

Our Young Folks.

Harry's Temptation.

"I don't begin to make enough money, and I would leave Mr. Hardin's store if I could find a better place. You know mother, the doctor says you should have good food and medicine, and I don't know how I can buy them unless I get a better place, or Mr. Hardin raises my salary."

"Don't worry, Harry; we will get along. You are receiving three dollars a week, and we can't expect more than that. I am very thankful, indeed, that he has given you a situation in his store. Three weeks you could find no work, I did feel that we were in danger of want; but the prospect is brighter now, and I know we will get along very well."

"That's just the way with you, mother; you never complain. But I don't want to starve, and I want you to have the medicine. How can you get well if you don't have the medicine the doctor ordered? O, it is awful to be poor."

"Come, Harry, do not repine. Our lot may seem hard; but we are all in the hands of a kind Father, and he will watch over us, and care for us, and provide for our wants. We are told in the Bible that not even a sparrow can fall to the ground without His knowledge, and do you not think He can see and know our wants?"

Mrs. Thompson was a widow and lived in a tenement in the city of B—. Her husband had died in a few years after their marriage, and she and her two children, Harry and Annie, were left in straitened circumstances. For some time she had taken in plain sewing, and done different kinds of work to keep the wolf from the door, but at last she fell sick, and her small savings were used up before she was again restored to health.

About this time, however, Harry had succeeded in obtaining a situation in Mr. Hardin's store, and they felt encouraged. Harry straitened himself up manfully, and said:—

"Now, mother, you will get along very well. I have a situation, and I'm going to keep you like a queen."

But Harry soon found out that if a queen and her family could live on three dollars a week, they couldn't be charged with extravagance and high living. The dialogue at the beginning of our little story shows that Harry had "reckoned without his host."

Harry had been at work about four weeks for Mr. Hardin, and was engaged one morning in sweeping the store, when he discovered a twenty-dollar bill lying on the floor.

"Whew!" he exclaimed, as he picked it up, "now I'm rich. Twenty dollars! I wonder who lost it? Some of last night's customers, I suppose. Well, they'll never miss it, and I can buy the medicine now; and I'll get a picture-book for Annie, too."

So, with a beating heart, he thrust the money into his pocket and continued his sweeping.

But he didn't feel quite right. His conscience troubled him, and he imagined that something was saying to him—"The money is not yours. Do right and sin not."

Before the time came for leaving the store in the evening he had decided to tell Mr. Hardin of the circumstances, and to give him the money.

He said to himself several times that afternoon, "The money is not mine, and I will not keep it. So that's a settled matter."

When his day's work was done he went into the office where Mr. Hardin was, and handing him the money, remarked that he had found it on the floor in the morning.

"In the morning!" said Mr. Hardin, somewhat sternly. "And why didn't you bring it to me at that time?"

"Why sir, I—I—" said Harry, his lip quivering, "I was tempted to keep it. I supposed it had been lost by a customer who would not know where it had been dropped, and would never return for it. I didn't want it for myself; but my mother is sick and has no money to buy the medicine which the doctor has ordered. I thought of the many nice things it would buy, and I wanted my mother to get well. But I don't want the money now. I have come out all right; I know it wouldn't be right to keep it, and I don't want it."

"Truly you have come out all right," said Mr. Hardin. "I left the money on the floor to test you. Honesty is a rarity among boys. Here Harry," he continued, rising and advancing, "let me shake your hand—the hand of an honest boy, just such a boy as I want to have in my store all the time. Here take the twenty dollars and buy what your mother needs. I will see that she doesn't want for anything. Run home and tell your mother that she has a noble boy, and that his salary will be raised immediately."

As he finished speaking he thrust the bill into the boy's hand.

"Oh sir," exclaimed Harry, "how can I thank you?"

Of course there was rejoicing that evening in Mrs. Thompson's humble home. Harry rejoiced because his mother would now want for nothing; the mother rejoiced because her son had remembered her teachings and proved himself honest; and Annie was glad because she could now have a "picture-book" and some "tandy."

And that night, at the family altar, the mother's prayer was a prayer of thanksgiving, not only for the timely aid they had received, but that her only son, her darling boy, had been strengthened in the hour of temptation, and enabled to choose the path of truth and right.—Christian at Work.

Mr. Tennyson is now sixty-six years old—a man still in his prime of thought and capacity for work. The only ill he's heir to is an annual hay fever. He is six feet in height, is broad-shouldered and large-boned, but not stout. His hands and feet are enormous. His face is long, and somewhat resembles that of Dante, save that it has not got the rigid mold and expression of the great Florentine, and the nose is not so aquiline. His hair is long and very black, his complexion olive. Once upon a time, in speaking of Mr. Tennyson's personal appearance, Buchanan Reed called him "a dilapidated Jupiter"—a piece of description at once picturesque, acute, and humorous.

Sabbath School Teacher.

LESSON LI.

Dec. 17, 1876. PETER'S RELEASE. Acts xii. 1-17.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 6, 7.

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Prov. x. 25; Dan. iii. 24, 25.

SCRIPTURE READINGS.—With v. 1, compare vs. 23, 24; with v. 2, read Matt. xx. 22; with v. 3, read Dent. xvi. 8-9; with v. 4 (Passover), compare Matt. xxvi. 2; with vs. 5, 6, read Heb. xiii. 2; with vs. 7-10, read Isa. xiv. 2; with v. 11, read Ps. xvi. 1; with v. 12, read Acts xii. 1-9; with v. 13, compare John xviii. 17; with v. 14, compare Luke xxiv. 41; with vs. 15, 16, compare John x. 20; with v. 17, compare Acts xv. 13.

GOLDEN TEXT.—The angel of the Lord escapeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.—Ps. xxxiv. 7.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—Angels minister to saints.

While Paul and Barnabas are busy, possibly while in Judea (see v. 24), and the Church at Antioch is prospering, "about that time" troubles arise at Jerusalem. It comes from Heron, grandson of Herod the Great (Matt. ii. 1-9), and nephew of the Herod of Mark vi. 14, brought up at Rome, descended from the Maccabees, a pious Jew, but an ambitious and unprincipled man. He acquired all Palestine and the title of "king." He took active steps to "reign," not in our modern mild sense, but in the Bible sense, to harass and oppress the Church, and (whoever else suffered in other ways) he killed a prominent man. Being king, he had power of life and death. Had the Jews sentenced James he would have been stoned.

Years before, a fond mother begged a place near Christ in his glory for her two sons. Turn to and read his reply in Matt. xx. 23. One of them, John's brother, Zebedee's son (both of them "sons of thunder"), drinks of the cup, and is baptized with the baptism of suffering for Christ, suffers with Him and for Him, and in a deeper sense than he or his mother then knew, comes to reign with Him. How often we also know not what we ask! James witnessed the transfiguration like Peter and John. He needed faith, strong and confirmed. He was "slain with the sword." Herod had his own reasons for this, but seeing how popular the act was (v. 8), proceeded against Peter (v. 3), one of the most prominent, no doubt, of the Christians, and a blow at whom would, it was thought, no doubt make a great impression. The Passover was at hand, and included, in common language, the festival week after the rite, when no leaven was used. (See Ex. xii. 13-27, and Luke xxii. 1-7.) It was a good time to show his affected zeal for Judaism, and to court popular favor.

The whole thing was done with much impressiveness. Peter was arrested, imprisoned, made a state prisoner, guarded by sixteen soldiers, four for each of the four watches of the night (see Matt. xiv. 25); two perhaps, inside and two outside his prison.

Our translators were less exact when they put "Easter" here, the only case in which they employ it, when more than twenty-five times they rightly translate the word Passover. So, of course, it ought to have been here. Herod's intention was to parade his zeal and Peter's sufferings so soon as the week of unleavened bread had passed, in which, it is said, no execution could take place.

But the Lord had other designs. The Church, as such, ceased not to pray to God. Memorials to Herod they possibly thought useless. Probably they asked, as we in the circumstances should have done, his preservation, and if that were not God's will, grace for him in the hour of suffering. What an example!

The Church praying, Peter chained, but sleeping, on the very eve of Herod's intended display, the guards watching, and the angel hastening on his way to deliver him; this is the situation. Two soldiers were chained to him, one to each arm, and two "mounted guard" outside.

(V. 7.) The prison is lighted by the angel's presence or his care. Peter is sharply struck on the side, roused promptly, and instantly unchained. Angels do their work thoroughly! How often men are struck, that they may be awakened and delivered!

As in the resurrection of Christ, there is no tremulous haste, and there shall be no sign of it. The angel is master of the situation. Nothing, either shoe or garment, is left behind (v. 8), as Peter is bidden to follow the angel. No time is to be lost, but there is time enough for all. Apart from his chained position, Peter would, in sleeping, be simply unguarded, i. e., his girdle loosed, and his sandals off. No change of clothing took place, but the outer garment was laid aside.

Mechanically Peter had obeyed, and in the same way he followed the angel, the whole seeming to him a glad vision. As we say, he did not "realize" that he was being freed.

V. 10 describes the further course of events. Ward after ward (he was, we may suppose, in the inner prison) or watch after watch of several men is passed, and the great outside, and perhaps well known, iron gate is reached, opened without any visible porter, one street (or perhaps, as we say, a street) is traversed, and the angelic deliverer disappears.

One can fancy Peter standing for a moment alone, in the cool night air, taking in the situation, coming to himself, his face gradually brightening with a new joy, and the instinctive feeling swelling in his spirit that he who had begun "this work would carry it on." "Hath delivered me," etc.

The believers were gathered together praying, likely with reference to the crisis and Peter's danger. It was late, but they were in earnest. Any paraphrase is likely to obscure a picture which is as vivid as it can well be. Even in rich men's houses, a female servant like Rhoda attended the outer door (Matt. xxvi. 69). Rhoda, meaning Rose, knew Peter well, and as we should say, "liked" him. The bond of his voice (see Matt. xxvi. 73) gladdened her. She knew the anxiety about him, and without waiting to open the door, rushed in to tell the news. And instead of

opening the door and settling the point, these good praying people had a little discussion about the fact, bandying strong language, and, as it often happens in such cases, setting up an untenable theory to account for what they ought to have taken as a prompt answer to their prayer. "It is his angel," alighting, we think, to a widespread and ancient idea of a ghostly appearance of a dying person to friends, when there is anything tragic as to the death. It was an unfounded superstition, and had no basis of reason; but agitated and hasty Christians do not always reason rightly. Meantime they were neglecting plain duty, and were reminded thereof by Peter's (v. 10) continued knocking. Their astonishment is not positive proof of unbelief. The way, the promptness, the timeliness of the answer, surprised them, just as something in the circumstances of each death gives certain features of its own to it, and awakens surprise, though nothing is more common or to be expected than death.

Peter, with a motion of the hand fitted to hush and quiet them, told the story of his deliverance, ascribed the fact to the Lord, usually meaning in such cases, Jesus Christ, and directed that James, the son of Alphaeus (James, son of Zebedee, had been slain), probably the only other apostle now in Jerusalem, should be informed. The idea that the latter part of this verse refers to the angel's words and after-course is without support. Peter's direction and departure, whether we are not told, are described. The allegation that he went to Rome, and remained, has no foundation, and is rendered unlikely by Paul's silence regarding him. He probably sought a place of safety from the immediate danger.

The following points may be fixed in the pupils' minds:

- 1. It is dangerous to yield to pride and the love of popularity. (See the beginning and the end of this chapter.) "Pride goeth before destruction" (Proverbs xvi. 5; Ps. x. 2).
- 2. It is safe to be in God's service, whether dying like James, or preserved like Peter (2 Tim. ii. 12). The mode in which we die is of little consequence. How brief the story of this martyrdom!
- 3. Prayer—special, united, earnest, is a power with God (James v. 17, 18).
- 4. Angels are ministering spirits (Heb. i. 14).
- 5. Vices keep hold of families. Herod, the grandfather, killed the babes; the uncle killed the Baptist; and the grandson and nephew of these two killed James.

SUGGESTIVE TOPICS.

The new persecutor—his first leading victim—the mode of his death—the effect on the people—the temptation to Herod—his second attempt—how far he proceeded—the time—the probable motive for taking that time—his intention—the action of the Church—the place of meeting—the joyful surprise—to Peter—to the Church—the angel's work—Peter's course—his "own son"—names—career—and connection with Barnabas, and the lessons.

Chautauqua Normal Workers.

At the Chautauqua Assembly a committee selected from the various denominations there represented was appointed to consider the practicability of preparing a Chautauqua normal course of study. The fact of the report was duly chronicled by Mr. Hurlbut, in his sketch of the Assembly, in the columns of the Times. The report itself is now reproduced here.

REPORT.

With a view to greater interest, uniformity, and efficiency in the work of normal-class instruction for Sabbath-school teachers among the various denominations of Christians, the undersigned committee, members of nine different denominations of Christians, appointed at the Chautauqua Sunday-school Assembly, August 8, 1876, for the purpose of recommending a course of subjects, and suggesting a basis of operations and plans of organization, respectfully suggest:

- 1. That the course comprise forty lessons, to be called the "Chautauqua Course of Sabbath-school Normal Lessons;" the time of each lesson to be divided between the consideration of the Bible and its contents, and the theory and practice of teaching.
- 2. That the Chautauqua Course of Sabbath-school Normal Lessons may be adopted and used by any church, society, union association, or institution of learning.
- 3. We recommend that normal-classes organizing to study, the Chautauqua Course of Sabbath-school Normal Lessons, appoint a local committee of instruction, who shall have charge of the work of the class, conduct examinations, and who may issue diplomas to graduates.
- 4. Normal-classes who desire to issue diplomas may obtain them from the Chautauqua Committee, with the heading "Chautauqua Sabbath-school Normal-class Diplomas" and upon which may be placed the stamp or name of the church, society, union, association, or institution of learning with which the class is connected; these diplomas to be signed by the local committee of instruction.
- 5. Normal-classes organizing to study the Chautauqua Course of Sabbath-school Normal Lessons are requested to forward to O. F. Presbrey, Esq., Washington, D. C., Secretary of the Chautauqua Committee, a statement of the name, location, church relation, numbers, and committee of instruction thereof, to be filed and preserved by said committee.

CHAUTAUQUA SABBATH SCHOOL NORMAL CLASS SERIES.

- LESSON 1.—a. Books of the Bible, authorship, and classification; b. Place and purposes of Sabbath-schools.
- LESSON 2.—a. The Bible a Divine book; evidences and inspiration; b. Home and the Sabbath-school.
- LESSON 3.—a. The Bible a Divine book; evidences and inspiration; b. The church and the Sabbath-school.
- LESSON 4.—a. The Bible a Divine book; evidences and inspiration; b. Organization of Sabbath-schools.
- LESSON 5.—a. The Bible a Divine book; evidences and inspiration; b. Management of Sabbath-schools.
- LESSON 6.—a. The English Bible; b. Sabbath-school classification.

LESSON 7.—a. General review of the Bible topics; b. Lessons system in Sabbath-schools.

LESSON 8.—a. Bible history and chronology; b. The superintendent's office and work.

LESSON 9.—a. Bible history and chronology; b. The teacher's office and work.

LESSON 10.—a. Bible history and chronology; b. The week day work of the superintendent.

LESSON 11.—a. Bible geography; b. The teacher's Bible and how to use it.

LESSON 12.—a. Bible geography; b. How to use the concordance.

LESSON 13.—a. Bible geography; b. How to use commentaries and helps.

LESSON 14.—a. Bible geography; b. Difficulties in teaching.

LESSON 15.—a. Bible biography; b. Mistakes in teaching.

LESSON 16.—a. Bible geography; b. How to secure attention.

LESSON 17.—a. Bible manners and customs; b. Lines of approach.

LESSON 18.—a. Bible manners and customs; b. Practice in lines of approach.

LESSON 19.—a. Bible manners and customs; b. Analysis of the lesson.

LESSON 20.—a. General review of Bible topics; b. Practice in analysis.

LESSON 21.—a. Natural history of the Bible; b. Seeking for root thoughts.

LESSON 22.—a. Bible institutions; b. Practice in seeking root thoughts.

LESSON 23.—a. Bible institutions; b. Seeking for the central thoughts.

LESSON 24.—a. Bible institutions; b. Practice in seeking central thoughts.

LESSON 25.—a. Bible interpretation; b. Illustrating the lesson.

LESSON 26.—a. Bible interpretation; b. Practice in illustration.

LESSON 27.—a. Bible interpretation; b. Word pictures.

LESSON 28.—a. General review of Bible topics; b. Practice in word pictures.

LESSON 29.—a. Bible doctrines; b. Slate and blackboard work.

LESSON 30.—a. Bible doctrines; b. Map drawing.

LESSON 31.—a. Bible doctrines; b. The art of questioning.

LESSON 32.—a. Bible doctrines; b. Practice in framing questions.

LESSON 33.—a. Bible doctrines; b. Teaching adult classes.

LESSON 34.—a. Bible doctrines; b. Teaching primary classes.

LESSON 35.—a. Bible doctrines; b. Teaching intermediate classes.

LESSON 36.—a. Bible doctrines; b. Teaching careless scholars.

LESSON 37.—a. Bible doctrines; b. Cultivating the memory.

LESSON 38.—a. Bible doctrines; b. Practice in cultivating the memory.

LESSON 39.—a. False religions mentioned in the Bible; b. Specimen lessons and criticisms.

LESSON 40.—a. Review of Bible topics; b. Class reviews.

TEXT BOOKS.

The Committee recommend that the Committees of instruction of the various Normal classes shall prescribe a list of Text Books, to be read by their scholars, which shall cover, as nearly as possible, the topics embraced in the foregoing course of study.—J. E. Vincent, L. M. Kuhns, Richard Newton, J. D. Cooper, James McNab, W. E. Knox, O. N. Hartshorn, A. J. Baird, Charles Rhoads, O. F. Presbrey.

The Importance of Sabbath Schools.

BY REV. ALEXANDER M'KAY, D.D.

The importance and utility of Sabbath School instruction seems to be universally admitted. The system of Sunday school tuition is no longer regarded as an experiment of doubt. Even men of the most moderate pretensions to Christianity have by observation and reflection been compelled to regard it as a nursery of useful knowledge, of pious dispositions, and of virtuous habits; and it is very cheering to think that during the last thirty or forty years especially, they have vastly increased in number, and proved such a beneficial agency for promoting the spiritual well-being of the children of all classes of the community. The interest taken in this department of Christian work is constantly increasing. All Christian denominations are engaged in it to some extent. In fact in this age of progress and invention, whenever a Christian church is organized, a Sabbath school in connection with it is considered an absolute necessity to its prosperity. Sunday schools are valuable auxiliaries to the Church of Christ. They have supplied the pulpit with ministers, the pews with Christians, and heaven with saints. How highly requisite that those who conduct them feel the deep responsibility that rests upon them, and ever keep in view the great end of Sabbath school instruction, which is not merely to explain the difficult words in the lesson or to point out the geographical location of places mentioned in that portion of Scripture. This is all well enough in its own place, but those who are teachers of the right stamp are seeking something nobler and higher, something far more important. They are seeking to win the young to Jesus. They are anxious to secure, within the fold of mercy, the lambs wandering in the wilderness of this world in which abound snares, pitfalls, and precipices, and all that is injurious and destructive to the soul. Oh blessed and glorious work to endeavour to rescue these little ones which constitute a part of that family for which Christ suffered and died on the cross; anything short of this will not meet the end in view. Sabbath school teachers ought to be able to say conscientiously that they are seeking for the conversion and salvation of their tender charge, and not merely to bring them over to this or that other sect. Sabbath schools have been blessings to children. Many thousands have thus been trained to habits of reading, thinking, and attending public worship, who would otherwise have been altogether neglected. A great many parents never attend to the religious instruction of their children and if it were not for the efforts of pious Sabbath school teachers, such would not be taught in the doctrines and precepts of the Bible. Many have learned in the Sabbath school the evil of sin, the value of the

soul, the necessity of vital godliness, and the way to heaven. Many children have died in holy triumph who have been indebted to the Sabbath school as the means of their conversion and happiness. Sabbath schools have been blessings to teachers, not only by employing their time, exercising their talents and calling forth their energies, but by awakening their consciences, and producing that saving change of heart and decision of character which are necessary to holiness, happiness, and glory. They have been blessings to parents, many a child has taught his parents to read, many interesting and instructive religious books have been carried home from the school, and pursued in the family with profit. Many parents have been induced in this way to hear the Gospel which provid the power of God to their salvation, and many of them have borne testimony to the improvement of their children in sound knowledge and good conduct. They have been blessings to Christ's churches, it is a well known fact, that many honorable and useful members in our congregations, many godly ministers in our pulpits, and several active and zealous missionaries now laboring in heathen lands, received their first religious impressions in the Sabbath school. How encouraging must be the results to society of multitudes of children, rearing from such an institution, trained in the ways of religion and morality, and prepared for doing their part in all the interests and duties of life, with fidelity and propriety. But never shall we be able to comprehend its vast importance and great value until the day of the revelation of all things. Then it will appear that this apparent humble agency, however little it may be thought of by infidels and scoffers of religion, has been the means, under God, of laying, in cases innumerable, the foundation of a pious and upright life, of a peaceful and triumphant death and of a blessed and glorious immortality in heaven. Is it not then the duty of every one who sincerely desires the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, to exert his utmost ability and influence in encouraging, promoting, and multiplying them? Let church members in general, and elders in particular, smile upon the efforts of the teachers, frequently visiting the school, and render them all the assistance in their power; and above all let ministers plead their cause with God, in the devotions of the sanctuary; that children, teachers, and parents may see and hear for encouragement and comfort that their care is every Sabbath laid before Him who's blessing is essential to success. Let the prayer and desire of all be in the language of the poet.

May Sunday schools increase around,  
Till not a village shall be found,  
Where wicked children are not taught,  
To mind religion as they ought.

May young teachers multiply,  
And young one's rise as old ones die,  
Till steady time his wheels shall stay,  
And death and sin be done away.

Reasons Why You Should Attend the Prayer Meeting.

- 1. God is there. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. He is there to meet you, to bless you, to hear your requests, to hold communion with you.
- 2. It is the appointed meeting-place of God and His children. A place between heaven and earth—the mercy-seat. He says: "There will I meet thee, and will commune with thee from off the mercy-seat."
- 3. It is good to be there. There you hear His word, sing His praise, and call upon Him by prayer. The soul is refreshed, the strength is renewed there, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength," etc.
- 4. Your condition requires it. "To obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need," to be separate from sinners, to be with Jesus and His children, to receive the strength, the refreshings, the light, the encouragement found there.
- 5. Your character demands it. To prove that you are consistent, that you love God and not mammon, that you love Christ and His service above all others.
- 6. Your profession demands it. To prove your obedience to Christ, your consecration to Him, your preference to Him, to His society above all others. To show it not a vain, a mere profession.
- 7. To fulfil your vows. You are in covenant with God and with His Church—set apart to His service. You have solemnly promised to serve the Lord, and you ought to feel, "Thy vows are upon me, O God."
- 8. To prove to the world your piety. By your fruits they are to know you. If you gather not with God's children, how can they respect your piety, or believe you are what you profess to be.
- 9. To encourage your pastor and others.
- 10. To do good and to get good.
- 11. For the welfare of the church. She cannot prosper without it.
- 12. Not to hinder the cause of Christ. Staying away is hindering, is opposition, is so much loss to the church, and so much hindrance to its spirituality.
- 13. To be free from the blood of souls. By discouraging others to go, and thus to lose their salvation.
- 14. To maintain peace of conscience.
- 15. To prevent backsliding.
- 16. To secure the Holy Ghost for the Church.
- 17. To die happy. Ponder these reasons, and then determine your duty and do it.

Habitual absence from the prayer meeting is not an evidence of the true Christian life, but is an evidence of the want of it.—N. Y. Christian Intelligencer.

THERE are many indications in England of the probability of a large demand there this winter for Canadian wheat. A writer in the London Times says that last year the British wheat crop was 22 per cent. below an average, whilst this year it is 11 per cent. below. The amount this year available for consumption, after deducting the wheat necessary to be retained for seed, is stated at about 72,000,000 bushels, the average yield per acre being twenty-five bushels this year. The requirements of the population for the year are estimated at 184,000,000 bushels. Therefore 112,000,000 bushels must be imported.