

Our Young Folks.

The Chapel Spider.

(Dedicated, without permission, to those whom it may concern.)

Two spiders, at the story goes, Upon a living bent, Entered the morning house one day, And hopefully were heard to say, "How we shall live at least ten days, With nothing to prevent."

What one Apple Did

In a small house on the outskirts of Salisbury lived old Job Peterson. No one lived in the house with him but his little grandson Ben. Back of the house was a little garden in which Job raised his potatoes and cabbages; in front was a small, grassy yard in which, by the side of the door, grew a tall apple tree—a constant source of great delight to little Ben, who was so lame that he could not get about from place to place without help.

Ben had one trouble. A big boy, named John Smith, who lived on the same street, took intense delight in teasing him; morning, noon, and night, he kept it up. He rarely passed Ben's window, or saw the child seated at the door, without mocking his lameness, or daring him to come out and run a race. The child had read in his New Testament about the Lord Jesus who forgave his enemies, and he really wanted to forgive John Smith, and make friends with him; but, as he sorrowfully told his grandfather, John would not let him.

Sabbath School Teacher.

LESSON XXX.

THE NEW BIRTH

COMMIT TO MEMORY, vs. 7, 8. PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE.—Book, xxxvii, 10, Num. xvi, 9. SCRIPTURE REFERENCES. With v. 7, comp. Rom. vi, 7, with v. 8. Rom. ix, 15, 16, with v. 9. John vi, 52, with v. 10, read Ezek. xxxvii, 25, with v. 11, Isa. lvi, 1; Jer. xiii, 23, with v. 12, John viii, 28, with v. 13, I Cor. xv, 50, with v. 14, comp. John vi, 32, with v. 15, Isa. xlv, 22, with v. 16, Job xxxviii, 21, with v. 17, Zech. ix, 12. JOHN'S TEST.—As many as received Him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.—John i, 12. CENTRAL TRUTH.—Nothing entereth into heaven that defileth. The scene of our lesson is in Jerusalem—where Jesus had wrought John i, 23, in Galilee, in consequence of which he was visited by the Jewish rulers. Nicodemus is only known to us from John's Gospel (for it is only conjectured that it is the same Nicodemus that appears in the Talmud). He was a Pharisee, a "ruler of the Jews" in religious matters, and a recognized teacher (vs. 1, 10), of naturally timid character, yet candid, just, and on occasion, not without firmness. We have three notices of him, marking his growth in knowledge and firmness, and which may be studied together with advantage, the other two being at John vi, 50, and xiv, 20. His coming by night was probably from the desire to learn truth without publicity. He was not willing probably to appear among even the inquirers, where none of the rulers were (John vi, 48). Perhaps there are persons still who fear to be "mixed up" with the followers of truth till they have gained a position. To understand the Lord's words in this momentous conversation, we must look at the progress of the interview. Nicodemus begins with some self-satisfaction. "We know," etc. It might have been thought by a common person in Jesus' place, desirable to have such patronage from such a man. But Jesus went directly to the root of the matter. "Meek knowledge avails little without a change of heart" (v. 3). "Born again"—how can that be—with the old? (v. 4). "Ah! it is not of the body I speak, but of the spiritual change of which Ezekiel wrote; 'I will pour clean water—I will pour my spirit,' &c., Ezek. xxxvi, 25, 27, till this has taken place, flesh is flesh" (v. 6). You wonder: but do you not remember in the next chapter, the vision of the dry bones and the breath of wind—bones so dry and dead, till breathed on, then standing up and living; so is every one that is born of the spirit (v. 8). "I do not understand—how can these things be?" "What! you, a master in Israel, and not knowing these things, a teacher of the law and the prophets, and ignorant of these most important prophecies, and ignorant of all this?" This is the point at which our lesson takes up the connection. Note, and teach the pupils the following things regarding it. (a) Nicodemus though afraid of man was sincere. Yet had he a little of the pride of superior class, and plumed himself on his knowledge. This was like those among whom he lived (John vi, 49). (b) Jesus dealt kindly with him, mildly glancing at his pride, and taking means to lower it. He did not reject him because of the mixture of evil in him. So gentle is he (see Matt. xii, 20). (c) He does not refer to baptism here, but to something which a teacher in Israel ought to have known, as it concerned Israel and had a high place in prophecy. And it is quite not worthy that the two figures, the water and the wind, came in order from the two chapters (Ezek. xxxvi, xxxvii). It is not spoken with reference to baptism, we venture to think, though many connect it with that rite. Jesus would not be likely to reproach Nicodemus for ignorance regarding baptism—not yet established. Two great truths are taught Nicodemus, and include both the foregoing explanation; the substance of this lesson: 1. Regeneration by the Holy Ghost. It is a matter of "marvel" that a Jew in good standing, should need to be born again (v. 7). This is anticipated in v. 6. "How" it is effected is the next question. The answer is, in effect: the "how" is of no practical account; the fact is of essential importance. For there is much about the manner of the wind you do not understand. But the effect is undeniable. So it is here. The manner of the Spirit's working is not unfolded, but the results show where he has been working. Men who walk according to the Spirit, show that somehow they are "born of the Spirit." Still Nicodemus wonders (v. 9). The reply of Christ has force only when we suppose the allusion to be to Old Testament Scriptures (v. 10; Ps. ii, 10; Jer. iv, 4; Ezek. xlviii, 31, etc.). How ignorant of spiritual truth we may be, and yet hold a high place, even in a church! The connection of the next three verses is not very clear; but it appears to be, "I have been telling you things already revealed on earth ('earthly things') and ye will not believe. How shall I be believed when I tell ye things 'heavenly'; things yet to be revealed?" (v. 12). For I speak not as the Old Testament prophets, what I have been told to say, but what, as God, I know and have seen. Thus, Jesus glances back to Nicodemus' word: "We know thou art a teacher come from God." "Nay," says Christ, "I am more." To this higher dignity he points again in v. 18. "The prophets have not been in heaven to witness what they reported, the Son of Man has. I am more than the 'teacher' you make me to be. So he rebukes the self-complacency of the ruler, and brings him to his true level. Yet he does not forget his "how" (v. 6). The rest of the lesson is the answer. II. Redemption by Christ (vs. 14-17). You ask how can a man be born again, &c., for instance, can you? The answer—"Look to, trust, believe, me!" for v. 14, as Moses (by God's direction), and as the brazen serpent, that bitten Israelites might look and live, so I am "lifted up" in the preaching, on the cross, in the church, that, etc. (v. 15). And all this comes of Divine love. I do not win over the Father, but love sent me. It is to "the world" any man of any name, color, race, who believes me, can share its blessing, even eternal life. He does not wish to condemn (v. 17). However, He goes on his way, gotten on, like whom there is another, who is not a creature among creatures, for men's salvation. And the salvation is obtained by believing, by any one "whosoever" who will believe. He who does not believe, perishes, the alternative of being saved, twice presented in vs. 15, and to Luther called the Bible in miniature. The whole point of address might be put in this form: "You count yourself well-informed and in a good position toward God. But you cannot be in that good position till born again. You ask how can I reply, born of the spirit, as the prophet taught. You still ask how can it be. Do not dwell on that. We do not dwell about the effects of the wind, though its cause is obscure, nor should we about the reality of the Spirit's work, though the manner of it is obscure. You say, What can I do, if the 'how' is not revealed? Do this, the only thing needed, believe on me, the Son of God, sent of God from heaven, to reveal him and save men, through believing in whom men, all men, any man, publican as well as a Pharisee, and a Pharisee no otherwise than as a publican can have eternal life." The explanation which possibly I'm heard, is identically the same, only at greater length, with that given in John i, 12, 13. Men are born again, by the Spirit, somehow, when they believe in Jesus. We may learn from this lesson that (a) Every inquirer is to be taught, however slow, proud or timid. Let the truth work. (b) The great things to be taught; the need of a new nature, and the way to get it by going to, believing in, Jesus. (c) The nature of Jesus, as a Son of God, is closely linked with the nature of the gospel. (d) The work of teaching is not lost, though faith does not appear at once. See the latter history of this man. (e) What is true of this ruler is true of every one in an unconverted, that is, Christless condition. SUGGESTIVE TOPICS. Nicodemus—position—character—feeling towards Christ—approach—where—when—how answered—meaning of born again—of "the kingdom"—his question—state of mind—reply to it—meaning of allusion to what—quote the passage—two chapters referred to—figures—their order—wind, how employed in Ezekiel—in John—point of comparison—Nicodemus' difficulty—the further light—the Lord's nature—different from Old Testament teachers—how men are to act—the Old Testament type—where reported—the points of resemblance—the gift of Jesus—the object—the result of receiving him—the freeness of their offer and the penalty of rejection. Who shall be Superintendent? In the choice of superintendent the younger the man the better, provided he is Sabbath school trained and thoroughly competent. Other things being equal, the young man is to be preferred to the old. The best old elder does not always make the best superintendent. There are, of course, splendid exceptions to this rule, as there are to all others, because there are some men who never grow old, who continue young in spirit, even when their heads are gray. There are veterans in the Sunday-school work who have always loved it, and will love it as long as they live; and these will always be good superintendents to the end. Still, as a general rule, it is best to have a young superintendent, because he is more likely to be full of activity, full of enthusiasm, full of joyousness, full of sympathy for the young, and because of the important fact that the young regard him as nearer to them, more congenial with them, and more accessible.—Dr. Halsey. NOTHING in the world, be sure of it, can ever overcome the irresistible strength of a sweet temper. Nothing can overcome the teacher who has first of all overcome his own impatience—first even the "bad boy." Dr. VINCENT says in the S. S. Journal, and we will let him say it again here: "If you are a Bible class teacher don't be a lecturer. Don't be a preacher. Don't be an exhorter. Don't be a declaimer. Be a teacher. A teacher gets work out of his scholars—gets questions, gets answers, gets hints, gets a good chance to keep his mouth shut a good part of the time, and the mouths of his scholars open and their brains busy, and their hearts excited. Teach! Teach! A WRITER in the Baptist Teacher does not speak at random, when, in answer to the question, "How better Sabbath school teachers than those ordinarily engaged in the work can be secured?" He says: (1) Let each one resolve to be a better teacher himself. (2) Let all together pray that the Lord of the harvest will raise up such laborers as the whitening fields demand. (3) Let the pastor and superintendent conjointly seek out such elements of power in the church as ought to be employed in the school, and never let them go till they have brought them in. (4) Let a Normal class be formed, in which the teachers of the future shall be trained, and "thoroughly furnished unto all good works." I once remarked to a doctor, your profession is much simpler than mine; there are but few diseases of the human system to cure, while our cases is infinite. He took from the shelf and read me the names of thirty affections of one member, when I begged him to stop for fear that with such capabilities of dissimulation existence might not be possible at all. So he who thinks it an easy matter to conduct a Sunday-school will find an infinite number of maladies which attack the classes that he never dreamed of, and which he will be "brown on all the resources which nature can give."—E. C. change.

Miscellaneous.

The number of persons killed on the railways of Great Britain last year was 1,425, and the number injured 5,050. A contribution returns for April and May show a decrease of more than 3,000 upon the returns for the corresponding months last year. New York, June 27.—A letter from Maracabo, May 29, gives an account of the earthquake at Caracas, New Granada, South America, on the 18th. The first shock levelled every wall in the city, burying in a single instant 8,000 people out of a population of 100,000. Several not killed subsequently died from injuries, and many were murdered by robbers. The shocks continued, and the fires burned much property. Those saved fled to the neighboring country. One day last week, Mr. J. O. Van Wert caught in a trap at Greenwagh, King's County, a large bear, weighing about 700 pounds. A couple of weeks previous, Mr. Joseph Flawling trapped one of about the same weight in a dead fall. Bears have been seen about there frequently, and have done a great deal of damage to cattle and sheep. A bear with two cubs were seen near the Long Reach by Mr. St. Crutt, a few days ago. Bradford, June 21.—About three o'clock a terrific storm of lightning, wind, and rain passed over this place, doing great damage to numerous buildings, completely destroying the Town Hall, and causing the death of a young man named A. Wood. NEW ORLEANS has determined upon the construction of a railroad of about three hundred miles in length. It is to extend from east to west across the island. The preparatory surveying has already been begun, and as a matter of course, so also have newspaper and platform discussions. Various routes are being proposed as the most eligible—each route having, in the opinion of its advocates, special advantages to recommend it. There is also a considerable difference of opinion as to which gauge—the broad or the narrow—would be most prudent to adopt. The narrow gauge has cheapness in the cost of construction to recommend. But an ocean traffic is expected for the New-Orleans Railroad which—it is alleged—a narrow gauge road would not have sufficient capacity to accommodate. Besides, it is said that a narrow gauge road would require a good deal more labor to keep it open during the winter than a broad gauge road. Whatever gauge is ultimately adopted, it is pretty certain that the construction of this road will tax the resources and credit of New-Orleans to their utmost capacity. CONFEDERATION OF COLONIES.—Lord Carnarvon is so well satisfied with the working of confederation in Canada that he proposes to apply the same principle—though, necessarily, with widely different forms—to the British Colonies in South Africa and the adjacent independent Dutch States. The whites are in perpetual jeopardy from the turbulence of the natives. One cannot think of the vast disproportion in their numbers without in some degree realizing the peril that exists. In Natal the whites number only 17,000, while of the Zulus—fierce and daring savages—there are 300,000. The disproportion is of course not so great in the Cape Colony, but it is even greater in the Province of Griqualand West, where the diamond fields are situated. Nothing like a uniform policy is pursued toward the natives, who are suspected of designs upon the settlements. They have firearms, and some districts have acquired rough military discipline under white leaders. The danger, then, is not altogether imaginary, and until it be removed and the problem connected with it solved, South Africa is not likely to attract the immigration which under other circumstances it might hope to receive. It is, perhaps, as a whole, the most magnificent undeveloped portion of the British Empire: its climate is delicious, its soil fertile, and its resources diversified. UNITED STATES.—We learn that the total earnings of all the railroads in the country for the year 1874 were \$520,466,874, against \$526,419,936 for 1873, a decrease of \$5,953,061, or only about 1 per cent. Considering the general prevalent cry of the great stagnation of business during 1874, this is a remarkable exhibit. The number of miles of railroad in operation at the close of 1874 was 72,623 against 70,688 at the close of 1873—an increase during the year of 1,940 miles. This is the smallest number of miles of railroad constructed in any one year since 1860. The total amount invested in railroads reaches the enormous sum of \$4,221,768,594, or nearly double the entire outstanding national debt. EARTHQUAKES and Tidal waves have been running riot amongst some of the Islands in the South Pacific Ocean, and three villages are reported to have been swept away by the latter, with an immense destruction of life and property. QUEEN VICTORIA has created three field marshals. The first is John Forster Fitzgerald, the second the Marquis of Tweeddale, and the third His Royal Highness Albert Edward, Prince of Wales.