

will seem long, I suspect. I do not think we can sleep much."

No answer.  
I went to his side, laying my hand upon his shoulder, continuing in the same voice, "Or would you rather give me the promise now and go home? Have you made up your mind?"

"Yes, sir," came with a sob.  
"You think you will take care in future to set a good example before the younger ones?"

"Yes, sir."

"You may go, then."  
He shot out of the door on a run. His home was a mile and a half through the woods. I had some misgivings. Not that I had done right, but I was engaged to a pretty cousin of Jack's, and I was not certain how the family would take it. I was soon reassured. His father had started after him, and not getting much satisfaction from the boy as to his delay, came on to my boarding-place. I explained just how it was.

"You have done a good thing," said the father. "Jack is a good boy, and so good-natured, that somehow when he does do wrong at home he slips out of it."

So it proved. John McCloud has been a popular and successful minister many years. Only a few months since I met him, when he laughingly told the story of that night in the old school-house, adding, seriously, "It was the turning-point of my life."—*The Interior.*

TEASE.

There are many bad habits which, though they cannot be called by so severe a name as vices, still less crimes, are, nevertheless, grave faults, regrettable on all accounts, and working a great deal of mischief when indulged in. One of them is the habit of teasing.

The habitual teaser is to be found in almost every circle, and often his indulgence in the practice is so excessive as to render his society odious, and his very affection more a pain than a pleasure. So soon as he makes a new acquaintance he prowls around him, sniffing out the vulnerable points where he may lodge his attacks, and fasten his keen teeth with more or less cruelty of purpose. A certain kind of man does this to all the young people who come in his way, just as certain older children tease all the little fellows who cannot defend themselves, and who have to submit to the rough play of the stronger under pain of worse befalling them. If the girl is shy and awkward, the teaser seizes on every opportunity to put her in difficult and prominent positions, and enjoys nothing so much as the poor victim's uncontrollable confusion and distress. He looks so deep that the whole face flames; eyes filled with tears; nervous trepidation so intense that the voice fails, and the hand trembles, and the weak head whirrs, while the little self-possession ever to be counted on—little enough at the best—is lost in the anguish of the moment, are pleasures to him of which we may hope that he does not realize the cruelty involved. He thinks Lucinda a little fool to be so perturbed about nothing, and he may add to this a half kind of notion that it will do her good to accustom her to things which are now so painful. He teases because he thinks it fine fun to see her poignant distress for so small a matter; much as Lucinda herself would probably tease her own dog Tiny by pretending to throw the stone while all the time holding it in her hand; or Trust with the lump of sugar on the quivering little black nose; or as she might tease baby brother by making believe to hide from him outside the door, till brought back by the piercing yell, for which she would call him a little goose, and kiss him till he laughed again.

Teasing goes on at home often to a lamentable extent, and more than one temper has been permanently soured by the process. The parents tease the children, and the children tease each other, till the passionate are made furious, the meek tearful, the humble craven, the sensitive callous, and the quiet morose. If one child has a certain ungainly habit—consequent, perhaps, on a physical defect as the peering of short sight, or the limp of lameness, if it is absent or dreamy or clumsy, those who are given to the bad habit of teasing never let it alone. No callow cygnet was ever more cruelly pecked at by the full-fledged ducks than is the poor ugly duckling of the nursery; and unless that cruel play is stopped by the authorities the mischief of a life is wrought. Nothing, indeed, in a house demands more careful overlooking and more vigorous and judicious suppressing than this habit of teasing indulged in by the members of a family one with the other; for the sport of the one is here again emphatically death to the other; and when you have broken the finer nature that lies in every soul, how will you mend it?

But it does not answer to be too sensitive, and to make a martyrdom out of a little harmless play that means to do no one any hurt. The only way in which to meet those who make teasing in a manner a profession is with

perfect good-humor and serenity. To be cross or tearful is to lay yourself open to worse assaults; for the teaser only wants to know which place is most vulnerable, and where he can best wound you. Give him this vantage-ground, and he will use it to your discomfiture; mask your weak places and he is powerless. This is a lesson which the young find it difficult to learn, but the sooner it is learned, and the more thoroughly practised, the better for them and the worse for their assailants. It is in fact a lesson on desirability for good temper, which we all find about the best friend and the most satisfactory defender to be had on our way through life.—*Home Journal.*

WHAT "THOU SHALT NOT STEAL" MEANS.

The thing that is needed is that the command "Thou shalt not steal" should be translated into the terms of modern commercial life. It ought to be shown, to begin with, that cheating is stealing; that every transaction in which by deceit or concealment or misrepresentation a man obtains money or other values that he could not have obtained if he had told the truth, is a direct infraction of the eighth commandment; that he who gains an advantage by telling a lie or by hiding the truth in a commercial transaction, is just as really a thief, in the sight of God's law, as he who picks his neighbor's pocket.

Then, it ought to be shown with equal distinctness that the commandment forbids all violations of the law of trust. He who appropriates to his own uses property entrusted to him for safe keeping is a thief. He who risks in private speculation the property which has been placed in his hands for specific purposes is a thief. The boy who spends the money of his Sunday-school class, or of his ball-club, for his own purposes, breaks the eighth commandment. He may intend to replace the money thus taken; he may think he knows just where he will be able to obtain it; but this gives him no right to take it. Every penny of it ought to be sacredly kept, that he may give at any moment an exact account of his stewardship.

Such distinct applications of the Bible law of honesty to the affairs of every day are always needed, and if the pulpit has failed at all, it has probably failed just here. It is not only true, as the venerable pastor says, that we have not made enough of honesty, it is also true that we have not made it so plain as we ought to have done what honesty requires and forbids. Specific and elementary teaching from the pulpit on this point would be timely and serviceable.—*Sunday Afternoon.*

THE NEXT BEST THING.

"Mr. Monoton," said my grandmother, "I have no wood to burn to-day. What shall I do?"

"Oh, send Louisa round to pick up some," said the good man, making a stride toward the door.

"But she has picked up all she can find."

"Then let her break up some old stuff."

"But she has broken up everything already."

"Oh! well, then, do the next best thing—I must be off," said the farmer; and off he was, whistling as he went, and no doubt wondering in his heart what the next best thing would turn out to be.

Noon came, and with it came my grandfather and four hungry laborers. My grandmother stood in the kitchen, spinning on her great wheel, and singing a pleasant little ditty; Louisa was scouring in the back room, and the cat purring on the hearth before a black and fireless chimney, while the table sat in the middle of the room ready for dinner, with empty dishes.

"Well, wife, here we are," said my grandfather, cheerily.

"So I see," said she placidly. "Have you had a good morning in the cornfield?"

"Why, yes, so so. But where is the dinner?"

"In the pot on the doorstep. Won't you see if it is done?"

And on the doorstep, to be sure, sat the great iron pot, nicely covered, but not looking particularly steamy. My grandfather raised the cover, and there lay all the ingredients of a nice boiled dinner—everything prepared in the nicest manner, and all the vegetables as raw as they had ever been. My grandfather stared, and my grandmother joined another roll to the yarn upon her distaff, and began another verse of her song.

"Why, woman, what does this mean?" began my grandfather, indignantly. "This dinner isn't cooked at all!"

"Dear me, is it not? Why, it has set in the sun this four hours."

"Set in the sun!"

"Yes, you told me to try the next best thing to having a fire, and I thought setting my dinner in the sun was about that."

My grandfather stood doubtful for a moment, but finally his sense of humor overcame

his sense of injury, and he laughed aloud. Then picking up his hat, he said,—

"Come, boys, we might as well start for the woods. We shall have no dinner till we have earned it, I perceive."

"Won't you have some bread and cheese before you go?" asked my grandmother, generous in her victory, as women always are. And so she won the day.—*Watchman.*

HOWEVER EARLY in the morning you seek the gate of access, you find it already open; and however deep the midnight hour when you find yourself in the sudden arms of death the winged prayer can bring an instant Saviour near.—*James Hamilton.*

Question Corner.—No. 2.

Answers to these questions should be sent in as soon as possible and addressed EDITOR NORTHERN MESSENGER. It is not necessary to write out the question, give merely the number of the question and the answer. In writing letters always give clearly the name of the place where you live and the initials of the province in which it is situated.

BIBLE QUESTIONS.

13. Who was reigning king of Babylon at the time of its capture by the Medes?
14. What exile returned and rebuilt the walls of the city of his fathers?
15. What aged person waited in Jerusalem the coming of the Messiah?
16. What king was carried captive to Babylon and brought back to Jerusalem?
17. What prophet mentions by name three men eminent for righteousness? Who were they?
18. What was the total number of the children of Israel when they first went down into Egypt?
19. How many were there when they came up out of Egypt?
20. Who slew eighty-five priests and by whose command did he do so?
21. What king of Judah had not seen a copy of the law until he was twenty-six years old?
22. What treasurer built for himself a sepulchre in which he was never laid?
23. What two false prophets of the same names as a king of Israel and a king of Judah were burned by Nebuchadnezzar?
24. Where is it said—"Them that honor me I will honor; and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed"?

BIBLICAL ENIGMA.

- My whole is composed of 42 letters.  
My 13, 26, 31, 7 was the son of Ham.  
My 27, 32, 17, 22, 11, 41, 2, 8, 9, 10, 10 was my 32, 15, 25, 18, 6, 28, 39.  
My 1, 16, 23, 37, 31, 14, 29, 27, 32 was a town at the lower part of Canaan.  
My 20, 7, 36, 17, 35, 14 is a place of Christian worship.  
My 3, 38, 42, 11, 8, 37 was a queen of Israel.  
My 32, 40, 25, 12, 33, 22 was a Jewish custom.  
My 16, 28, 12, 4, 7, 32 was a prophet.  
My 34, 32, 33, 12, 29, 2 was another noted prophet.  
My 37, 21, 6, 11 was an affectionate daughter-in-law.  
My 1, 3, 42, 7, 19, 28 means "House of God."  
My 34, 12, 34, 24, 9, 21, 5 was another name for Thomas.  
My whole is a verse to be found in Romans.

ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS IN NO. 24.

205. Hananiah from Jeremiah, Jer. xxviii. 10, 11.
206. Joshua, Josh. viii. 2.
207. Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, 1 Kings, xii. 28.
208. Oshes, Num. xiii. 16.
209. Nebuchadnezzar, he was compelled to dwell with the beasts of the field, Dan. iv. 30.
210. The Israelitish spies sent to spy out Jericho, Joshua ii.
211. The vision of the Cherubim, Ezekiel i. 1, 28.
212. Nebuchadnezzar, 2 Kings xxv. 7.
213. Joseph, Gen. xxxix. 5.
214. David, 1 Chron. xxix. 1, 5.
215. Fifty-two years after the destruction of the first, by Zerubbabel and 536 B.C.
216. Haggai, ii. 3.

BIBLE ENIGMA.

Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

CORRECT ANSWERS RECEIVED.

To No. 24.—Jessie H. Robson, 10 ac.; W. M. McMillan, 11 ac.; Annie Donaldson, 11 ac.; Francis Hooker, 11 ac.; Margaret Patton, 11 ac.; Mary Patton, 11 ac.  
To No. 25.—Florence Shular, 3; Anna A. B., 10 ac.; Emma E. Dasher, 8; Maggie J. McLeod, 10 ac.; Kenneth Bethune, 9; Margaret Patton, 12 ac.; Mary Patton, 12 ac.; Annie Donaldson, 12 ac.; Francis Hooker, 12 ac.; Arthur G. Adams, 4 ac.; Carrie Lewis, 10 ac.; Clarence Goodspeed, 10; D. Morton, 10 ac.; Elsie B. Kerr, ac.; Stephen S. Stevens, 10 ac.; James Rose, 11 ac.; Nellie Clark, 11 ac.; George Cann, 8; Lillie Jackson, 11 ac.; James E. Graham, 11 ac.; Addie E. Worsley, 10 ac.

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From the International Lessons for 1879, by Edw. W. Rice, as issued by American Sunday-School Union.)

LESSON III.

JANUARY 19.1  
THE MISSION OF NEHEMIAH. [About 445-444 B. C.]  
READ Neh. 2: 1-8.

1. And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him: and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetimes sad in his presence.
2. Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. I then I was very sore afraid.
3. And said unto the king, Let the king live forever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?
4. Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? so I prayed to the God of heaven.
5. And I said unto the king, If it please thy king, and if thy servant have found favor in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it.
6. And the king said unto me (the queen also sitting by him), For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me: and I set him a time.
7. Moreover, I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over: till I come into Judah.
8. And a letter unto A'saph, the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertaineth to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**

The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build.—Neh. 2: 20.

—o—

**CENTRAL TRUTH.**

Men's hearts are in God's hand.

CONNECTED HISTORY.—During the remainder of the long reign of Darius, the Jews had peace. But in the year 485 B. C., Ahasuerus ascended the throne, and reigned 29 years. During his reign occurred the events recorded in the book of Esther. (He is supposed to have been the Xerxes of classic history, who invaded Greece with five millions of Persians, and, at Thermopylae, met Leonidas and his three hundred Spartans.) Some scholars prefer to identify Artaxerxes (the son of Xerxes), with the Ahasuerus of the book of Esther, and think the queen mentioned in Neh. 2: 6, was Esther herself; but this is not well supported. During the reign of Artaxerxes (See Notes) there was a fresh migration of Jews to Jerusalem. B.C. 453, under Ezra, who received permission from the king and was accompanied by 3,000 of his countrymen, Ezra 7: 11-26.

NOTES ON PERSONS, etc.—*Ne-he-mi-ah*—comforted of Jehovah. *Ar-tax-er-xes*—mighty warrior, or king, called Longimanus from the great length of his arms and hands; reigned 465-425 B. C. *Ne-san*, the first month of the Jewish year, which began with the vernal equinox, our March-April. *A'saph*, the keeper of the royal forest or "paradise," of Artaxerxes; probably a Jew.

EXPLANATIONS AND QUESTION 4.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I.) SAD IN THE KING'S PRESENCE. (II.) GLADDENED BY THE KING'S PERMISSION. (III.) STRENGTHENED BY THE KING'S LETTERS.

I. SAD IN THE KING'S PRESENCE. (1.) MONTH NISAN, this was about four months after Nehemiah first heard of the state of affairs in Jerusalem, Ezra 1: 1; WINE, &c., Nehemiah was the king's cup-bearer, a very honorable and influential position. (2.) COUNTENANCE SAD. It is distressing to see people sad, and kings expected their favorites always to be happy in their presence, Esther 4: 2; SORE AFRAID, capricious despots inflicted the severest punishments, even death, when displeased. Nehemiah had a great request to make, and if it was refused, he also might be punished. (3.) LIVE FOREVER, a usual formula in addressing kings, 1 Kings 1: 34; Dan. 2: 4; 5: 10; 6: 6, 21; FATHERS' SEPULCHRES, only the kings were buried within the city walls. Some have inferred from this that Nehemiah was of the royal house; LIETH WASTE, as it had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, more than one hundred and forty years before, 2 Chron. 35: 19.

I. QUESTIONS.—How long a time had elapsed since the first company returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel? (See Connected History.) What kings had ruled? The place of the book of Esther in this history? The visit of Ezra to Jerusalem? Ezra 7: 11-24. State what you know of the reigning King Artaxerxes. Of Nehemiah's sadness before him.

II. GLADDENED BY THE KING'S PERMISSION. (4.) I PRAYED, ejaculatory prayer; GOD OF HEAVEN, the God of Israel, as distinguished from the heathen, idol gods. (5.) THE QUEEN, &c. It was not customary for queens to be at the royal banquet, but the Assyrian tablets show a king and a queen together at table, drinking wine. The other wife of Artaxerxes was Damsappa (some suppose Esther is the one referred to, see Connected History); I SET HIM A TIME, probably this was afterwards lengthened, since Nehemiah was the governor of the Jews for twelve years. Neh. 5: 14; and later again visited Jerusalem, Neh. 13: 6, 7.

II. QUESTIONS.—How did Nehemiah seek God's help? State the substance of his former prayer. The condition of the wasted city. Other examples of earnest prayer. Repeat Nehemiah's request to the king. What is known of the queen? The time of Nehemiah's absence?

III. STRENGTHENED BY THE KING'S LETTERS. (7.) GOVERNORS, pashas, or viceroys; BEYOND THE RIVER,