

ing half-way round, Ruth found a little clear space, and creeping forward, soon came to rising ground. Catching hold of a bush, she pulled herself a little way up the slope, when an idea of their situation suddenly flashed upon her.

"Why, we're in the creek—the creek drench down by the meadow lot," she called out. "Where are you all? I've lost you."

"Here," replied her mother's voice not three yards away. "Is Scott with thee? Harry and Lou are safe."

"No," answered Ruth, aghast, hastening with all possible speed to her mother's side.

"Where is the child?" she cried, immediately calling aloud with all her strength, "Scott! Scott!"

But no answer.

"He must have hidden somewhere when the darkness came," was the mother's despairing conclusion.

"The root-house!" Ruth's words told the awful story.

"If I could save him!" And with a silent prayer for strength, she once more dashed into the stifling smoke.

Hour after hour crept by; it seemed to the terrified children as if they must have sat there for days; and they were so hungry! and Ruth never would come!

Presently, after long waiting, the darkness began to lift somewhat, and they could see each other's faces. Little by little the gloom cleared away until the whole atmosphere was of a dusky hue. And still they waited. At length, starting up with an exclamation of joy as rapid footsteps approached, they heard their father's voice.

"Ruth! Hal!"

"Here, roared Hal, starting to his feet. In a moment more Mr. Leonard bounded down the steep bank of the creek, and with him Jake Murphy, who had started from the village to warn Mr. Leonard, reaching the farm just as that first overwhelming darkness dropped upon the village.

They had found shelter in the old well, for Mr. Leonard was overtaken in his preparations for flight, and could not reach the house before it burst into flames. When the crisis was past, almost wild with grief and despair, he commenced a search for wife and children, fearing at every step to come upon their lifeless bodies. For a moment he stood overcome with thankfulness as he found them unharmed.

But two were missing. Mrs. Leonard hurriedly told of little Scott's disappearance, and of Ruth's effort to save him.

The two men hastened to the root-house. It was still standing, though blackened and charred, and no sign of life appeared. The door was tightly closed, and upon opening it a sight met the father's eye which almost overpowered the strong man. There lay Ruth, white and still, tightly clasping the little fellow to her bosom.

It was but the work of a moment to carry them out of the dark building. Both were unconscious, though they bore few traces of the fire. Might there not yet be a chance of life?

Quickly the men bore the motionless forms to the creek. All the remedies which they could obtain were applied, but it seemed in vain; the loving ones could do little but watch and wait.

At last Ruth stirred, and slowly opened her eyes. The brave heart once more began to beat, though for many a long, weary day the blistered hands and arms refused to move. But Ruth was spared.

Little Scott lay there for hours, until it seemed that the family must lose their baby, when he wonderingly gazed around upon the anxious group, and inquired, "Did you try to cook me for dinner?"

All the pent-up feelings found vent in a tearful laugh, and then the laugh turned to joy, and the joy to thanksgiving.

When the flaming hurricane had swept onward in its mad course of destruction, and the sun, which had risen in such fierce glory, sent a last sickly glimmer through the murky air, it revealed the little village of Greenville a waste of smoking ruins. But the fire had mercifully stopped upon reach-Farmer Leonard's grassy meadow, and thus had the fugitives in the creek been saved.

The strong men set to work with a will. It took but a few hours to raise a little shed for protection; and day after day his prospects brightened, as the timely aid and sympathy of friends helped him to rebuild his ruined home.

It would have been hard to find a happier household than this reunited family.

Slowly a strength returned to Ruth's wounded arms, and a sweet peace shone through the gray eyes as she once more became able to enjoy the blessings which had so nearly been taken from her.

Her great opportunity had come, and it had found her ready.

AS A LITTLE CHILD.

A TRUE STORY.

A mother and a little child of six years were together one afternoon, the former busily plying her needle, the latter building a wonderful castle with a box of jointed bricks. They were almost constant companions, for all the elders of the flock were at school, whilst Nellie was still her mother's pupil. A bright, merry, intelligent young creature was the little scholar. She needed neither coaxing nor driving; but loved to learn as the mother loved to teach. And, childlike she chattered on for a time, hardly noticing how brief were her mother's answers, or that, very often, there was no reply at all to her many questions. But this state of things was so contrary to custom that it attracted Nellie's attention, and, turning towards her mother, she saw that her hands were lying idle in her lap, and that her eyes were filling with tears.

In a moment the bricks were on the ground and the castle a mere wreck. The child darted to her mother, exclaiming, "Mamma, mamma! what is the matter? Are you ill? Do tell me what you are crying for!" and at the same time she softly wiped the tear from Mrs. Matthews' cheek, and followed this act by a loving kiss.

The mother lifted the child on her knee, and clasping her arms round her, wept quietly for a few moments. Then, as soon as she could speak, she said, "Nellie, your father and I are in great trouble about something. You are too young to understand why I am crying, darling, and I cannot tell you about it or I would, because I know my little Nellie would like to comfort her mother."

The little arms gave an answering pressure as the child said, "Can't I fetch or do anything, mamma?"

"Darling, I wish you could," was the answer.

Nellie remained silent for a moment, and then she said, with a beautiful bright smile, "Mamma, I can ask God to take away the trouble from papa and you. He can do everything."

The child's hopeful words thrilled through the mother's ears like a message of mercy. She was a profound believer in the power of prayer. She had taught her children to pray as soon as they could lispen, and not one of them could say, "I remember the time when mother first prayed with me." She had knelt with her babe in her arms; she had breathed prayers over the little sleepers as they lay in their cots; and as soon as they were old enough mother and children had bowed the knee, and in simple words sent up their petitions to the throne of grace together.

And now this youngest of them all was bringing her lessons to mind, and strengthening the faith of her mother by her childlike confidence in the love and power of God, and in His willingness to answer prayer.

Mrs. Matthews saw Nellie go to the window and behind the shelter of the curtain. She remained silent for some minutes while the little bowed figure, with clasped hands, was asking God "to take away the trouble which made her mother weep." She was sure He knew all about it, though she did not, and could not tell Him.

The prayer ended, Nellie came back to her mother, and sat quietly for a little while, until Mrs. Matthews was called out of the room; but before she went to bed that night she whispered, "Is the trouble gone yet, mamma?"

"Not yet, Nellie. We have to wait God's time for removing trouble."

"Well! He will take it away," replied the child, without one shade of doubt as to the result of her prayer.

The mother sighed, as the thought came into her mind, "Oh that I could receive the kingdom of God, that I could grasp His promises and trust Him, as this little child, who first heard of Jesus, the Saviour of sinners through me! How easy it seems to tell others; how difficult to Rejoice in the Lord always, and to trust Him as a child submits to the leading of a living parent."

The morning came, and again Nellie whispered her inquiry, "Mamma, I have asked God again. Is the trouble gone yet?"

Mrs. Matthews was half afraid to say "No," there was something so touching in the child's confidence. She replied, "Not yet, Nellie."

"But it will, mamma?" half inquiringly.

"Yes, dear," replied Mrs. Matthews, firmly, "it will, Nellie. But we cannot be sure when or how. God knows what is best. Never forget that, dear. Sometimes He makes us wait a while, to see if we can be patient and trust Him; and sometimes, though He does not take away the trouble, He makes us strong and willing to bear it."

This was something new for the child. She thought the little face brightened. "I understand, mamma. I know," she cried eagerly. "You love me, but you do not always give me everything I want, and sometimes you make me wait. I will ask God to make you strong."

Day after day the child waited, prayed, and expected an answer, believing it would certainly come. One morning Mr. Matthews received a letter as they were all at breakfast. As he read it his face grew bright; he handed it to his wife, and Nellie heard her mother say, while tears of a new kind ran down her cheeks, "Thank God!"

"Mamma mamma! is the trouble gone?" cried Nellie, eagerly.

"My darling, it is," was the answer, as she kissed the face of her little comforter with a thankful heart.

Mr. Matthews wondered what Nellie meant, especially when he heard her glad shout, "I knew it would go! I was sure it would go." But when her mother told him how the child's prayer and her daily expressions had cheered and comforted her during those days of trial, he understood it all, and rejoiced that the good seed sown in the young heart had already brought forth fruit.

These words of Jesus are—"Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein."

May this true story of a child's prayers faith, and patiently waiting, be the means of carrying comfort to some weary and heavy-laden soul, longing, but fearing to take God at His word, and to lay hold on those precious promises which are all "Yea and amen in Christ Jesus."—*Ruth Lamb in Friendly Greetings.*

HINTS TO TEACHERS ON THE CURRENT LESSONS.

(From *Peloubet's Select Notes*)

May 13.—Acts 11: 19-30.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. "The Church in a wicked world." As the coral islands of the Pacific rise and bask in the light of heaven, flowery and fertile, while their base is surrounded by the barren, salt, angry waves of an unfathomable ocean, so the group of Christians that clustered together as a Church in Antioch, were rich in all the graces of the spirit, although they had sprung from a dreary heathenism, and were surrounded by it still.—*Ariost.*

II. Some one has said that the Church in the world is like a ship in the ocean—the ship is safe in the water so long as the water is not in the ship.

III. "Cleaving to Christ." I have seen a heavy piece of solid iron hanging on another not welded, not linked, not glued to the spot; and yet it cleaved with such tenacity as to bear not only its own weight, but mine, too, if I choose to seize it and hang upon it. A wire charged with an electric current is in contact with its mass, and hence its adhesion. Cut that wire through, or remove it by a hand's breadth, and the piece of iron drops dead to the ground like any other unsupported weight. A stream of life from the Lord, in contact with a human spirit, keeps that spirit cleaving to the Lord so firmly that no power on earth or in hell can wrench the two asunder. From Christ the mysterious life-stream flows; through the being of a disciple it spreads, and to the Lord it returns again. In that circle the feeblest Christian is held safely; but if the circle were broken, the dependent spirit would instantly drop off.—*Ariost.*

1. Ver. 19. All the efforts of men to destroy the Gospel God uses for its furtherance.

2. True religion is always a religion that will travel. No true Christian ever leaves it behind him.

3. Ver. 20. All true preaching and teaching of Christianity is preaching the Lord Jesus.

4. Ver. 23. A man's character is shown by the things that make him glad.

5. The need of young converts—to cleave unto the Lord Jesus.

6. Ver. 24. Three qualities needed for a successful worker in the Gospel: (1) goodness; (2) full of the Holy Ghost; (3) faith.

7. Are we Christians? Then we ought to think and speak and act, in everything, as becomes Christians, and to do nothing to the reproach of that worthy name by which we are called; that that may not be said to us, which Alexander said to a soldier of his own name, that was noted for a coward, "Either change thy name or mend thy manners."—*Henry.*

8. Ver. 29. The desire to help others is one of the first fruits of the Christian life.

9. Each disciple should give and help according to his ability.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

There are brought to our notice in this lesson three things connected with the progress of the Gospel: (1) Its progress among the Gentiles, (vers. 19-21). How the change took place from the Gospel to Jews only to the Gentiles. The hand of the Lord, as the cause of the great number of additions to the Church, compared with the sources of the addition noted in verse 24. (2) Progress by the aid of Christians, vers. 22-26, by sending from the mother Church, by the goodness and faith of Barnabas, by an extra helper, Saul. (3) Progress in good works, vers. 27-30. This, the natural fruit of the Christian spirit.

Question Corner.—No. 8.

BIBLE QUESTIONS.

1. When did some arrows save a friend's life?
2. What class of men wore linen bonnets?
3. When did a cake of barley bread give courage to a judge and his army?
4. What king's life was saved by some figs?
5. When was one bunch of grapes carried by two men?
6. When did a taste of honey almost cause the death of the king's son?
7. Who caused iron to swim?
8. When was a jaw-bone used as a weapon?
9. What leaves were freshly arranged every Sabbath?
10. Of what were mirrors made by the Jews?
11. Whose daughter was Noah? Give chapter and verse.

SCRIPTURE ACROSTIC.

"The words of the wise and their dark sayings."

1. What will the Lord direct if we acknowledge Him in all our ways?
2. Than what is wisdom more precious?
3. What is it that maketh a wise man mad?
4. What kind of woman is a crown to her husband?
5. Whom does the Lord make to be at peace with the man whose ways please Him?
6. What does Solomon recommend for the back of him that is void of understanding?
7. What is it that maketh rich and has no sorrow added to it?
8. Who is it that is advised to go to the ant and consider her ways?

ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS IN NO. 6.

SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS.

Prov. 2: 6. Phil. 4: 6. Paul. Gal. 6: 2. James 5: 16.

EASTER ACROSTIC.

T-hou art,
H-ope's
E-tishah.

L-ydia,
O-badiah,
E-toshah,
D-oreas.

I-saac,
S-arid.

R-achel,
I-srahel,
S-arahel,
E-tiah,
N-ebos.

CORRECT ANSWERS RECEIVED.

Correct answers have been received from Annie Black, David McJannet, M. Edith Waters, Frederick Holland, Annie E. Brown, Clara E. Folsom, and J. F. Hunter.