

Our Young Folks.

Misspent Evenings.

The boy who spends an hour of each evening lounging idly on the street corners, wastes in the course of a year three hundred and sixty-five precious hours, which if applied to study, would familiarize him with the rudiments of almost any of the familiar sciences.

Reading by Subjects.

But perhaps you don't know how to read by subjects. Let me tell you. Suppose you see an allusion to something that interests you—say Sir Walter Raleigh; look for his name in an encyclopaedia or biographical dictionary (which you will find in every tolerable village library).

If you have no special subject of interest, take up an encyclopaedia, slowly turn the leaves, and read any item that attracts you, not forcing yourself to read anything. If you have any life in you, you will find something to interest you; then you have your subject. If it is some historical person or event, proceed as I have already indicated; if scientific, overhaul the dictionaries of science, lives of scientific men, discussions of disputed points, etc.

Why Tides are Later Each Day.

As the moon revolves around the earth from west to east, she advances eastwardly in her orbit about thirteen degrees every twenty-four hours. Hence, when any part of the earth, in its revolution, comes under a part of the heavens where the moon was the evening before, the moon is not there, but has gone eastward thirteen degrees, and therefore the earth must turn on its axis as much longer as is necessary to bring that part again under the moon, which requires generally, not always, about fifty minutes.

The same thing occurs the next evening, and the evening after, and thus the moon rises most of the year about fifty minutes later each day. Now, as the tides are produced mainly by the moon, it will at once be seen from this eastward movement and this later rising each day, why they must occur about fifty minutes later each succeeding day.

It must not be supposed that the whole body of the ocean, to its profoundest depths, is equally moved by the tides. The tides are mainly superficial, and except where the water is of moderate depth the lowest parts are only slightly disturbed; but to what depth the tidal current extends can never, perhaps, be satisfactorily determined.

Gov. DEWE says that chronic kleptomania is Florida's great drawback. The people have it so badly that they live by stealing from one another.

The Foreign Missionary of the Presbyterian Church says, "Late letters from Oromiah, Persia, speak of a wonderful movement of grace at several of the out-stations. At one of these, three meetings were held each day for a week with an attendance of three or four hundred. One evening thirty-five impenitent persons arose and asked the prayer of God's people."

About 9,000 of the Ceylonese have sent a memorial to the Queen praying for disestablishment in Ceylon. They call attention to the fact that the payment of annual subsidies to a small body of Christians, out of the public revenues, to which all contribute, is a violation of the principle laid down by the royal proclamation of 1868, which announced that none would be either favored or disturbed by reason of their religious faith.

Sabbath School Teacher.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

LESSON XXV.

JUNE 24. ] THE DESTRUCTION OF NINEVEH. [ Nahum 1877. ] 1.1-18.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 8-7. PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Zeph. ii. 13; 2 Kings xix. 22-23.

SCRIPTURE READINGS.—With v. 1, read Gen. x. 11; with v. 2, read Josh. xxiv. 19; with v. 3, read Jonah iv. 2; with v. 4, read Matt. viii. 20; with v. 5, read 2 Peter iii. 10; with v. 6, read Rev. xvi. 9; with v. 7, read 2 Tim. ii. 10; with v. 8, read Ps. i. 6; with v. 9, read Ps. li. 1; with v. 10, read Mat. iv. 1; with v. 11, compare Dan. vii. 8, 21; with v. 12, read Ps. xxx. 6; with v. 13, read Jer. xxx. 8.

TO BE IDENTIFIED: Nineveh, Babel, Carmel, Lebanon, and Nahum the Elkoshite.

GOLDEN TEXT.—The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked.—Nahum i. 3.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—The Lord bears with but will not acquit the wicked.

INTRODUCTORY.—Our knowledge of the writer of this prediction is confined to verses 1. Two places, one near Tiberias, in Galilee, and one near Mosul, are set up as answers to the former. He flourished after Jonah, when Nineveh had returned to its sins; about the time, when, in like terms, Isaiah comforted Judah under the Assyrian assaults (2 Kings xviii. 16, 10), and when Assyria was in the height of her glory. It is to be noted that the world had not at this time a single example of a great capital ruined and desolate. There was nothing in the times to suggest such a prediction. The date of Nahum is placed about 700 B. C. Hezekiah was king of Judah. Israel had been carried captive. The warnings of Jonah (in connection with which read Nahum) having been forgotten, punishment is threatened. After one more warning from Zephaniah, the ruin came about one hundred years after the "burden" was recorded.

(Verse 1.) The prophets saw "things to come" with the eye of the mind; hence "vision." (See Num. xii. 6.) In this the prophet saw the sad and gloomy future of a great capital. It weighed on his own spirit. It would in its fulfillment weigh down the proud, wicked capital. (See Lesson VIII. for its greatness.)

(Verse 2.) "God is love." He desires his creatures' whole affection. He is displeased when it is not given. That displeasure is called—after the manner of men—"jealousy" (see Ex. xx. 5), which word represents the intensity of the feeling. (See Prov. vi. 34.) The same is true of "revenge," &c., not in passionate and uncontrollable anger and fury, but in just anger that cannot be turned aside. It is to be remembered that these awful things of God can only be revealed by being uttered in our language. A magistrate who never punished, a king to whom rebellion and faithful service are the same, would lose all moral power. The Ruler of all executes His law. A just president is not the subject of personal passion when punishing criminals. Verse 2 asserts God's justice. Notice the threefold "Jehovah" in this verse, and compare with Isa. vi. 8.

The character of His rule is in verse 3. He does not love to punish, "is slow to anger" (Ps. ciii. 8); but not for want of power (Job ix. 4), nor from favor to sin. "He will not acquit the wicked," i. e., the impenitent, as among us, the despisers of Jesus Christ and His salvation. As examples of His might, and of the mystery sometimes attending its displays, He has His "way in the whirlwind and in the storm" (see Ps. xviii. 10); and as clouds of dust in the desert attend the march of an army, so the Lord, when depicted as a "man of war," has the clouds for the dust of His feet. These representations suit the work of judgment seen in the vision.

Verse 4 gives historic illustrations, in a rapid, abrupt way, of what He had done—"rebuking the Red sea" (Ex. xiv. 21), and drying up the waters, as at Jordan (Josh. iii. 18.) On the forests of Bashan, rich in pastures (Amos iv. 1), He sends languor, and on the rich, dewy top of Carmel He sends withering. They were, in their way, famous as Lebanon, the "white mountain," for its beauty, on which he can send languishing. (See Hos. xiv. 6, and lesson thereon.) The description of His power is continued in verse 5, in the quaking of the mountains, the melting of the hills, the heaving up (better than "burn") of the earth, even where men dwell, "the world," as in Ps. xxiv. 1. So, in verse 6, the whole material world, with its volcanic and other forces, is at His will. He can pour down fire, as in Gen. xix. 24; Ex. ix. 23, 24, and overturn the rocks. (See 1 Kings xix. 24.)

Such displays of material power may well alarm; so the assurance comes in verse 7. "He is good;" a stronghold (Prov. xvii. 10), and his people are not forgotten or lost in the storm of indignation that destroys his foes.

The burden of Nineveh is taken up again at verse 8, and continued with the connected events to the end of the lesson.

1. The completeness of the ruin (verse 8)—"an utter end." Could anything better describe the fulfillment than that for long ages the very site of this great city was unknown? A "flood" stands for an invading force in Isa. viii. 7, 9; an allusion may be here to the flood in the river sapping a part of the wall and aiding in its overthrow. Night settled down on Nineveh—"Darkness shall," &c. A battle was fought on the site of the city, according to Gibbon, A. D. 627, when even the ruins had disappeared, and the vacant space afforded a spacious battle-field, &c. (Gibbon, ch. 46.) The demand of verse 9 may refer to the overbearing tone of Assyria, as seen in 2 Kings xix. 10, or may be an appeal to Judah. "What do you suppose the Lord will do? He will make an utter end," &c.

2. The manner of the destruction is hinted at. Massed compactly together, as their troops might be, like the tangled and impenetrable undergrowth of the forest, and as safe from fear as drunken men are—"drunken," &c.—yet as readily as the

fire consumes this would the Lord's judgment devour them—as stubble is burnt up. The debauchery of the defenders made the capture of the city easier.

3. Attendant circumstances are noted. One comes out of "thee," i. e., Assyria. (See the illustration in Isa. xxxv. 11-20.) For the "wicked" counsel; (see 2 Kings xix. 10-18.) But secure as they were, "quiet, and numerous, they shall be mowed down as grass, when He shall pass through," or, "then shall he pass away"—vanish, as in Ps. xxxvii. 36.

4. The overthrow of Assyria secures Judah from him (verse 12.) "Though I have," &c. (verse 13.) The form of "thee" in the original shows Judah is meant, and Judah has no great suffering again from this quarter. (See 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11, 14.) Judah was freed—the yoke broken (2 Kings xviii. 14)—according to a figure in Isa. x. 27, and elsewhere.

What lessons may we learn? 1. The mighty power of God. If He created, He is able to destroy. And if so, He is also able to save.

2. The great love of God, for it is love to men that sends warning upon warning before deserved wrath is poured out. As a father makes the punishment of a child the last resort, so it is with God.

3. For He warns before striking. Men and nations may see themselves in the barren fig tree. They are not cut down on the first failure. To Nineveh Jonah is sent, and a temporary reform follows. But it is only temporary, and the guilt of apostasy is all the greater. This ought to be borne in mind by those who were roused during times of awakening in these cities and congregations, and who have become careless again.

4. For he will smile at last. Slow to anger, yet he will not at all acquit the wicked.

5. There is no escape. His word is true; proved true by all the fulfilled prophecies. See the condition of Nineveh as described by Kitto, Botta, and others.

SUGGESTIVE TOPICS.

Nahum—his place—his message—how described—meaning of burden—vision—divine character as to patience—power—justice—illustrations of his control of nature—what to his people—the enemy of Judah—the promised deliverance—the threatened doom—and the lessons to us.

The Blackboard.

The blackboard may be made very useful in a Sabbath school, aside from its use in enforcing the lesson, as a bulletin board. Thus, before the hour of opening, it may have written clearly upon it the place of the Scripture to be read, and the number of the hymns to be sung. As the scholars enter they can find the place in their Bibles, and have the Hymnals open at the first hymn, so as to be ready to go on with the exercises without delay or confusion. With the younger classes especially there is a decided gain in this. After these exercises, the Board can be cleaned, and any other use made of it. Where blackboard exercises of an elaborate character are given by the superintendent, they can be prepared in advance on the reverse of the board, and so be out of sight until needed.

Self-Evident Truths.

What are the chief points established by self-evident truths as to the fact of sin?

- 1. Good is what ought to be.
2. Evil is what ought not to be.
3. Conscience intuitively perceives the difference between what ought to be and what ought not to be in the soul's choice among motives.
4. Conscience reveals, therefore, a moral law.

5. That law is above the human will, and acts without and even against the consent of the will.

6. There cannot be a thought without a being who thinks; nor a moral law without a moral lawgiver.

7. When, therefore, the will chooses to act from a motive which conscience pronounces evil, that act of the will is disobedience—not to abstract law only, but to God.

8. Thus evil becomes sin.

9. It is incontrovertible that man often hears a still, small voice within him saying "I ought."

10. It is incontrovertible that man often answers the voice which says "I ought," by saying "I will not."

11. It is incontrovertible that instantly and invariably after saying to "I ought" "I will not," a man must say "I am not at peace with myself."

12. It is incontrovertible that he must say also "I am not in fellowship with the nature of things."

13. It is incontrovertible that he must say also "I have lost fellowship with God."

14. It is incontrovertible that he who is disloyal to the voice which says "I ought" must also say "I ought to satisfy the injured majesty of the law I have violated." Sin creates an obligation to satisfy the injured majesty of the moral law.—(See Julius Muller, "Doctrine of Sin," Vol. 1, pp. 1-200.)

16. It is incontrovertible that, in the absence of expiation, man forebodes punishment.

17. It is incontrovertible that when man is free from the love of sin, he is not free from constitutional apprehension as to the effect of the guilt of past sin on his personal future in this world and the next.

18. It is incontrovertible that the desire to be sure that the guilt of sin will be overlooked, is one of the most powerful forces in human nature.

19. It is incontrovertible that an atonement may thus in the solitudes of conscience be scientifically known to be the desire of all nations—that is, of all who have fallen into that disturbance of the moral nature which is called sin.

20. The atonement which reason can prove is needed, revelation declares has been made.—Rev. Joseph Cook's Monday Lectures.

Are you a branch of the Vine which is Christ? Bear fruit.

The Christian Graces.

- Strive to be humble; ages prove
The weak in judgment He will guide.
Be hopeful—hope with faith and love
Doth now and shall for aye abide.
Be honest—owing no man, save
Thy neighbor as thyself to love,
Remembering only this, I crave,
Each perfect gift comes from above.
To temperance, in all things lean,
Best antidote to sensual vice;
Patience and gentleness, too, I ween,
Twin jewels are of rarest price.
Be truthful—faith and prayer combined
The arduous mountains can uproot;
Add singleness of heart and mind,
These graces yield the choicest fruit.
But love is queenliest of them all,
A truth that he who runs may prove;
Love's the fulfilment of the law,
For God made law, and God is love.

Positive Religion.

In every department of life, says the Presbyterian Banner, there is a class of people who may be characterized as destructives. Their main business seems to be to carp at others, to denounce the way in which things are generally done, to attribute improper motives to this one and that one, to excite suspicion against this man and that man, and to intimate that among those with whom they come in contact there is very little truthfulness and only a small amount of honesty. They do nothing to strengthen good principles in others, to build up credit, or to advance the general well-being of society. The same disposition is seen in some who occupy the pulpit. They are always denouncing, never encouraging; exposing shame, but never exhibiting realities; pulling down, but never building up. They dissect and lay bare the infirmities of their people, but they never heal them; they prove their hearers to be weak, but they never do anything to make them strong. They deplete, but they never feed. And all the while they, and it may be others too, are wondering why the people of their charges do not grow in grace, and why sinners are not converted. Zion's Herald gives the following explanation:

"A beligerent and critical ministry is usually without fruit, because it attempts to destroy the weeds without stooking the ground with good seed. The weeds are sure to spring up again in the vacant field. The positive preacher has no such trouble. Every available place being covered with wheat, there is no chance for the tares. Filling the mind with the truths of Christianity, evil influences are held in check, and the virtues of the gospel come to maturity. The Master did not send you so much to fight the devil out of the world as to introduce the gospel into it. Bring in the fulness of evangelic truth and spiritual influence, and the enemy will have no occupation. It is not enough that men get rid of Satan; they need OUNSER. To be emptied of evil will avail nothing without being filled with good. Fill the minds of the people with the vital and saving truths of the Christian system, and they will prove an impervious shield against the attacks of the arch deceiver and enemy of mankind. Satan may come, but he will find nothing in them, as he found nothing in the Master."

These are true and weighty words, worthy of careful thought both by ministers and people. A ministry always engaged in pulling down cannot be a successful one. Under such an influence Christian character and life cannot make progress, nor can much inroad be made upon the kingdom of Satan.

Causes of Intemperance.

Prentice Mulford recently delivered an address on "The Causes and Cure of Intemperance" before the Liberal Club in New York, in the course of which he said:

Intemperance is induced by the exhaustion resulting from severe manual labor. After a day's toil reaction and stimulus cannot be obtained so readily as through liquor. The children of all who are vexed with want one day and overworked the next, are unhealthy and lack endurance, and as a consequence turn to rum for stimulus after the most common exertion. Mental overwork is another cause of intemperance. American custom requires a man to make his mark at 30 or 35 years of age, or be considered a failure. Men break down at it, and when they do not resort to liquor, narcotics are used. The division of labor hastens the result. A man must be all doctor or lawyer, and exhausting one faculty of the brain, stimulants are used and abused.

Children are too much educated, he continued, when they are educated above a grade of society in which they can move. The schools turn out many scholars with large ideas into a world where bread and wealth are all in all. Wornied with the struggle and sick of the companionship they find, they become drunkards in an attempt to render themselves congenial. Our sons are taught to look down upon certain avocations, and society digs a pit where it allows the existence of a degraded class into which the sons of wealth fall when reverses come, for it requires a strong will to live without the approbation of the world. People drink because their homes are uncongenial, but the fault is in the social customs which reign. An excessive taste for stimulants is, the speaker claimed, hereditary, and he gave his own personal history in support of this theory. He had been a drunkard, and cured himself by "rest in large doses," and by an exercise of will, which he considered could be strengthened by exercise. If a man was sober for six weeks, a debauch then might so far relieve his craving for liquor that he might extend his prohibition for three months. A plan successful in California was that of taking the pledge for a certain time, and then, after a debauch renewing the pledge.

The American Board, since its organization in 1810, has expended \$16,000,000, and sent out to the foreign work 1,149 missionaries. There are now in the Turkish Empire nearly 150 missionaries sent by this Board.

Missionary Notes.

The Presbyterian Church at River Bend, Dakota, has 121 members who are full-blooded Lakota Indians, as also are the elders and ministers. Twenty years ago, with one or two exceptions, they were all heathen. Now they and their families constitute the major part of a population of about 800 souls who have settled on the Big Sioux within eight years.

The Established Church of Scotland proposes to establish a mission in China. Up to 1870 the Church's only Foreign Mission Work was in India. Last year it began a small mission in Africa, and now China will probably be added to its foreign fields. One of the members of the Foreign Mission Committee offers to guarantee \$5,000 for the purpose, and a young doctor volunteers to go out as a medical missionary.

Rev. Dr. Brown of Japan, in a letter to the Evangelist says: "Recently a new Church has sprung up in the province of Shinghu, where no Missionary led the way, more than a hundred miles from any open port where foreigners reside, and it now has nearly forty communicants. Since this new year commenced, half a dozen converts to Christianity beyond the summit of the Hakone Mountains, have been baptized by a member of our Mission, who went there in response to a call brought by a messenger from these converts, and last Sunday seven persons were baptized.

Rev. E. B. JENKINS, of India, says, "Thirty years ago no respectable Hindu family would have permitted a daughter of the house even to approach the Mission premises. As for allowing a missionary to be her instructor, it was simply an impossible supposition. But the other day one hundred and thirteen caste girls were brought into the Mission house to see me, and to be examined in the New Testament, fourteen of them young Brahman ladies, and this in a comparatively isolated town, remote from the swell of the great changes that are sweeping the Presidency cities."

MISSIONARIES in foreign fields complain of the indifference of English and American residents to their work. They say their fellow-countrymen, in the pursuit of their business, take no interest apparently, in the conversion of the heathen, rarely or never calling upon the missionary to inquire how his work is prospering. The missionaries think that this fact accounts for the discouraging and untrue reports which are sometimes made in regard to the missions. It would be of advantage both to the missionary and the foreign residents if they would cultivate each other's acquaintance.

A recent census of the city of Calcutta gives some interesting facts in relation to the religions professed by the population. The number of native Christians is 2680, against 2466 in 1872. The total population is 409,086. Two-thirds of the whole are Hindus, and of the Hindus, the Brahmans are the most numerous caste. As to intelligence, the Hindus are far in advance of the Mohammedans. Of the Hindoo males, forty-two per cent can read and write; of the Mohammedan males, only 16.5 per cent; of the Hindoo females thirty-three per cent can read and write; of the Mohammedan, only one per cent.

Rev. THOMAS BARCLAY, one of the English Presbyterian Church Missionaries in Formosa, writes: "Last week we held our meeting in one of the chapels. Some of the people had walked two hundred miles to be present. It made my heart glad to see about fifty or sixty office-bearers meeting together, not to talk about how they could win more money, but how they might be able to serve Christ better, and make His Church prosper. Ten years ago, not one of these men had heard the name of Jesus, there was not a single Christian in the whole island, now there are hundreds and hundreds of men who come regularly to church."

From Miss Green's Report of Medical work in Barielly, we select the following: "The number of patients since January, 1876, prescribed for at Dispensary, 3,822; number of prescriptions dispensed, 6,127; visits to Zenanas, 44; native Christians, 85; patients in hospital, 26. In response to an application made during the year, the Government has furnished us with a Grant-in-aid, giving us a yearly supply of medicines, instruments, and hospital necessities, asking in return only a few statistics. The buildings are free from debt, and the rent of the ground goes into the hospital fund. A little Brahman girl, afflicted with what is known as 'St. Vitus dance,' was denied admittance to the houses of any of her friends in the city because they said she had an 'evil spirit.' She came to us, and remained over two months, and went away very thankful for the good received. She and the friends with her, were under religious instruction while here, and we hope the seed sown may bring forth fruit."

Capital Advice.

Every one "who possesses engravings which are neither framed nor bound in volumes is probably aware how dangerous it is to show them to any but a very few exceptionally careful people. One of the most eminent engravers of the English school had a fine collection of proofs which he hardly dared to show to his acquaintances and he used to say that he very seldom met with any one who could or would hold a print so as not to injure the paper in some degree. What people generally do when they get hold of a print is to break the paper either by taking it up with one hand only, on one side when the weight of the paper is enough to cause a break, or else by seizing it in such a way as to produce a hollow about the thumb, the edges of the hollow being fractures in the substance of the paper. \*\*\* The proper way to hold a print is to take it with both hands, and the thumb and forefinger of each hand, placing them at half the height of the paper. In this way the paper is so held that its weight will not cause it, and it is almost impossible to create paper with the thumb and forefinger only." So says Mr Hamerton in the "Portfolio," and all are requested to take notice.