habits and form good ones.

In the Bible class this ought not to be overlooked. If a portion is read round, a few words occasionally are generally sufficient. I should encourage *all* to read, especially those whom I believe to be the Lord's. It sometimes happens that one or two are so defective in education that they are afraid to take part lest they should be laughed at. These I should encourage to read; and it is a wonderful thing to be able to say to any young brother in the Lord, "suppose you were led of the Holy Spirit to read a portion of scripture in the

assembly some day, what would you do, if you are afraid to read in this little company?" Such should be encouraged to read, and it would help them if they read out loud in private, with some christian friend to correct their mistakes.

When such are present in the class, a few words as to the courtesy due by those who can read well towards those who have not had the privilege of so good an education, often has the desired effect of checking any undue notice which might otherwise be taken of mistakes. The teacher would correct these in the kindest way.

But, as I have said, the great thing is *reverence* for God's word, and this, as we know, is often evinced where there is but little education; whereas it may be that it is the one who reads easily who causes the pain.

I would commend this subject to Sunday-school workers, especially to the leaders of Bible classes. And with the fact before us that each scholar may one day be a teacher, and each of the male scholars may one day be led of God to read in the assembly —I do not think that the *way* in which they read is unimportant; and it is clear to me that the Sunday school and the Bible class may be used to the encouraging of good and reverential reading of God's word, without in any way interfering with the higher aims and objects of the teachers.

C. L.

BOOKS FOR LIBRARIES.

Dear Brother,

I have read Ebenezer's and F. P.'s correspondence about the school libraries with much interest, and in general quite agree with what they have

written. Referring to F. P.'s letter, especially to what he says about *fiction*, we surely all regret and would refuse the bulk of that sort of writing, albeit with a religious tendency. But this kind of thing appears to me to be so shaded off, almost from white to black, that a considerable amount of discrimination is to be exercised.

In the Lord's mercy, I was forbidden in my childhood to read books of fiction, commonly so called; and since I have grown older, I have had no desire to alter the rule. I remember, however, that I was one day rather stoutly denouncing the whole thing, when the one to whom I was speaking replied: "A certain man had two sons."

This he did in a manner quite free from irreverence and I felt the force of the words.

I have used the expression 'from white to black.' In the words of Him who said: "Behold a sower went forth to sow," we have the pure white. And I am prone to believe that there is a way in which we can for His glory speak, as it were, by parables, and in what some would call *fiction*. When truth is conveyed in the form of a dialogue, is not that another form of the same thing? I do not commend the frequent use of this style, nor do we find the Lord's servants often adopting it, and yet there are sufficient examples familiar to most of us to say something in its favour. The dark shades of *fiction* I need say nothing about, only to join in their unqualified condemnation. The question seems to me to be another in which no rule of terms, and definitions, will guide us, but a spiritual discernment.

T. J.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

I have been much interested in reading the letter signed F. P. in the August issue of the "Worker" and through you must offer my thanks to the writer for his candid remarks. May I, as a young inquirer, venture an opinion upon the same important subject?

Can the same rule here really be applicable alike to the aged saint and the child of seven? Then this is a serious question indeed, and gravely have we erred in offering other than the bare and naked truth. But, to begin with, is the library to be looked upon solely as a direct agent in furthering the gospel? Is it not rather to be regarded as an ally, so to speak, of the Sunday school? Agreed that the library *is* an essential adjunct to the school, then it must consist of books congenial to the natural tastes of children, such as will really gladden the hearts of the little ones; and I think those books are to be found, which, while they shall arouse the interests, will almost unconsciously sow the seeds of truth, or, at any rate, awaken the little minds to a deeper and more sincere desire for the things which are of God.

Your correspondent suggests scientific works; where, may I ask, is a book of this nature to be found, simple enough to attract and interest the undeveloped mind of an infant? And are such books invariably written by Christians? I may just mention as a fact that we number amongst our collection several works upon botany, &c., but very, very seldom are they asked for, and even when given out are often returned unread. Such books are perhaps really useful to mature minds, but I do think something different is wanted for the very young.

Not for one moment, indeed, do I wish to advocate fiction as a vehicle for the gospel; but what is fiction? a something feigned, an invention, in fact, a falsehood. Now, who would so designate those innocent little pictures of child-life, which have such a charm for the very youngest, and the reading of which can surely produce none but a healthy and beneficial effect?

If such reading be introduced, of course every book, before being circulated, should be carefully read through by the teachers, and if one be found containing thoughts and opinions in any way opposed to scripture, it should be as carefully expunged.

But, if wrong in my opinions, I am very willing to be convinced of my error, and hope, sir, you yourself will give us a few words upon the subject. Our one motive in everything of course, should be, and I trust is, to further the glorious cause of our one Lord and Master, fighting with His weapons, and so reflecting His light that we shall stand up as ensamples amongst men. That we may never once trust to our own powers, but may lean unshaken upon that One, is the earnest prayer of

Yours sincerely,

J. B. R.

WORKS FLOWING FROM LOVE.

"I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience . . . . nevertheless I have against thee that thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou hast fallen; and repent."

NOTES OF LESSONS FOR A BIBLE CLASS.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

Chapter xl.—xli.

In chapter xl. Jehovah addresses a direct challenge to Job, "Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God let him answer it."

Job has now come to his right mind, and has not one word to say as to his righteousness. At once he confesses, "*I am vile:* what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further."

This was what Jehovah was leading to. Remark it is not simply what Job had done—good or bad; but he now owns that he himself was vile—vile in his nature. Ah, this is a very important lesson to learn, because it leads one altogether away from *self* to God, and to find perfection in Christ alone.

But Jehovah probes Job still further. Job had sadly offended by calling God's justice into question: therefore He demanded, "Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?" He asks if Job can arm himself with majesty and excellency, with glory and beauty; and if he is able to humble and subdue all the proud and the wicked. If so, Jehovah would own that Job's right hand could save him. But instead of this Job was sitting among the ashes, full of sores, and could in no way help or relieve himself! Was he in a position to find fault with his Maker?

Jehovah again turns to His works in nature.

And first he refers to the behemoth, which he terms the chief of the ways of God.

Is it known what animal this refers to?

This is the only place where the word occurs, and you will see that it reads in the margin, "or the elephant, as some think." By the word used in the original it is not known what animal is referred to; but from the description here given we shall see that it agrees very well with the hippopotamus, much better, I think, than with the elephant. His great strength is variously described, yet he eateth grass. Verses 21 and 22 shew clearly that he is an animal that lives on the banks of the river; and in verse 23 if the river overflows he is not frightened and rushes away; but draws the water into his mouth. This exactly agrees with the habits of the hippopotamus.

In chapter xli. Jehovah refers to an animal as leviathan; and this reads in the margin "a whale or a whirlpool." You will naturally inquire what animal is here referred to. The same word in the original occurs in four other places. Once in Job iii. 8, which reads in the margin, "Who is ready to raise up a leviathan?" In Psalm lxxiv, "Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness." In Psalm civ. 25, 26, "This great and wide sea . . . . There go the ships; there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein." In Isaiah xxvii. 1, "In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword, shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea."

There can be no doubt that in the last passage Satan is referred to under the name of leviathan,

which would seem rather to point to the serpent than to anything else. Psalm civ. refers doubtless by the "great and wide sea" to the Mediterranean, and then perhaps the whale may be referred to; for, as is well-known, the crocodile is a fresh-water animal, and does not inhabit the sea. On the whole, it is perhaps best to view the term 'leviathan' as denoting 'a monster' without always pointing out one definite animal.

Our passage is the only one that enters into any lengthy description of the animal intended, and there can be very little doubt that of all known animals the crocodile comes the nearest to the description here given. In the first place it is clearly an amphibious animal, capable of living both in the water and on land, "Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook?" (Ver. 1.) "He maketh the deep to boil like a pot; he maketh the sea like a pot of ointment." (Ver. 31.) We must not press the word 'sea' too much, as inland lakes were also called seas, and in some places a large river is called a sea.

The close-fitting scales also answer to the crocodile; and the uselessness of attacking him with the sword, spear, dart, or arrow, is also proverbial. There are a few expressions that cause difficulties; such as, "By his neesings (sneezings) a light doth shine, and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning. Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out. Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething pot or caldron. His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth." If these expressions are taken literally there is no known animal that answers to them; if they are taken figuratively, there is but little difficulty. The crocodile casts forth from his

nostrils volumes of vapour, which in the sunshine may have the appearance of a hugh caldron on a fire. We know of no animal whose breath sets light to coals, or who has a flame going out of his mouth, but this may be figurative language to express great heat for an animal that lives in the water. At all events the crocodile is the animal that comes nearest to the description here given, and without being too positive we must let it rest there. As the lion is called the king of the forest, and the eagle monarch of the birds, so the crocodile may well be called king of the waters: here "king over all the children of pride."

What is meant by the latter part of verse 25: "When he raiseth up himself, the mighty are afraid; by reason of breakings they purify themselves?"

The part is translated differently in the English Bible in use before our present edition. It stands thus: "And for fear they faint in themselves," and it is similarly rendered by modern translators. This makes the meaning quite plain.

Here we must leave the subject for the present. God Himself points to His wonderful works in nature. Can man do anything like them? Who then is man to call in question what God his Maker does? As man seeks to make his works redound to his praise, so all the works of God should praise Him; and it is a solemn fact that they all do praise Him *except man.* Poor man! he has fallen from his first estate, but knows it not, and though told so, he will not own it. If we own it, we know God has provided a remedy in the death of His Son Jesus Christ. But we must, with Job, take our true place as lost sinners, and own our vileness.

NOTES ON SCRIPTURE.

MATTHEW XX.

VERSES 1–16. This is the parable of the labourers in the vineyard. It is connected with the last verse of chapter xix. by the word *for*: "Many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first. For the kingdom of heaven," &c.

The householder goes out *early* and hires labourers for his vineyard at the agreed price of a penny a day. The penny is a denarius, and worth about seven pence half-penny of our money. For this a working man could purchase more than enough for his maintenance. The denarius was a day's pay of a Roman soldier in the time of Tiberias, a few years before this parable was spoken. And an ancient writer, in illustrating the great fertility of the land, and the consequent cheapness of provisions, states that a day's entertainment at an inn cost only the twentieth part of a denarius! If so, a denarius per day was liberal wages.

Again the householder goes out about the third hour (nine o'clock) and finds others standing idle in the market-place. These he also hires, promising to give them what is *right*, without the sum being named.

He did the same at about the sixth hour and the ninth hour.

Again at the eleventh hour he finds others standing idle, and he hires them also.

When evening was come, the steward paid the workmen, beginning at the last; and he gave to each and all a penny. But those who had worked all day, expecting to receive more than the others,

murmured against the Master; because those who had worked but one hour received as much as they did.

He answered one of them, "Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst thou not agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?"

There was no injustice in the householder. Those labourers who worked all the day had *agreed* for a penny per day, and therefore had no real cause of complaint. The others had left the wages with the householder, and had, as we may say, more than they earned. The latter class, of course, did not complain; and the former had what they had agreed for, and had no real cause for complaint. The householder was fully justified in giving away what was *his own*, and he asked, "Is thine eye evil, because I am good?"

There is a similar principle in the doctrine of election. Men have often said that it is unjust to elect A to eternal life, and not B also. But if we ask *to whom* is the injustice? A of course will not complain, and it cannot be to B; for he will not be punished for A's sins, but for his own, and his own only; and it is not unjust for a man to be punished for his sins. Salvation is freely offered to both alike: A through God's mercy accepts it; and B, entirely apart from A, refuses it. For this refusal, and for his sins generally, he will be condemned and judged.

In a word, the parable sets forth the *sovereignty* of God, under the figure of labourers in the vineyard. God is good, and He will dispense His gifts as pleases Himself, but He will do it in a

way that while many will receive much more than is their due, there will be no injustice to any. "Friend, I do thee no wrong" is a full answer to any who has an evil eye towards the God of mercy, who dispenses His gifts not according to man's rule, but as it pleases Himself. It *is* lawful for Him to do what He will with His own.

This in no way clashes with the question of rewards. A cup of cold water shall not lose its reward. But the thief on the cross, and the many saved at the eleventh hour, will have eternal life given them, as much as Paul and others who labour for many a long year. God will not give up His sovereignty, and He will so give His gifts as to make many a one who is now first to be last; and some who are now last shall be first.

BOOKS FOR THE LIBRARY.

WHAT IS FICTION?

MR. EDITOR,

Your correspondents, T. J. and J. B. R., have raised important questions as to "What is fiction?" Is there such a thing as "white" fiction, or a "white" use of fiction? And did our Lord use it? And if so, may we, and to what extent?

Our first question is: Is there any difference, and what is it, between fiction and that which our Lord used as parable? I have said that I believe that nothing could justify an evangelist inventing anecdotes in his preaching—to which I suppose all agree—but would any object to an evangelist, in order to illustrate a point, *supposing* a case, provided he put it in that shape?

Thus, if I say, Suppose a ship was sinking, and

a life-boat went to its relief, &c., I apprehend no one would call that inventing a story, or that it was in any sense fiction. I take it therefore, that "parable" is something quite distinct from what we mean by fiction.

This difference may well be illustrated by the well-known book by John Bunyan, "The Pilgrim's Progress." This, if I mistake not, is described as being written "in the similitude of a dream." Is that fiction? I think we shall all agree in saying that it is not; but that it comes under the class of allegory or parable.

Still we have been reminded that our Lord said, "A certain man had two sons," &c. Was this fiction? (With reverence be it asked.)

Now on turning to Luke xv., we find that the Pharisees and scribes were complaining of our Lord because He received sinners, and then we read: "He spake this parable unto them." Then follow the lost sheep, the lost piece of money, and the prodigal son—the three forming one parable, as has often been remarked. And so in many places we read, "He spoke a parable to them."

Now this seems to me entirely to remove what is said from the very faintest tinge of even "white" fiction, if such a thing there can be. Suppose our Lord began by saying, "Hear this parable," or similar words, it would altogether meet the difficulty; and this seems to be implied by these words, "He spoke a parable to them." For those who read there can be no mistake. And it must be remembered that some at least of the parables are believed to be things that actually took place.

There is also another guard used in scripture, by saying that "The kingdom of heaven is *like*" to this or that.

But let us inquire, What is a parable? Cruden says, "This word is formed from the Greek *parabole*, which comes from the verb *paraballein*, signifying 'to compare things together.' It is a similitude taken from natural things, to instruct us in the knowledge of things spiritual." Now if this is a true definition, it seems to me fundamentally different from that which is called fiction.

Let us look at a case in point: Nathan and David. "The Lord sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich and the other poor," &c. Was this a parable, or was it fiction? Let us see if we can compare what was said with the facts of the case.

Two men in one city	David and Uriah
One rich	The king
One poor	Uriah
The poor man had one ewe lamb	Uriah's wife
It dwelt with his children	Bath-sheba at home
It lay in his bosom	Bath-sheba as wife
The rich man spared his own flock	David not satisfied with his wives
He slew the ewe lamb of the poor man	Uriah slain, and Bath-sheba sacrificed to David's passion.

David gives his judgment: such an one should surely die. Nathan replies, "Thou art the man."

Now, was this address of Nathan's fiction? I say, no: it was parable; all through it is comparable with the facts of David's conduct. If I take a mere tale it is quite different; it may contain a moral, or even statements of the gospel; but it is

not a parable; there are no facts running side by side to which it can be compared: it is not a similitude; it is a tale and nothing more.

If we refer again to the "Pilgrim's Progress," we see all through it similitudes. The city of Destruction is the world; the pack on the back is the burden of sin, and so on, and stamps the book as a parable or similitude, and not fiction.

So of books written in the form of a dialogue. I take it that there is always the *supposing* a case; the writer supposes A advances certain statements; B answers them; A responds, and so forth. It seems to me that it is fundamentally different from fiction.

So of the parables of our Lord, I do not say that they were always introduced with the words, "Hear a parable"—though they certainly were sometimes—but they *were* parables. Natural things were described to teach things spiritual; and in my judgment they were in no sense fiction, but *fact* in the form of allegory or parable.

If I catch the gist of T. J.'s remarks, it is this: Is there not a sanctified use of fiction, as evinced by its use in scripture, and by our Lord Himself? In my judgment, there is not; there is no sanctified use of it, and our Lord did not use it. He used parable and similitude.

I would further remark that if there is a sanctified use of it, who can tell what it is, and where does it end? If spiritual discernment is needed to detect the *misuse*, all without this discernment will be damaged by it: and these are the very people that need to be guarded against that which will not feed and instruct them.

Your correspondent J. B. R. asks if the same rule is to apply to the aged saint and the child of

seven? I say, certainly, if the principle of "thou and thy house," is to be our guide. If I put fiction into my child's hand when he is seven years old, when am I to withdraw it? I may on the other hand beget in the child a love for that light reading that will never be eradicated, and be a dreadful snare to him when he becomes a Christian. I am surprised that your correspondent speaks of that class of books as "innocent little pictures of child-life;" and reminds me that I lately saw a Christian writer commending "The Thousand and One Nights" as those charming tales that delighted his boyhood.

I was recently in the company of a dear aged Christian—loved and esteemed by all who know him—who was lamenting the spread of worldliness amongst Christians, and he gave it as his judgment that the cause of its being manifested in our children was that is was really in ourselves. We liked a little bit of it—one in one shape, and another in another—and the children followed our example, but naturally went farther than we did or what we approved of. But we ourselves were not reckoning ourselves dead to it. I must say I felt convicted, and I leave your readers to say whether it is true or not of themselves.

Now to apply this to our subject, I need only state it as a fact that it is comparatively rare to find a periodical avowedly religious, in which there is not a tale of fiction, and in some cases they are unblushingly advertised to be by celebrated novelists. Therefore, there is no wonder that Christians generally put such books in the hands of their children, for they love them themselves.

Still, are not such more consistent than we are if we deny ourselves such things, but give them to our

children? It seems to me in direct contravention of the principle, "Thou and thy house." I cannot look upon any fiction as innocent. Your correspondent describes it as "a something feigned, an invention, in fact, a falsehood." Then I say there can be no white use of what is false; our Lord did not use it. Parable and similitude He did use, but I believe, as I have stated, that these do not in any way come under the head of fiction. Nothing that your correspondents have said alter in any way my judgment that all works of fiction ought to be excluded from our libraries. F. P.

THE WISDOM OF THE WISE COMPARED WITH SCRIPTURE.

THE following extract, which puts in strong contrast the wisdom of the wisest of men as to nature, compared with what is of God—may be made good use of by the Sunday-school teacher.

"Read even the cosmogony of Buffon, or some of Voltaire's sneers on the doctrine of a deluge, or on the fossil animals of a primitive world. We will go much farther. Read again—we do not say the absurd reasonings of the pagans, of Lucretius, of Pliny, or of Plutarch, against the theory of the antipodes, but even the fathers of the Christian church. Hear the theological indignation of the admirable Augustine, who says that it is opposed to scripture; and the scientific eloquence of Lactantius . . . . he exclaims, 'Is there any man so silly as to believe that men exist having their feet above their heads, trees with their fruit hanging downwards, rain, snow, and hail falling topsy turvy?' 'They would answer you,' he adds, 'by maintaining that the earth is a globe.' 'One

knows not what to say of such men, who when they have once run into error, persist in their folly, and defend one absurdity by another.' . . .

Listen, at a later period, to the whole clergy of Spain, and especially to the imposing Council of Salamanca, indignant at the geographical system by which Christopher Columbus was led to look for a whole new continent. Listen, at the epoch of Newton's birth, to the great Galileo . . . . . behold him groaning, at the age of eighty, in the prisons of Rome, for having discovered the movements of the earth, after having had to pronounce these words, ten years before (28th June, 1633) their Eminences, at the palace of the Holy Office: 'I, Galileo, in the seventieth year of my age, on my knees before your Eminences, having before my eyes, and touching with my own hand the Holy Scripture, abjure, curse, and detest, the error of the earth's movement!'

What might we not have been entitled to say of the scriptures had they expressed themselves on the phenomena of nature, as these have been spoken of by all the ancient sages?—had they referred all to four elements, as people did for so long a period? . . . . . had they imagined the heaven to be a solid sphere, to which the fixed stars are attached, as was done by Aristotle, and almost all the ancients?—had they spoken, as has been done so recently, and even among people professing Christianity, of the influence exerted by the movements of the heavens on the elements of this lower world, on the characters of men, and on the course of human events. . . .

Open the Bible, and try if you can find anything of this sort there. No: none of those blunders which the science of every succeeding age discovers

in the books of those that preceded it; none of those absurdities, above all, which modern astronomy points out, in such numbers, in the writings of the ancients, in their sacred codes, in their systems of philosophy, and in the finest pages even of the Fathers of the church—no such errors can be found in any of our sacred books: nothing there will ever contradict what, after so many ages, the investigations of the learned world have been able to reveal to us of what is certain in regard to the state of our globe or of that of the heavens.

"Carefully search our scriptures from one end to the other, in search of such blemishes there; and while engaged in this research, remember that it is a book which speaks of everything, which describes nature, which proclaims its grandeur, which tells the story of its creation, which informs us of the structure of the heavens, of the creation of light, of the waters, of the atmosphere, of the mountains, of animals, and of plants;—it is a book that tells us of the first revolutions of the world, and foretells to us also the last; a book that relates them in circumstantial narratives, exalts them in a sublime poesy, and chants them in strains of fervent psalmody;—it is a book replete with the glow of oriental rapture, elevation, variety, and boldness;—it is a book which speaks of the earth, and of things visible, at the same time that it speaks of the celestial world, and of things invisible;—it is a book to which nearly fifty writers of every degree of mental cultivation, of every rank, of every condition, and separated by fifteen hundred years from each other, have successively put their hand;—it is a book composed first in the centre of Asia, among the sands of Arabia, or in the deserts of Judea, or in the forecourt of the temple of the

Jews, or in the rustic schools of the prophets of Bethel and of Jericho, or in the sumptuous palaces of Babylon, or on the idolatrous banks of Chebar; and afterwards at the centre of western civilisation, amid the Jews with their manifold ignorance, amid polytheism and its ideas, as well as in the bosom of pantheism and its silly philosophy;—it is a book the first writer of which had been for the space of forty years a pupil of the magicians of Egypt, who looked upon the sun, and the stars, and the elements as endowed with intelligence, as re-acting upon the elements, and as governing the world by continual effluxes;—it is a book the first chapters of which preceded by more than *nine hundred years* the most ancient philosophers of ancient Greece and of Asia;—it is a book which carries its narratives even into the field of the invisible world, into the hierarchies of the angels, even into the remotest realms of futurity, and the glorious scenes of the last day;—well then, search through these fifty authors, search through these sixty-six books, search through these one thousand, one hundred and eighty-nine chapters, and these thirty-one thousand, one hundred and seventy-three verses—search for one single error of those thousands with which ancient and modern books abound, when they speak either of the heaven or of the earth, or of their revolutions, or of their elements; search, but *you will search in vain.*"—GAUSSEN.

WHO WAS ANTIPAS?

WILL you kindly tell me through the "Worker," who is meant by "Antipas," in Revelation ii. 13, "Even in those days wherein Antipas [was] my

faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth." The above certainly refers to a time of great persecution for Christ's sake. "Thou holdest fast *my* name, and hast *not* denied *my* faith." I am sorry to intrude upon your valuable time and space, yet, in reading that portion, we came to the passage, and did not know, nor could we find that name recorded anywhere else.

F. B.

Antipas is not named in any other part of the New Testament. Some have supposed it is to be taken in a typical sense. Thus Hengstenberg interprets the name to mean "Against all," and says, "The two names 'Fear God' and 'Against all' are closely connected with each other. One cannot truly fear God without standing forth against the world, which lies in wickedness, and having it also standing against us."

But it is much better to take it as a real person. We must remember that the Revelation was written as late as the close of the first century, and that the seven churches actually existed at the time. Eusebius speaks of a persecution at this identical city, and mentions the names of a few of the martyrs, but Antipas is not among them. He says, "There are also records extant of others that suffered martyrdom in Pergamos, a city of Asia. Of these we mention only Carpus and Papylus, and a woman named Agathonice; who, after many illustrious testimonies given by them, gloriously finished their course." If this is the persecution alluded to, we have a useful lesson in the fact that God mentions a faithful witness who is not recorded by the historians.

THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST AND THE KINGDOM OF SATAN.

It was once said by a good man that if he saw a child crying in the street, and by the means of a halfpenny he could assuage its grief, he felt as if he had taken a shovel-full from that mighty pile of woe which Satan is building up in the earth.

There may be a measure of truth in this, for Satan was a murderer from the beginning, and has the ruin and misery of man ever before him; still man may be deceived even in his philanthropy. Let him make a *religion* of it, and Satan cannot be better pleased. He does not mind waiving minor points in order to gain his ulterior aim—the ruin of the soul. And alas! how solemn it is to think how many are engaged with the improvement of their fellow-man in various shapes, but who may themselves be lost at last! Satan will tolerate the temporal good done by philanthropists, because he can turn them to the more fatal and lasting destruction of the soul.

It is however a great and true thought that Satan is attempting to build up a mighty empire. We read of principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in heavenly places; he has his demons, and they are many; and his 'angels.' It may indeed be called the kingdom of destruction. But it is not a warfare simply between Satan and man, or who indeed could stand? but it is between the Lord Jesus and Satan. Let us never forget that remarkable passage in the garden of Eden, when the Lord God addressed the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between

thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Satan thus stands directly opposed both to the woman and to her seed—Christ. As we know, Christ on the cross entirely overcame Satan: "He destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil:" that is, Christ annulled Satan's power already for the Christian, and laid the foundation for the entire crushing of his head in a future day, as we read in Romans xvi. 20, "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly;" finally to be cast into the lake of fire prepared for him and his angels.

But at present he is rearing up his kingdom and carrying on his enmity against the Lord Jesus, His saints, and mankind generally. By faith Christians can look upon him as a conquered foe, but are still in danger of his devices. If we resist him, scripture declares he will flee from us; but apart and beyond our own individual safety we are to put on the whole armour of God and fight the Lord's battle against our common foe: for we wrestle with wicked spirits in heavenly places.

I doubt not that a very prominent part of this warfare is in service for the Lord. One of the chief aims of Satan is to hinder and spoil our work, and we need the armour of God to discern his actings and to withstand him. In 1 Thessalonians ii. 18, we have this remarkable passage, "We would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again, but Satan hindered me." It does not say in what way Satan hindered Paul. It might have been in outward circumstances, but God is above the circumstances, and faith in Him removes mountains. The way in which 'I Paul'

is in opposition to 'Satan' leads one to think that it *may* have been through some unwatchfulness on Paul's part. Satan may have had a device which Paul did not see through until afterwards, when in the Lord's presence he saw it was really Satan who had hindered him.

Look again at the device of Satan in connection with service at Philippi, when he caused the possessed damsel to follow the servants of the Lord and cry for many days, "These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation." (Acts xvi. 17.) With some deep-laid plan, Satan's agent bore testimony to Paul and his companions, and to the salvation they preached. But Paul was not to be deceived; he commanded the spirit, in the name of Jesus Christ, to leave the damsel; and it was compelled to obey. Satan was foiled, and the testimony was saved; and the Epistle to the Philippians testifies to the reality of the work in that city.

Now I cannot but think that all this is of great practical value to the evangelist and the Sunday-school teacher. Do we fully realize that the Lord Jesus Christ is building up a kingdom, and that Satan is as active as ever to prevent its extension? Thus every one who is converted is one snatched out of the clutches of Satan and transferred into this kingdom: as is described in Colossians i. 13, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." And the humblest instrument used in the conversion of a sinner is one who has spoiled the kingdom of darkness, and delivered one from the power of Satan and eternal misery. While, on the other hand, he has been the means of transferring a soul into the kingdom of God's

dear Son, that shall shine to all eternity to His glory.

Is this a small matter? Is there nothing here to fire one's zeal? to make us instant in season and out of season? But let us not be unmindful of Satan's devices. He will try to hinder us—to hinder our attendance with all sorts of plausible reasoning. Will not some of us have to confess, 'I know I ought to have been at my post, but'—ah, we should like to find a good excuse, yet in honesty we must add, 'but Satan hindered me.' And let us remember that he has many devices besides hindering our attendance; but with the whole armour on, and being in communion with the Captain of our salvation, we shall see through his devices, and become more than conquerors.

My readers will see that this is looking at our work from an unusual stand-point. We are more apt to look at it from the *sinner's* point of view. The soul is above all value: shall we not seek the salvation of our scholars? Surely; but it does not lessen its importance when looked at from the *Saviour's* point of view. He has a great work in hand—a great kingdom to establish; and, through grace, we are His workmen. And the interest is intensified when we remember that Christ has a deadly enemy striving to hinder that work, and striving to hinder us in our service for that Saviour. For *us*, he is a *conquered* foe, but still a subtle and dangerous one, with many devices to trip us up and stop our service. But we have the blessed promise that when the Lord opens for us a door, no one can shut it. And, by His grace, we shall be able to build upon the foundation, gold, silver, and precious stones, that shall endure to His praise for ever and ever. S. E.

EXAMPLES OF SCRIPTURE LESSONS.

JOHN THE BAPTIST.

As John the Baptist fills so important a place in the early history of our Lord, we cannot well pass him over without notice. And, besides, there are traits in his character which our scholars will be quick to appreciate, if not to imitate. From whatever point of view we regard him, he was a most remarkable man. His birth was foretold, and occurred at a period of his parents' lives that made it almost a miracle, and very much like the birth of Isaac.

The days of his childhood and youth were spent in the deserts, and his food was locusts and wild honey. His parents had been told by an angel that he was not to touch wine or strong drink, and in this respect he was like Samson.

When he was about thirty years of age he was called by God to commence his ministry of preaching repentance and remission of sins, and announcing the kingdom of heaven, as the forerunner of Christ, and in this he answers to the prophecy of Isaiah xi. 3, and also Malachi iv. 5. The Lord Jesus spake of him as coming to fulfil these prophecies, and also said of him, "Among those that are born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist."

The close of his life was very singular. He was put in prison by Herod, whom he had offended by his faithfulness; and at the request of Herod's wife and her daughter he was beheaded. While in prison he sent two of his disciples to Jesus, asking, "Art thou he that should come, or look

we for another?" which seems very strange after his bold testimony to Christ as the "Son of God" and "Lamb of God." (John i.) But whether it was his own faith that was failing, or that he acted thus for the sake of his disciples, it is rather difficult to say. We are inclined, however, to take this latter view; and it is after this the Lord speaks of him as we have just before quoted. (Luke vii.)

But it will be well to bring before our scholars (especially the saved ones) his humility in speaking of himself. In John i. we read that the Jews sent men to him to ask him if he was the Christ, and he answered "No."

"Art thou Elias?"

"I am not."

"Art thou that prophet?"

"No."

"Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of *thyself?*"

"I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Elias."

"Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet."

"I baptize with water, but there standeth one among you whom ye know not; he it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, *whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.*"

All this is beautiful, and in connection with it the following incident will be helpful:—

David was a little boy who believed in the Lord Jesus. His parents were believers also. He had two sisters and a younger brother. One Saturday evening, after tea was over, they joined together in family worship, and sang that hymn

"Abide with me, fast falls the eventide,
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide,
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, oh abide with me."

At the close of the singing David's father said he wanted him to go to the workshop to get a letter he had left there. This workshop was built at the end of a long garden, some little distance from the house, and was where David's father used to work as a carpenter, with his men.

David very willingly obeyed his father's directions, and went off to get the letter. When he arrived at the workshop and opened the door, he found the place was full of smoke. He went in and there saw that some loose materials had been smouldering, which, now that the door was opened, burst into a flame.

Quick as thought David set about doing what he could to put out the fire. But first of all he clasped his hands together and offered up a short prayer for help to the "Helper of the helpless."

He knew that in an adjoining room his father kept some pails filled with water in case of an emergency, but it was just in front of the door leading to this room that the fire was worst. However, he ran towards it, and would soon have been through, but he could not turn the handle for some moments, and in the meantime the fire was burning round his feet.

When he did get through he seized the pails and poured the contents on to the flames, which soon began to subside. Then he felt giddy and lost all consciousness of what followed.

In the house, they wondered why he was so long gone, and his father began to be anxious; so he put on his hat and walked towards the workshop.

When he reached it he saw the empty pails and the charred remains of what had been burning, but did not at first see poor David, who was lying in one corner of the room. Poor boy, the exertion had been too much for him, and he had fainted.

His father picked him up, and carried him home. A doctor was sent for to attend to his burns, and all night long he was anxiously watched by his parents. He seemed feverish and weak, but towards morning fell into a sound sleep.

As the family sat down to breakfast on the Sunday morning, little David's adventure and his bravery formed the chief subject of conversation. His elder sister said—

"Well, really, I did not think our David had so much courage."

"Only let me hear the boys call him a milksop again," said his younger sister.

"Yes, yes," chimed in his little brother, while his little fists looked as though they were being prepared for an occasion.

"I knew our David was not a coward," said his mother, "and that when the time came for it to be tested he would prove himself good and brave."

His father said something about his "making a man," but here stopped, as he fancied he heard David's voice. "There, now," he said, "we have woke him up with our talking!" Then going to the foot of the stairs, he called up, "David, my boy, have we woke you up? What do you want?"

"I wasn't asleep, father," he replied, "I have heard what you have all been saying, and I want to tell you that there's no credit to me, but you'll find it in that verse we sang last night, about, 'When other helpers fail, and comforts flee, *Help of the helpless*, oh, abide with me.'"

NOTES OF LESSONS FOR A BIBLE CLASS.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

In chapter xlii. we get the close of the book of Job. We were seeing last week, God's address to Job; and we ought to notice that God was shewing Job His own greatness and majesty, and Job's nothingness. And God did this by pointing Job to His works in creation and nature. Where was Job when the heavens and the earth were formed? and what had Job to do in keeping all nature in its due course? Or, to come to things on the earth, they far exceeded all Job's power and his wisdom. It was God who made all, and God who cared and provided for all. Was it right then in Job to call in question God's justice and righteous judgments?

Job at once owns that God was Almighty, and could do all things; and confesses that he had uttered things he understood not; things too wonderful for him to know. Indeed, he confessed himself *a fool*. But Job had now been brought into the immediate presence of God: he had heard of Him before, but "now mine eye seeth thee," was his confession. And then immediately follows, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." This was really the lesson God was teaching Job all along, but he was slow to learn it. It is one thing to speak of my actions. A moral man may review his life and see but little that he calls failure; but let him get into the presence of God, and there he learns, as Job did, what he is in himself, apart from his actions. Job said, "I am vile," "I abhor myself." This is the lesson we all have to learn if we take God's judgment concerning us. As we saw at the commence-

ment of the book, Job was a righteous, God-fearing man; but he had not learnt what he was in himself, in his flesh, as we have it in the New Testament; and all this discipline was God's manner of teaching him this important lesson.

It is so of many Christians now. The gospel of God's grace is preached fully, and persons believe in the Lord Jesus, but they do not learn what they are in themselves; and years perhaps elapse before they are brought to the confession of Job: "I am vile—I abhor myself." Of course it ought to be the confession of all men: for the flesh in all is the same. But it is only when we are brought into God's presence that we see ourselves as He describes us. We then, as scripture says, affix our seal that God is true. God says we are born in sin and shapen in iniquity, and that in the flesh dwelleth no good thing. Man thinks that is too sweeping—at least there is a *little* good; but the Christian is able to say, It is true, that describes *me*. And then when this is done, he looks to another, even to Christ, for everything, and all is happiness and blessing.

But let us look at the close of the book. Directly Job had made the above confession, all is settled—the lesson of God is learnt, and God addresses not another word to Job. He turns now to Job's friends, and reproves them; for they have not spoken of Him the thing that was right. They had said a great many things that may have been right in their way; but they had not spoken *of God* what was right; they had not rightly interpreted Him and His dealings with Job. He bids them offer up a burnt sacrifice and go to his servant Job, who was to pray for them. Thus we see that no sooner is Job restored than he takes the

place of priest, and intercedes for his friends. And we read, "the Lord accepted Job." We find the same thing in the New Testament where the Christian is exhorted to make intercession for all men. Every real Christian is a priest, and has access to God for himself, and able to intercede for others.

Then God turned the captivity of Job, and it is said that God did this *when* Job prayed for his friends. Job was now in such a position that he could, as it were, forget himself, and be engaged about his friends. And God comes in and turns Job's captivity, as his calamities are here called, and gave him twice as much as he had before. His friends rally round him now that he is again in prosperity, and make him presents. "So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than the beginning." And he had seven sons and three daughters, and lived to see his sons' sons to four generations.

Is there anything important in the names that Job gave to his daughters?

The names are somewhat as follows:—

Jemima, 'handsome as the day,' or 'dove.' Kezia, 'cassia;' and Keren-happuch, 'the horn or child of beauty.' Their names seem to agree with what follows: "In all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job;" their names do not seem to have any reference to the restoration of Job.

This is like our God. He wounds to heal and afflicts for our good. The best wine is kept to the last; the blessings in store for all believers will far exceed all that they enjoy by the way.

NOTES ON SCRIPTURE.

MATTHEW XX.

VERSES 17–19. Our Lord takes His twelve disciples apart, and reveals to them that He is about to go up to Jerusalem where He would be betrayed into the hands of the chiefs of the nation, who would deliver Him unto the Gentiles, who would mock, scourge, and crucify Him; but the third day He would rise again.

On comparing this with other parts of the Gospels it is clear that the disciples did not understand what our Lord said to them. In Luke xxiv. we find that they were surprised at His death—they thought he was going to deliver Israel in some other way. And when He was dead, they were surprised at His body not being found in the tomb: His resurrection was equally unexpected by them. But the above revelation was afterwards brought to the remembrance of the women at the sepulchre, and by them told to the disciples. See Luke xxiv. 6, 8.

Verses 20–28. The mother of James and John come to Jesus, to request of Him that her two sons might sit one on His right hand and one on His left in the kingdom. This stands in remarkable contrast with the words of our Lord as to His *suffering:* they seek their own exaltation instead of entering into the question of His suffering of which He had just told them. When He was about to take the lowest place, they sought the highest. By comparing Mark it will be seen that the desire really came from the two disciples, though their mother may have actually made the request.

Our Lord asks if they are able to drink of the

cup that He had to drink, and be baptized with His baptism? He thus again reminds them of the suffering He had to go through before He would come into His kingdom. Could they take part in that suffering? They said, Yes, they could. They little knew what they said. He was about to drink the cup of wrath, of which they could *not* drink except to their own destruction.

Nevertheless in another sense they could drink of Christ's cup of rejection and suffering from man. We are made partakers of His sufferings (2 Cor. i. 7; Phil. iii. 10; 1 Pet. iv. 13); but not the sufferings of atonement—therein He stood entirely alone.

But to grant to them places on His right hand and on His left was not Christ's to give: those places were reserved for those for whom they had been prepared of the Father. Christ here takes a marvellous place. Though He was to have the kingdom, it was all left to the Father as to who should be the nearest to Him.

The ten other disciples were indignant at the two seeking this exaltation for themselves. But our Lord called them unto Him, and said, Among the nations men naturally sought for place and power; but it should not be so among them. In His kingdom whosoever desired to be great and chief, was to study to be the servant of all the rest. It was so with Himself: he came not to be served, but to serve, and even to lay down His life a ransom for many.

We see this exemplified in the life of our Lord. He was ever ready to serve the sick and the needy: so busy indeed that He and His disciples had not opportunity to take their meals. (Mark vi. 31.)

Also in Paul, he was all things to all men;

ever ready to spend and be spent in the service of his Master.

Verses 29–34. As Jesus departed from Jericho two blind men sitting by the wayside called to Jesus as Son of David to have mercy upon them. They were bid to hold their peace by those who were not themselves blind; but they cried out with greater earnestness. Our Lord called them to Him, and touched their eyes, and they saw immediately, and they followed Him.

This is important as the last presentation of Christ to Israel under various titles. The first is in the above incident where He is proclaimed as Son of David, to be followed by others of Lord, King of Israel, &c. The people try to stop the proclamation, but it could not be; the blind men only cried out the louder, repeating the title.

It may be taken as typical of the remnant by-and-by: they hear of the Son of David: He opens their eyes, and they follow Him. It may also be applied to the gospel which tells of One who opens the eyes of the blind; then to be followed by those who are healed.

The difficulties attending this narrative when compared with the accounts in the other gospels were considered in last year's volume, we do not therefore enter into them now.

OBSOLETE WORDS AND MEANINGS OF WORDS IN SCRIPTURE.

Mete, Exodus xvi. 18; Psalm lx. 6; Matthew vii. 2. To measure; from the Latin *metiri*, to measure.

Meteyard, Leviticus xix. 35. A yard or rod for measuring; a measuring rod.

Middlemost, Ezekiel xlii. 56. Nearest to the middle.

Milch, Genesis xxxii. 15; 1 Samuel vi. 7, 10. Milk-giving. Perhaps from same source as the German *milch*, milk.

Mincing, Isaiah iii. 16. Walking with nicety, or affected nicety.

Mind, to, Ruth i. 18; 2 Chronicles xxiv. 4; Matthew i. 19; 2 Corinthians i. 15, 17. To intend, purpose.

Minish. Same as diminish. From the Latin *minuere*, to lessen.

Mollify, Isaiah i. 6. To make soft.

Mortify, Romans viii. 13; Colossians iii. 5. "Put to death." From the Latin *mors*, death, and *facere*, to make.

Mote, a small particle. From the Anglo-Saxon *mot*, speck or spot.

Much, Philemon 8. "Very."

Muffler, Isaiah iii. 19. "A covering for the face;" but the word in the original is otherwise translated; as the "spangled ornaments" of the margin.

Munition, "a stronghold, or fortress." From the Latin *munitio*, a defending.

Naught, 2 Kings ii. 19; Proverbs xx. 14. "Of little value." Literally "nothing;" from the Anglo-Saxon *na wiht*.

Naughtiness, 1 Samuel xvii. 28; Proverbs xi. 6. Little worth, good-for-nothing-ness.

Neesing, Job xli. 18. Now written, "sneezing."

Nephew. It originally signified a "grandson;" but is used in other and wider senses in scripture.

Nether, nethermost. "Lower, lowest." From the Anglo-Saxon *nithera*, comparative of *nither*, below.

Obeisance. Literally "obedience;" shewing by bowing that you are ready to obey. From the French *obéissance*, from *obéir*, to obey.

Observed, Mark vi. 20. It is in the Greek, "kept safe." Perhaps the translators meant that Herod did not lose sight of John.

Occupier, Ezekiel xxvii. 27. "Trader," one occupied with anything.

Occupy, to. "To trade." From the Latin *occupare*, to lay hold of.

Occurrent, 1 Kings v. 4. "Occurrence." Nothing occurred to disturb the tranquillity of the king.

Odd number, Numbers iii. 48. Now written "odds," the number over and above any given number.

On, 1 Samuel xxvii. 11. Now written "of."

Once, Jeremiah xiii. 27. "Yet," or "again;" an indefinite future time being alluded to.

Or ever, Psalm xc. 2; Proverbs viii. 23; Canticles vi. 12; Daniel vi. 24. Signifies "ere," "before."

Orderings, 1 Chronicles xxiv. 19. "Arrangements."

Other, Joshua viii. 22; 2 Chronicles xxxii. 22; Job xxiv. 24; Luke xxiii. 32; Philippians ii. 3. Now written "others."

Ouche. "Socket." Perhaps from the old English *nouche*.

Outgoings. The places where we go out of our own land, &c.; the extreme boundaries.

Outlandish. Belonging to that which is out of the land; foreign.

Overcharge, Luke xxi. 34; 2 Corinthians ii. 5. "Excessively burdened."

Overlive, Joshua xxiv. 31. "Outlive."

Overpass, Jeremiah v. 28. Now written "pass over."

Overran, 2 Samuel xviii. 23. "Outran."

Palmer-worm. What insect is referred to is not now known; nor why the translators called it palmer-worm. Coverdale had "catterpillar." Some suppose that it is named after the pilgrims who were called "palmers," because they carried palm-branches. The insect wanders alone, devouring as it goes.

Paps. The breasts of the male or female. From the Latin *papilla*, the nipple.

Parcel. Piece, or portion, as of land.

Passeth, Ephesians iii. 19; Philippians iv. 7. Surpasseth.

Passion, Acts i. 3. In its literal meaning, "suffering." From the Latin *passio*.

Pate. Literally "the skull-pan;" the head. From the Latin *patina*, basin or pan.

Peculiar. That which is select, precious. From the Latin *peculium*, literally "a small private property."

Peeled, Isaiah xviii. 2, 7; Ezekiel xxix. 18. The word in the original signifies "to make smooth;" hence, to make bald, bare; to plunder.

Peep, to, Isaiah viii. 19; x. 14. Same as "to pipe," cry or chirp like a chicken. Perhaps from the French *pépier*, to chirp.

Peradventure. By adventure. Perhaps.

Plain, Genesis xxv. 27. Perhaps an *even* man, one not remarkable for anything, either good or bad; "simple."

Play, Exodus xxxii. 6; 1 Corinthians x. 7; 2 Samuel ii. 14; vi. 21; 1 Chronicles xiii. 8. The word in the original in Exodus is different from that used in the other passages; but both signify "to laugh, sport, dance."

Pommel, 2 Chronicles iv. 12, 13. Literally anything round. In 1 Kings vii. the same word is translated "bowls." A round projection on the pillars.

Post. Simply "a runner." One who ran with the letters.

Potsherd. Simply a shred or fragment of an earthenware pot,

Pottage. Anything cooked in a pot.

Presently. Not "after a little;" but "now, in the present time, at once."

Press-fat. Now the "vat" connected with the wine-press.

Prevent. In its literal meaning, "to come or go before." From the Latin *prævenire*, to come before.

Pricks. Goads, or any pointed instruments.

Proper, 1 Chronicles xxix. 3; Acts i. 19; 1 Corinthians vii. 7. In its original meaning, "one's own." From the Latin *proprius*. In Hebrews xi. 23 the word "proper" is quite different: Moses was seen to be "comely," or "beautiful."

Provoke. Used in some places in its literal meaning, "to call forth," "to stir up."

Publican. In its original meaning, one who collected the revenue from the public.

Pulse. Any grain or seed. Derivation not known.

Purtenance, Exodus xii. 9. The original word signifies "the inwards, or intestines." It is not easy to see why the word "purtenance" was used.

Quaternion. The number "four." From the Latin *quaternio*.

Quick. "Living." From the Anglo-Saxon *cwic*.

Quit. Same as acquit, set free.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

DEAR BROTHER,

I have read with much interest some articles in the "Worker" on our school libraries, and was very glad to see them, more especially as the subject is one to which I have directed some attention lately.

I suppose we all agree in considering a good library a valuable adjunct to a well-ordered school. What class of books should be found on the shelves of the library is the question. The answer to this is, no doubt, The most suitable books for those for whose benefit we have the library. Who are these? The elder scholars.

In our school I find the library is chiefly used by girls betweeen the ages of eight and fifteen. A few still older use it, but most girls, when over the age I have mentioned, are either in workshops or service, and have either no time or little inclination. Very few of our boys—I should say only about fifteen per cent.—read the books, and these boys are generally the younger ones. When I ask

the lads in my class (first boys) why they do not use the library, they generally tell me that they have no time, or that they have read all the books *they care for* that we have.

Now I know that boys and girls of that age, if not these very ones, read "penny dreadfuls," in which they take great interest, and look out for the next numbers with, I might say, almost breathless anxiety. Cannot we supply these young people with good literature, which will, instead of corrupting, improve their minds? I believe these impure papers are a great lever in Satan's hands, and by their means, very often the impressions made by the Sunday-school teaching is weakened and perhaps the truth taken altogether out of their minds, as in the case of the seed sown on the wayside.

Let us then see what books we can give them instead of this pernicious trash. For the elder boys I would say *good* books of travels, &c., such as "Livingstone," "Rob Roy Canoe in Palestine;" a few histories, especially of the Reformation. I know these books will find many objectors among our teachers: but, I ask, would they not give them to their own children? If they would, why not to their scholars, who in such matters I would, as much as possible, treat as my own children. Let us call this class A.

Class B, Biographies of Christian men and women.

Class C, such books as "Pilgrim Street," "City Sparrows," books by A. L. O. E. (Parables, see F. P.'s article in the "Worker" for October, *not on any account* Novels.) This it might be well to make the largest class in the school.

Class D, bound magazines, "Good News," &c.

Class E, a few Elementary Educational books, such as "Simple Science," "The Boy Philosopher," for instance. This class might be large or small, as convenient to the district.

Class F, "Teachers' Reference," "Synopsis," "Englishman's Greek Concordance and Testament," and other books.

Of course a most careful discrimination would have to be used in selecting the books, especially for classes A, B, C and E. Much too depends on the amount of money at the librarian's disposal.

Hoping these few practical words may find a place in your magazine.

ONE INTERESTED IN THE LIBRARY.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

DEAR SIR,

I trust you will excuse the liberty in writing to you, but I wanted a few suggestions as to the Sunday school.

1. Are there not collective responsibilities as well as individual? Surely each teacher is responsible to Christ for the way, and what, he teaches; but then, has he not responsibilities in connection with the school through his being part, and not the whole? else it seems to me, for example, that a teacher who did not feel happy in addresses being given at the close of the school might dismiss his class at the close of teaching, and leave before school was over, which would not be conducive to order; and hence, as a consequence, if teachers do not feel corporate responsibilities, they will not feel the need of coming together to cry to God for His blessing upon the school as a whole.

2. Would you not look upon a person having a class at home in a different light from his having one at school?

3. Ought there not to be *some* system of discipline? For one has been often pained to see children come into school at all times (of course very thankful to see them then), and for them to be allowed to do pretty well as they like; and some teachers giving their scholars sweets to keep them quiet—is not such a course of acting humiliating in the extreme? And are we not, while seeking to avoid the *errors* of system, in danger of allowing room for the exercise of selfwill on the part of the scholars, and doing away with decency and order?

If you should feel at liberty to furnish a few suggestions as to this through your valuable periodical, I should be very thankful; and it no doubt would prove helpful, not only to myself, but many more.

A WORKER.

1. There are certainly corporate responsibilities in a Sunday school. Whatever the teachers agree to, ought to be cheerfully carried out by each one of the teachers. Although it may be against my own judgment, I should bow to the judgment of the many.

2. There is a little difference between a class held in a private house and the Sunday school generally, but no rule can be laid down. Sometimes it is judged best to hold Bible classes in private houses for those too old for the Sunday school; and, of course, it is open for any Christians to gather a few children around them in their own houses, and seek to lead them to Christ, where for any godly reason they cannot join with others.

3. As to discipline, we are more than ever convinced that it ought to be insisted on. A school in disorder is the teachers' and superintendent's fault. Children are very quick to discover when they may do as they like, and when they may not, and they ought to be taught *at the first* that they may not do as they like. It is the firmness of love that is needed. A want of this does the children a great deal of harm, and keeps the school in disorder.

EARLY PUBLIC WORSHIP.

MR. EDITOR,

Do any of the quite early writers describe how public worship, as it is called, was conducted in their day? I think anyone reading the New Testament must be struck with the wide divergence between what is found therein and what is seen in any of our modern churches and chapels. I am aware that some writers maintain that no definite rules are laid down in scripture, and therefore that all are free to adopt any plan that does not actually clash with scripture: this I do not admit, and I have often wondered whether the writings of the early Fathers would throw any light upon the innovations.

G. R.

We fear there is not much light to be thrown upon these questions in the early writers. People do not generally write about what is well known at the time. Still a few things may be noted.

It seems clear that at first there were no public buildings erected for the purpose, but that Chris-

tians met together just where they could. "A large upper room" was the meeting place in the Acts, and such rooms no doubt were often made use of. One of the early accusations against the Christians was that they had no temples, which was taken as a sign of their atheism and impiety; and those who wrote in reply to such accusations in no way denied the charge. Still they had their places of meeting, and in the reign of Alexander Severus (A.D. 222—235) there was a contention about a public place, which the Christians had seized and held against the vintners. The emperor decided in favour of the Christians, remarking that "it was much better that God should be worshipped there any way than that the vintners should possess it." Persecution in a great measure prevented the creation of public buildings, but in favourable times places were erected purposely for the meetings of Christians.

One thing is clear, that the early Christians met together every Sunday to break bread; but perhaps we had better give the description from Justin Martyr (A.D. 114—165). "On the day called Sunday all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have

been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows, and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need. But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead."—*First Apology.*

We give this for the one fact that they broke bread every Sunday. The heading to the section we quote is "Weekly Worship of the Christians." Strange things had already crept into their worship. We might well ask why they mixed water with their wine, and why they carried the bread and wine to those who were absent. Who the president was we are not told; we read of no such person in the scripture. Indeed one is struck in reading even the early Fathers at the immense chasm there is between scripture and that which even the associates of the apostles wrote. In one respect it is well that it should be so, so that these writings should not be confounded with scripture, especially as some of them were in early days bound up with the New Testament and were read in the churches.

"He that observeth the wind, shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap."

NOTES ON SCRIPTURE.

Matthew xxi.

VERSES 1–11. This is Christ's presentation to the nation as their king. Although God had ulterior purposes to carry out, that did not interfere with the real presentation of Christ to the nation under His various characters; but, alas, to be followed only by their rejection of Him, and the sealing of their doom.

The purport of Christ's riding into Jerusalem upon the colt is made plain by the quotation from the Old Testament: "Tell ye the daughters of Sion, Behold thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass." This may be from Isaiah lxii. 11, and Zech. ix. 9.

Christ sent His disciples to fetch the ass and its colt, that He might in a direct way thus ride into Jerusalem, the seat of the Jewish nation; and a great multitude going before and following after cried, "Hosannah to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosannah in the highest."

This is doubtless an application of Psalm cxviii. Verses 25, 26 read, "Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord! O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." The word "Hosanna" signifies "save now," as we read in the Psalm. This, with the term "Son of David," the people ought to have connected with that remarkable passage in Isaiah ix.: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given . . . . of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David." But alas, the nation had not eyes to recognise their Messiah and King.

In some of the other Gospels the cries of the multitude are even plainer as to this presentation as King: "Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord." (Mark xi. 10.) "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord." (Luke xix. 38.) "Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord." (John xii. 13.) So that Christ was loudly proclaimed to the nation as their King, and though this was done by a great multitude, so that "all the city was moved," the Pharisees were much displeased and sought to stop the proclamation.

And even as to the multitude, it may have been that some who thus cried were the same who afterwards cried out, "Away with him, away with him." How many there are who have even to this day raised joyful exclamations on Palm Sunday, as this is called, who have in no way bowed their hearts to that One whose glory it professes to celebrate. Even on this occasion, when the question was asked, Who is this? the answer was, "This is Jesus, the *prophet* of Nazareth of Galilee. Not a word of His being their King.

John is the only evangelist that names the palm-trees in connection with this event. Our Gospel says branches from the trees. This was a royal honour, and see 2 Kings ix. 13 for the strewed garments.

The Godhead of our Lord here shines out. He knew exactly where the asses were to be found if far out of sight. And He was able to insure obedience in the owners to His wishes.

The wording in Matthew might seem to imply that Christ rode upon both the foal and its mother. "Sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. . . . The disciples brought the ass and the colt,

and put on them their clothes, and they sat him thereon." The prophecy in verse 5 may be read "upon an ass, *even* a colt the foal of an ass;" and the other three Gospels mention the colt only; so that it is most probable that the mother was allowed to accompany the colt, which was young enough for it to be said of it, "whereon never man sat."

Notice the word "meek" in the prophecy; and contrast this peaceful riding upon an ass, with the same Jesus "with eyes like a flame of fire, coming forth on a white horse to judge and make war." (Rev. xix. 11.) And contrast Christ as a Saviour now, and His coming in judgment on those that know not God, and those who obey not the Gospel. Good use may also be made of the quotation from Isaiah lxii. 11, which, instead of 'thy king cometh,' reads 'thy salvation cometh.' The one who was King is also salvation or the Saviour.

EXAMPLES OF SCRIPTURE LESSONS.

XI.—Jesus at the Marriage Feast.

John ii. 1-11.

Teachers will find this a portion of the sacred record specially pleasing and interesting to their scholars. There is something wonderfully beautiful in it.

We see Jesus in the midst of one of earth's happiest scenes, where every heart is calculated to be full of joy and gladness, from the bride and bridegroom down to the very servants, and yet He Himself shining out in such a striking manner that everything else is lost sight of, and, like the disciples at the transfiguration we see no man save "Jesus only." His mother, His disciples, the

governor, all seem to vanish in the crowd, and Jesus stands out in bold relief as the One who engages all our attention and draws forth our admiration.

Oh, that it were so with all our dear scholars, and that it were more constantly so with us, for surely if our souls were more engaged with Him —His love and loveliness, His sorrows and joys, His sufferings and glory—then we should speak to our scholars in such a manner that they would see, at any rate, that we were in the enjoyment of the blessings we invite them to receive.

It will be well for teachers to go into the details of this portion, dwelling upon the points which are likely to be difficult for their scholars to understand. We can well imagine some little one asking how large the six water-pots were, and what was the meaning of "two or three firkins," and then why Jesus made so much wine. These are little questions perhaps, but they require right answers. Some infidels have raised questions on these points and tried to cast doubt upon the truth of the statement, or to cast a slur upon the Lord for making so much wine. But it is necessary to remember that at these feasts there were a great many guests, and that they generally continued about seven days. And, moreover, it makes the miracle the more striking—the larger the quantity the greater the miracle, at least to men's minds; though it would be just as really a miracle to turn one drop of water into wine as an ocean, and He who could do the one could do the other.

It may also be necessary to explain what a "governor of the feast" was. Indeed it is always necessary in dealing with children to find out what they do and what they do not understand. We are

apt to take too much for granted, and so miss the end we have in view.

ut per haps the most important lesson to learn is that when *their* source of joy (of which wine is a type) had run out, and they had nothing left but water (type of death), He turns that same water into wine, such as they had not tasted before. It will be easy to use this as an illustration of the truth that Jesus can give such joy as we can get nowhere else, in fact turn our very sorrows into joy.

"Jesus only, He can give
Sweetest pleasures while we live."

But still, however much joy He may be pleased to give us down here, we know that when we get into that place which He has gone to prepare for us, we shall have to say, like the governor of the feast, "Thou hast kept the good wine until now," or, like the queen of Sheba, "The half hath not been told."

Some of our elder scholars may be inclined to think that Jesus being present on such an occasion as this, warrants them in going to places of worldly festivity and amusement. But we would ask such this question, "Did Jesus go there for himself or for God?" and if they cannot go to such places for the same object, they had better stay away. Satan often ensnares young believers in this way, and they only find it out when they have lost their first joy, and then bitterly regret being drawn aside from the path of obedience to Him.

But now to draw attention to the 11th verse: "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory, *and his disciples believed on him.*" This may be used as an occasion for pressing home upon the scholars the

question whether they believe on Him. And this we feel it very important to do as often as possible, until it is manifest that they do believe on Him, not only as the worker of miracles, but as the Saviour of sinners, who died that they might live, and know the blessedness of tasting that "good wine."

There is also another point. We are reminded by this marriage of that one which is yet future, in which we who believe in Him shall have such a blessed part, when He shall be the bridegroom and we the bride, and blessed shall they be who are called unto the marriage of the Lamb.

NOTES OF LESSONS FOR A BIBLE CLASS.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

We have now gone through the book of Job, but we passed over an important verse in the last chapter, where Job confesses to God; "I have uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me which I knew not."

We must remember that Job had been trying to explain the dealings of God towards him, and we have seen what sad mistakes he fell into, and really made himself out to be more righteous than God.

And many a one has made as great mistakes. Who can explain why a Christian, who has up to a certain point been zealous and useful, is laid aside on a bed of sickness and there kept for years? It is for the Christian to *believe* that all that happens to him is for his good, because God has said that all things shall thus work together; but to believe it is one thing, and to be able to explain the why and the wherefore is quite another. They are "things too wonderful for me."

The Christian is said to walk by faith and not by sight, and this implies that we are called upon to believe in what we cannot see ; and it is a great thing for each Christian to be able to say from his heart, "God is for me." If I get firm hold on this, then I am sure that all that comes upon me is either sent or permitted by my Father who loves me : and I must wait till by-and-by to have His ways explained to me.

Now in contrast to this is the outward prosperity of the wicked, as described in Psalm lxxiii. : "There are no bands in their death ; but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men ; neither are they plagued like other men. . . . . Their eyes stand out with fatness ; they have more than heart could wish." (Vers. 4–7.) Thus a man goes on in life in outward prosperity, careless and at his ease. But when death comes to summon such away, how awful the change ! Who would not prefer the lot of Job with all his losses and all his sickness, and know, as Job learnt at last, that it was all of God : "Now mine eye seeth thee," than to have prosperity and ease here, but have nothing to fall back upon when calamity comes, but a dreadful and a lasting perdition.

In reference to Job it is worthy of note that twice in Ezekiel is he named along with Noah and Daniel, as three righteous men who, when God deals with His guilty people Israel, should be able to deliver themselves, but themselves only, not their sons and daughters. See chapter xiv. 14, 20.

Also we read in James v. 11, "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord : that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy." This is after the manner of God

in speaking of Old Testament saints. He speaks of the good in them, and says nothing of their failures. Now, though Job misunderstood God's dealings with him, yet he did not turn away from God. When tempted even by his own wife to curse God and die, he rebuked her, and said, "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" Let us remember too the crushing calamities that befel him, and those too in quick succession, giving no time for the mind to recover from one shock before another came; and yet he said, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." And though his body was full of sores yet he endured to the end. And this God has held up to Christians as a pattern of endurance. And though, for our good, God sees it necessary to chasten us, yet, as here, we are assured that He is "very pitiful and of tender mercy." We should ever remember this, for by nature we are apt to have hard thoughts of God when sorrow, trial, and affliction come upon us; but He has been pleased to give us an assurance that all things work together for the best to those that love God and are the called according to His purpose.

May God bless our consideration of the book of Job. We learn from it that when God works in a soul, nothing of all that Satan even can bring against that soul can crush out the life that God has given. It is an eternal life, and Satan cannot touch it. And the discipline that Job went through is one of great value for a Christian to keep in memory all his journey through. It was God who first spoke to Satan, and it was God who was above it all to bring blessing to Job's soul. So He disciplines us for our good. And the lesson that

Job learnt is a lesson we all have to learn, and the sooner we learn it the better. So that we can truly confess, "I am vile;" "In my flesh dwelleth *no* good thing," that the excellency of all we are and all we have may be in Christ Jesus our Lord.

OBSOLETE WORDS AND MEANINGS OF WORDS IN SCRIPTURE.

Ragged, Isaiah ii. 21. Same as "rugged."

Ranges, Leviticus xi. 35. A cooking furnace; place for the pots.

Ravin, Genesis xlix. 27; Psalm xvii. 12 (margin); Nehemiah ii. 12. To plunder, tear in pieces. Perhaps from "raven," to seize and tear like a raven. Plunder.

Ready, Ezra vii. 6; Psalm xlv. i. Swift.

Reins. Literally "the kidneys;" but used for the innermost part of the frame, generally as the seat of the mind. From the Latin *renes*.

Replenish. "To fill," not "to fill again," as it really signifies.

Reprobate, Jeremiah vi. 30. "Rejected." Applied now only to persons.

Reprove. This word does not always imply censure, but is sometimes "to refute," "to convict."

Rereward. Now written "rearward."

Reward. Returns made for evil as well as good.

Road, 1 Samuel xxvii. 10. Same as "raid."

Sackbut. A stringed musical instrument; not as now used for the trombone. From the French *saquebute*, a wind instrument, perhaps confounded with the Latin *sambuca*, a stringed instrument. In the Hebrew it is *sabbeca*.

Scall. Same as "scab."

Scrabbled, 1 Samuel xxi. 13. "To scrape," or "make marks," as in the margin.

Scrip. A sack or pouch. Perhaps from "scraps."

Secure. Its literal meaning is "without care,"

from the Latin *securus*. But this may be because we are safe, or because we are indifferent; and so its meaning is sometimes "careless." See Judges viii. 11; xviii. 7, 10; Micah ii. 8.

Sometimes. In the sense of "some time," once.

Soothsayer. It is curious to notice how the use of this word has departed from its literal meaning, which is "truth sayer." It is, perhaps, because they professed to tell the truth as to future events: fortune-teller.

Sorer, Hebrews x. 29. "More severe," worse.

Sottish, Jeremiah iv. 22. In its literal meaning, "foolish." From the French *sot*, stupid.

Sped, Judges v. 30. Not in the sense of "hastened," but "succeeded," in what they went after. The original word signifies "to find."

Stablish. Now written "establish."

Strait. Literally "to stretch tight," strain, contract; hence "difficult."

Stricken. Now written "struck." "Well stricken in years," advanced in years.

Sup up, Habakkuk i. 9. "Drink in;" but the different translations in the margin shew the difficulty of the passage.

Swaddle. Same as "to swathe," bind up.

Swine. Not used now for a single pig, as in Leviticus xi. 7, &c.

Seethe, to. "To boil," cook by boiling. From the Anglo-Saxon *seothan*.

Servitor, 2 Kings iv. 43. Simply "one who serves," a servant.

Several, severally. In its original meaning of "separate, separately." From "sever," to separate.

Sherd, Isaiah xxx. 14; Ezekiel xxiii. 34. Same as "shred," fragment. The word in the original signifies "potsherd."

Shoe-latchet. "A shoe-lace," or fastening.

Shroud, Ezekiel xxxi. 3. In the sense of "shelter," or "defence." The word in the original signifies "wood," or "forest."

Silverlings, Isaiah vii. 23. A piece of silver coin. It is elsewhere translated "silver," or "money."

Sith, Ezekiel xxxv. 6. "Since." From the old English *sithence.*

Skill, 'can skill,' 1 Kings v. 6; 2 Chronicles ii. 7, 8; xxxiv. 12. Those who can understand or know; skilful ones.

Slime. Not mud, but bitumen of some sort.

Sod, sodden. The old past tense and past participle of "seethe," to boil. Now written "seethed."

Sodering, Isaiah xli. 7. Now written "soldering."

Tabering, Nahum ii. 7. From "tabret," a small musical instrument; hence "to taber," or beat or tap: "beating upon their breasts."

Table. Often in the sense of "tablet," that which can be written on.

Tache. A catch, or loop, to which other things can be attached.

Tale, Exodus v. 8, 18; 1 Samuel xviii. 27; 1 Chronicles ix. 28. The number total of that which has been counted. See Tell.

Target. Rather "shield:" but in 1 Samuel xvii. 6 the word for target is elsewhere translated "spear," and it may be "a spear" [hung] between his shoulders.

Tell. In some places "to count, number;" as Gen. xv. 5, "tell the stars;" Ps. xxii. 17, "I may tell all my bones." From the Anglo-Saxon *tellan*, to number.

Temperance. "Moderation" generally; not confined to drink.

Tempt. Used in its literal sense of "to stretch out," try the strength of, not confined to evil. "God did tempt Abraham," tried the strength of his faith. "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust," his evil desires.

Tetrarch. The ruler of a *fourth* part of a province.

Tire, Ezekiel xxiv. 17. Attire for the head.

Tire, to, 2 Kings ix. 30. To attire, adorn.

Translate. In its literal meaning, "to carry over." We should now say "transfer."

Travel, Numbers xx. 14; Lamentations iii. 5. Written elsewhere "travail," pain, labour.

Turtle, Leviticus xii. 8, xv. 29; Numbers vi. 10: Canticles ii. 12; Jeremiah viii. 7. Not the sea-tortoise, but, as elsewhere translated, the turtle-dove.

Twain. "Two." From the Old English, *twayne*.

Unction. "Anointing." From the Latin *unctio*.

Undersetter, 1 Kings vii. 30. Something set under, support.

Undertake, Isaiah xxxviii. 14. "Become surety" for me.

Unmoveable. Now written "immovable."

Unperfect. Now written "imperfect;" but as this word has two meanings, it would not do for "unperfect" in Psalm cxxxix. 16.

Untoward, Acts ii. 40. "Not toward," across, crooked, perverse.

Usury. "Interest," not confined to exorbitant interest. From *usura*, a using.

Utter, Ezekiel x. 5; xlii. 1. "Outer."

Vagabond. In its literal sense, "wandering." From the Latin *vagari*.

Vain. "Empty," worthless. From the Latin *vanus*, empty.

Venison. The flesh of any animal taken in hunting. From the Latin *venatio*, hunting.

Very, Genesis xxvii. 21; John vii. 26. "True."

Vile. In its literal meaning, "of small price," worthless. From the Latin *vilis*.

Volume, Psalm xl. 7; Hebrews x. 7. In its literal meaning, "roll," or scroll. From *volumen*, a roll.

Washpot. Pot for washing.

Wasteness, Zephaniah i. 15. "Devastation," that which wastes.

Wax, to. "To grow or increase." From the Anglo-Saxon *weaxan*.

Wayfaring man. A traveller, one going his way.

Wealth, wealthy. Used sometimes for "well-being" generally.

Well-favoured. Well-looking.

Wench, 2 Samuel xvii. 17. "A young woman of low birth;" but this is not conveyed in the original. It is often translated "handmaid," sometimes "maid-servant."

Whether, Matthew xxi. 31. "Which?"

Whit. Literally "creature, or thing," but used also for the smallest particle imaginable.

Whole. "Hale," sound, well.

Wimple, Isaiah iii. 22. A veil folded round the neck and face. In Ruth iii. 15 the same word is translated "veil."

Winebibber. Wine-drinker. See "bibber."

Winefat. Wine-vat.

Wist. "Know." Past-participle of Anglo-Saxon *witan*, to know.

Wit. "Insight," understanding. From the same.

Without, 2 Corinthians x. 13–15. "Beyond."

Witty, Proverbs viii. 12. "Skilful."

Wont. "Accustomed." From the Old English *won*, *wone*, to dwell.

Work, to, Romans iv. 15; v. 3; 2 Corinthians vii. 10. "Work out," produce.

Wot, wotteth. From "to wit."

Wreathen. "Twisted," or infolded, like a wreath.

Yesternight. "The night (and evening) of yesterday," as now we say, "last night."

CHILDREN PASSED THROUGH THE FIRE.

Dear Mr. Editor,

Will you please explain what is meant by passing children through the fire? It is often referred to in the Old Testament, and is said to be an "abomination of the heathen." T.

This was forbidden by the law as given by

Moses, "Thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech." (Lev. xviii. 21.) But "they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination," &c. (2 Kings xvii. 17.)

The only question of any difficulty is whether the expression "to pass through the fire" signifies an actual sacrifice, or passing the children between two fires as a purification, or as a devoting the children to this heathen god.

The Jewish writers mostly contend for the latter and say that the children were not actually put to death, but passed between the fires for purification. Of course, if this were done to a heathen god, it would be an acknowledgment of that god, and be in fact an act of idolatry; but by referring to a few passages we shall see that the scriptures put a much more serious aspect on the rite.

In 2 Kings xvi. 3, we read of Ahaz that "he made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen;" but in 2 Chronicles xxviii. 3, it is distinctly stated he "burnt his children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathen." Now this latter would explain what is meant by the expression "to pass through the fire," and place the burning beyond a question. Again in Jeremiah vii. 31, the accusation is "they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom *to burn* their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I commanded them not;" and chapter xxxii. 35 connects the valley of the son of Hinnom with passing the children through the fire to Molech; implying that the children were burnt there.

Again in Psalm cvi. 37, 38, we read "they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto

devils, and shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan; and the land was polluted with blood."

These passages surely prove—dreadful as it may seem—that the Israelites actually offered up their children as sacrifices to the gods of Canaan, of which Molech was one of the principal. Tradition describes this god in the form of a hollow image, in which a fire was lit, and when heated the victims were laid in his extended arms, and consumed; drums being sounded to drown their cries. But some passages are thought to imply that the children were first slain and then burnt. See Ezekiel xvi. 20, 21.

One other question remains, namely, how many and which of the children were sacrificed. In the passage quoted from 2 Chronicles xxviii. 3 it says that Ahab burnt "his children" in the fire. We need not conclude from this that he burnt all his children; for a passage in Ezekiel xx. 26, charges them with making all their firstborn to pass through the fire; and as a man had several wives, so the firstborn of each may have been thus sacrificed. And here we see one of the devices of Satan. As God had sanctified all the firstborn to Himself, but which were redeemed by the Levites (Num. iii. 12, 13); so Satan, in imitation, would have all the firstborn dedicated to him, not however to be redeemed, but in cruelty to be sacrificed to the god Molech, making good his character as a murderer from the beginning.

That God's chosen people Israel could have fallen into such dreadful cruelty with their idolatry should be a solemn warning to professing Christendom lest Satan should lead them likewise into

being mere instruments in his hands to work out his murderous designs, and that too under the name of religion.

TEACHERS' MEETINGS.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

I have been hoping for some time past to hear of another general teachers' meeting in London. I believe hitherto they have been profitable occasions and it seems a pity we have so few of them. I beg to suggest that we have one quarterly, and that a few brethren be appointed to undertake the carrying out of such a plan. If you would be willing to act in the matter, I venture to think many would be very glad. B.

[This reminds us that we have not had lately any reports of Teachers' Meetings from the country. It may be that the meetings were not sufficiently definite in character to call for report. We hope our friends will not forget to communicate anything of general interest. As to B.'s proposal the thing is very simple: if one school would give an invitation for the first meeting, the question could be asked, Where shall we meet next? The time and place being then named would save all trouble of sending out invitations; and as to time, it might perhaps stand for the third Tuesday in the months of January, April, July and October. One thing ought to be understood that each school inviting is quite free to invite to tea or not; and if tea is given, all who attend the meeting may be asked to have fellowship in the expenses. What is good for London would also be good for the country, in any district where a few schools are near enough to reach a central spot.—ED.]

G. Morrish, 20, Paternoster Square.





