

tion; or because the giver would be ashamed to be reputed less generous than his neighbours; or because his pride would be offended if he were thought less rich than his neighbours. But he would be very glad to enjoy his reputation at a less sacrifice, or, at any rate, it is *as* the condition of his reputation that he gives. Men who think of these things are apt to consider that there is something rather refined and sentimental in the notion of the pleasure of giving. But when true benevolence is the actuating principle, giving is a pleasure, a positive enjoyment, an exaltation of our being.

Many have the disposition to give, and have not, or think they have not, the power. Such persons ought to endeavour to possess the power. They ought to increase their industry, they ought to increase their self-denial, they ought to increase their attention to every cent of their expenditure, that they may have to give to those that need. If we have the disposition to give we shall give what we can, we shall do our best that we may enjoy the blessedness of giving. An important truth is taught us by the Lord Jesus Christ in the observation he made on the giving of the poor widow. The positive amount she gave was trifling: this amount, as coming from her, was great. Others gave, but they had abundance left. Others gave what they had acquired by inheritance or obtained with ease. They could well afford it, and still enjoy their darling luxuries and comforts. What the widow gave she had acquired by toil; it was her subsistence for the day; she would have to toil again to-morrow for to-morrow's living; but to-day *all* she has she gives. She had the disposition to give. How much more happy was she in giving according to her ability, than she would have been if she had received a like sum, or even a larger one from her wealthier neighbours, as they passed into the temple.

#### WHO WAS SHE ?

The Sunday School lesson for the 25th of the present month takes for its subject the interesting and instructive incident narrated in Luke vii, 40-50. Not the least prominent of the characters who

figure therein is the "woman in the city who was a sinner." There appears to be a considerable diversity of opinion as to who this woman was: some asserting that she was Mary Magdalene, others the sister of Martha and Lazarus. And the whole of the evangelists have been brought forward to support the different hypotheses. It appears evident, however, by a careful perusal of the narrative given by Luke, that neither of these Marys is the person alluded to by him.

Matthew speaks of a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, who poured it on the *head* of Christ as he sat at meat. Mark records a similar circumstance in his fourteenth chapter, in which he says, "and being in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster-box of ointment of spikenard, very precious, and she brake the box, and poured it on his *head*." This evidently is the same woman spoken of by Mathew. But none of the circumstances agree with the account given by Luke; from which we must infer that they are entirely different. Our Lord, it appears, was sitting at meat in "one of the Pharisees' houses, and not in the house of Simon the leper, (though the name of this Pharisee was Simon, which at that time was very common). Nor is there any reasonable ground to suppose that it was at Bethany. Besides, the statement is twice repeated, once in the descriptive part of the narrative, and once in the very words of Christ which it records, that the ointment on this occasion was applied to our Lord's *feet*.

The more popular idea is that it was Mary Magdalene who was this "sinner"—this "woman of the city,"—but there is no evidence whatever, so far as we can learn, to sustain it. From anything that appears respecting her in the New Testament, we have no right to class her with the "fallen" ones of her sex, much less to identify her with the weeping penitent in whom the proud Simon could see nothing but vice and loathsomeness. We should be just to the dead as well as to the living. Let us, at any rate, be prepared to prove—before we assert it—that Mary Magdalene was that of which her name is commonly used as the synonym.

#### THE TEACHER'S AIM.

Last month we published a thoughtful article on this subject from the pen of one of our most thoughtful brethren. The positions taken by the writer must commend themselves to every one interested in the cause of Sunday Schools, and more especially to every earnest worker in this sphere of Christian usefulness. Without doubt the grand aim of the true teacher will be to lead the members of his class—every one of them—to Christ. He may have other aims, as the article referred to suggests, but these will be only such as depend for their value upon their relation to this greater one. The vine-dresser may evince prudent fore-thought in preparing the trellis for the vine, and arranging its branches thereon, before the returning spring has awakened its dormant life. But his great anxiety will have reference to the *condition of the plant*. His most careful and diligent efforts will be directed to the production—so far as this may depend upon human agency—of the signs of vitality. During the whole period within which the tender bud should show itself he will watch for its appearance: if it tarry he will wait for it.—The utility of anything he may have done to furnish abundant opportunity of fruit-bearing in the future will be determined by the ascertained life or death of the plant. Our illustration is not, it is true, in all respects a perfect one, but it is so far appropriate that it serves to show how naturally the conversion of the scholar will dominate every other aim of the intelligent and earnest teacher. By all means let "truth to *edify* be provided for the soul," in anticipation of the beginning of the new life; let the youth be taught, as far as possible, "the whole counsel of God," but let it never be forgotten that until the new life does begin any effort in this direction is of no immediate value, and if that new life should never begin would only tend to the greater condemnation of the lost soul. Teacher, let your chief business be "to store the young mind with *saving truth*." Endeavour to bring Christ out of every lesson. Labour earnestly for the conversion of your scholar, if you would not labour in vain and spend your strength for nought.