

Our Young Folks.

Silence.

BY PROF. UPHAM.

When, smitten, thou dost feel the rod, Be still, and leave thy cause with God; And attend to thy soul's chief teacher...

The Ants' Monday Dinner.

How did I know what the ants had for dinner yesterday? Ha, it is odd that I should have known, but I'll tell you how it happened.

I was sitting under a big pine tree, high up on a hill-side. The hill-side was more than seven thousand feet above the sea, and this is higher than many mountains...

Suddenly I saw, under a tuft of grass, a tiny yellow caterpillar, which seemed to be bounding along in a very strange way.

"Ho! ho! Mr. Ant," said I, "you needn't think you're going to be strong enough to drag that fellow very far."

Why, it was about the same thing as if you or I should drag off a heifer, kicking and struggling for dear life all the time; only that the heifer hasn't half so many legs to catch hold of things with as the caterpillar had.

"Dear me!" said I, "ants don't live in trees! What does this mean?"

The bark of the tree was all broken and jagged, and full of seams twenty times as deep as the height of the ant's body.

"Please, sir, send this money to the heathen."

"But my dear little fellow, I must have a name to acknowledge it."

"The led hesitated, as if he did not understand. 'You must tell me your name,' repeated the minister, 'that we may know who gave the money.'"

"Oh, well, then, sir, please put it down to Neddie and me; that will do, won't it, sir?"

"Well, well," said I, "the little people are stronger than the big ones, after all! Who's has my ant gone?"

Sure enough! It hadn't been two minutes that I had been watching the hawk and the birds, but in that two minutes the ant and the caterpillar had disappeared.

"I suppose if I could have seen his face, and had understood the language of ants' features, I should have seen plainly written there, 'Dear me, what sort of a

country was that I tumbled into, so frightfully black and smooth?" By this time the caterpillar had had the breath pretty well knocked out of his body, and was so limp and helpless that the ant was not afraid of his getting away from him.

"You stupid woman, not to suppose that ants can be as well behaved as people! When you passed Mr. Jones yesterday, you didn't peep into his market-basket, nor touch the big cabbage he had under his arm."

Presently, the ant dropped the caterpillar, and ran on a few steps—I mean inches—to meet another ant who was coming toward him.

The oddest thing was, how the ants came running home from all directions. I don't believe there was any dinner bell rung, though there might have been one too fine for my ears to hear; but in less than a minute, I had counted thirty-three ants running down that hole I fancied they looked as hungry as wolves.

I had a great mind to dig down into the hole with a stick, and see what had become of the caterpillar. But I thought it wasn't quite fair to take the roof off a man's house to find out how he cooks his beef for dinner; so I sat still awhile, and wondered whether they would lay him out straight on the floor, and all stand in rows each side of him and nibble across, and whether they would leave any for Tuesday; and then I went home to my own dinner.—H. H., in St. Nicholas for Nov.

Working for Jesus.

A preacher in England was once talking about the heathen, and telling how much they needed Bibles to teach them of Jesus. In the congregation was a little boy who became intensely interested.

Finally he hit upon the plan. The people of England used rubbing, or door stones, for polishing their hearths and scouring their wooden floors. These stones are bits of marble or freestone, begged from the stone cutters or marble workers.

This little boy had a favourite donkey named Neddie. He thought it would be nice to have Neddie help in the benevolent work. So he harassed him up, and loaded him with stones, and went around calling: "Do you want any door stones?"

Before long he raised fifteen dollars. And then he went up to the minister and said: "Please, sir, send this money to the heathen."

"But my dear little fellow, I must have a name to acknowledge it."

"The led hesitated, as if he did not understand. 'You must tell me your name,' repeated the minister, 'that we may know who gave the money.'"

"Oh, well, then, sir, please put it down to Neddie and me; that will do, won't it, sir?"

Value of a Tract.

When forwarding his quarterly report a colporteur of the Presbyterian Board of Publication, in Wisconsin, writes as follows:

About two weeks ago a man stopped up to me and said: "I suppose you don't know me?"

"I replied that I had seen him somewhere, but under what circumstances I could not say. Taking me by the hand, with tearful eyes and utterance, he said:

"I thank God for sending you to my house over a year ago, and for the tract, 'Do You Pray?' which you then gave me. Until I read that tract over and over I never knew what prayer was. But for a year my life has been, I trust, one of prayer. I have circulated that tract among my neighbors, and it has been read until it is nearly worn out."

At his earnest request I promised to visit him again in a short time.—Presbyterian at Work.

A Word for the Master.

A lady when writing a letter to a young naval officer, who was almost a stranger, thought, "Shall I close this as anybody would, or shall I say a word for my Master?"

Then, lifting up her heart for a moment, she wrote, telling him that his constant change of scene and place was an apt illustration of the words, "Here we have no continuing city, and asked if he could not continue to come."

In trembling awe she folded it, and sent it off. Back came the answer, "Thank you so much for those kind words. My parents are dead. I am an orphan, and no one has spoken to me like that since my mother died long years ago."

The boy shot at venture hit home, and the young man shortly after rejoiced in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of peace. Christians, how often do we close a letter "as anybody would," when we might say a word for Jesus?

Sabbath School Teacher.

LESSON LII.

December 27, 1874. FOURTH QUARTERLY REVIEW.

(October 2.) At the beginning of this quarter's "Lessons" we found our Lord—where? The peculiarities of Decapolis—meaning of the word? There was brought to him a deaf mute—some thing to be learned from the bringing—peculiarities of his case, and of our Lord's method of curing him—truths that had to be there taught—errors that had to be there guarded against—peculiarities in our Lord's course—why "sigh?" Why enjoin silence? The testimony drawn from the people. The lesson to us?

(October 11.) In the next mighty work the sufferer is not brought by friends, but by whom? The evil to be dealt with? The hopelessness of the man from failure—with whom? His appeal—the faith of the man—how it is called out—confessed—the mixture in it—the word of power—the lesson to the disciples—and to us?

For the disciples needed teaching and training, as our third lesson (Oct. 18) shows. They had much remaining selfishness—in what two forms? The likeness between personal ambition and the pride of a party? How they showed both? The details of each case? By whom was the second error mentioned? The reply of the Lord? The real honour this outsider put on Christ? The grace opposed to ambitions and to sectarianism? Meaning of "offend" in this connection? Where else the "mill stone" is the figure or utter ruin? and in what connection. The active side of catholicity? How a "cup of cold water" may be given so as to bring reward? Forms in which we may give it?

It is not hearing only, but sight, that our Lord gives, as we saw in our fourth lesson (Oct. 25.) Sufferer's name—condition—position—cry—discouragement—encouragement—request? The blank check given to faith to fill up—"what wilt thou?" and the lessons of it to us. Can we explain the principle of these cures? Jesus puts away sin. Its wages? Diseases the beginning of "death"—a part of it. If He can deal with the effects, then the cause of them is under His control. Other uses of miracles.

But there is judgment as well as mercy, as we saw at the beginning of November (1st); yet it is God's "strange work," how shown? Fig tree—where? Giving what promise—peculiarities of the tree? Had fig gathering passed? What reason to expect figs? The lesson taught? When the disciples noticed the effect—why not sooner? The apology to Hebrew people—warning concerning the nation? Warning also to us? Anything to blame in the trees leaves? No, then in what? No fruit. In a profession of religion? No, except where no "fruits of righteousness."

In the lessons, November 8, 15 and 22, we have our Lord in contact with persons of the most marked character, from whose reported intercourse with whom we are intended to learn something. Such are the scribes—their attitude, their tone, their question as to the law, and the answer brought out—the "two commandments"—what? The likeness? The difference? The character of the scribes—how denounced? The contrast presented by the widow—her gift? Its merit? The commendation? The lessons to us regarding giving? The entertainment at Simon's house—his former condition—the grateful woman—her anointing of Jesus—the criticism of a disciple—the defence of the act by the Master—the prophecy regarding her? And the last lesson of this month also fixes our attention on one unappreciated person in connection with "the betrayal."

Recall description of Judas—his name—its significance—the indirect testimony he bears to the purity of Jesus' life? His secret sin? Was it known at the time, or afterwards? His probable downward course? Disappointment? Object at last? His tempters? His betrayer, who "entered into him"? The aggravations of his sin? The mode of betrayal, and why then and there? The awful warning his case furnishes. How did the twelve behave? Particularly how did Peter behave? (December 6.) Recall the facts? What may be learned generally from such? Lessons such as these (a wise teacher will bring them out by questions and answers) may be learnt. Not only have the most eminent servants of God sinned, but they have gone astray on that side where they appeared to be the strongest; faithful Abraham by lack of faith, meek Moses by impatience, patient Job by over haste, courageous Peter by fear of man. No flesh can glory in God's presence.

Another use is served by such incidents faithfully recorded. They show the honesty and therefore, the truthfulness of the sacred writers. Deceivers setting up a scheme of their own would not be likely to report the disgrace of a leading disciple. But Peter must himself have given the account of his own fall to Mark, with whom he laboured and whom he calls his son (1 Pet. v. 13.) He magnifies God's grace in his own unworthiness like Paul, (1 Tim. i. 13-15.)

A careful reading of Peter's letters, first and second, will show the effect on his own mind of his temptation and failure. Nowhere else have we so many pointed lessons on the need of watchfulness and the wages of the devil. He had learned the meaning of Luke xxii. 81.

In gazing on the cross, after recalling the facts, what point should be impressed on our minds? Such as these:

(1) The death of Jesus fulfilled Scripture, from Gen. iii. 15 in an ever widening stream of prophecy and type.

(2) It was official, public, and abundantly witnessed, "not in a corner."

(3) The guilt of it is on man, as man. It was deliberately effected by Jews and Gentiles, and by the rulers and the ruled of both.

(4) It was the most momentous deed ever done on earth. It was not only the death of Christ, but the destruction of Satan's kingdom, the end of Judaism, and the overthrow of heathenism. The three hours' darkness was not too much as a funeral pall, nor the earthquake out of pro-

portion to the shaking of all things in the moral and spiritual world.

(5) The only parallel to it will be found in his coming again (Isa. ii. 10).

The subject of the last lesson may be supposed to be distinctly in the mind that it will be sufficient to show how we should feel towards this "risen Saviour," and how we should be influenced by our rising in him (Col. iii. 1-3).

Interpreting the Bible.

Some people are so fond of saying—"You can't prove anything from the Bible," that it is worth while to consider how true the saying is. If it means that men have handled the Scriptures so constantly in an unfair manner, as to make it teach anything or nothing, then the proposition is undoubtedly correct. But if it affirms, either that the Bible has no positive meaning to convey, or that meaning cannot be determined, it is utterly false.

The former notion puts it below every book that has a claim to the respect of mankind. It is absurd to suppose that a meaningless book is in any sense the word of God. But it is frequently claimed that because it is God's book, the thoughts it conveys are too great for definiteness, incapable of expression by human formulas.

The answer to that is, it is the most human of books; its statements centre about ONE who spoke as a man, even while he spoke as never man spoke. Suppose thoughts about the infinite and unsearchable do enter, that does not make the whole a puzzle.

We can use formulas for infinity in the most practical matters. Because the side and diagonal of a square are not commensurable, but require an infinite decimal to express their relation to each other, mathematicians do not give up the formula which conveys that relation. If that difficulty were an insurmountable one there would be an end to modern science as we know it.

Leaving this phase of the subject to itself—for such views soon die from their inherent destructiveness—let us ask what the facts are in relation to the New Testament. Here is a book in a given language written at a certain time. Irrespective of its inspiration, what are the facilities for determining its meaning? The answer is not uncertain. While the truth it contains proves to be inexhaustible, there is no book in existence which can be studied so easily, none for which history has contributed so many helps.

In the first place, the fact that it is in a dead language is an advantage. We are not embarrassed by the present meaning of words, so different from the older ones, as in reading from the English Bible. Then it was written at a late period in the history of that language. This too is an advantage.

We do not depend on fanciful etymologies, but can trace the use of the words for centuries. A word in the New Testament can be proven to have a definite meaning far more readily than a word in Homer. Then too, the antecedent history in general sheds more light than in the case of any other book. Classical works are usually illustrated by few facts from a limited period. The New Testament is illustrated by all the ages which preceded, i. e., historic ages.

If there is any plan in history, that plan centres in the facts this book records. But even on lower ground, the Jewish religion and Greek culture are to be regarded as exegetical helps. Then come in studies of comment, of laborious research, so minute that every important word has had aries written upon it.

Now if all this led to greater divergence of opinion, there would be room for a "reer. But whenever honest, unbiased effort has been put forth in the line of Biblical study, the tendency has been toward unanimity. When men do not like the conclusions, they begin to adopt some other than what is rightly called honest exegesis. When a man denies justification by faith, and the Vicarious Atonement, he invariably casts about for some theory of interpretation which differs from the straightforward historical one. Traditional reverence for the Bible may keep such an one from neglecting Scriptural study, but his followers adopt his inferences as their opinions, and despise exegesis.

In fact the number of appliances for getting at the meaning of the New Testament is so great, the advantage for definite interpretation so pre-eminent, that the hand of Providence is clearly to be seen in these things. What else could we expect, if this is what it claims to be—a revelation from God? That there are dark places, that there are difficulties, that imperfect men—exposed to bias from every quarter—fail to interpret correctly, is undeniable; but that there is less reason for uncertainty than in the case of any book older than two centuries, may be boldly affirmed. If we can prove anything from the Bible, it is not because it has no meaning, nor because that meaning is undiscoverable.

Glory of the Southern Skies.

The glory of the southern sky, in the region near the cross, is indescribable. There where the thick stream of bright stars which skirts the milky way crosses the river of light, its brilliancy is wondrously increased, and it exhibits a magnificence unequalled in any other portion of the heavens.

There glitter a multitude of bright stars, more thickly scattered than in any region within our northern view, while the background is gorgeous in its splendor. Often, on some clear night when it has suddenly been brought to my view in passing some edifice or turning some street corner, I have stood amazed at the flood of light which it diffused; and often, too, after leaving the observatory in the early morning hours, after a night of weary labour, I have felt reluctant to abandon the much-needed repose.

In close proximity are the rich constellations of the Centaur, the keel and sails of the ship Argo, and the Wolf, and the glory reaches through the Alfa oven to the southern portion of the Scorpion. There are large tracts which rival the Pleiades in the profusion of their stars gleaming upon a background of nebula. Elsewhere the southern heavens are not so brilliant as the northern, nor do they contain so many stars as bright as the faintest which we can discern; but there is nothing between the two poles to compare in beauty with the tract to which I refer.—Dr. B. A. Gould.

Miscellaneous.

A LITTLE explained, a little endured, and a little passed over in silence, and lo! the rugged atoms fit like smooth mosaic.

Much depends on the way we come into trouble. Paul and Jonah were both in a storm, but in very different circumstances.—Rev. John Newton.

It is only from the Bible we learn that God is love; that his character is spotlessly holy. There we are informed that our first duty, our chief interest, is to acquire a character in righteousness and benevolence like God's.

An elevated purpose is a good and ennobling thing, but we cannot begin at the top of it. We must work up to it by the often difficult path of daily duty—of daily duty always carefully performed.

INSTEAD of spending much time in refuting error, real or supposed, let the pulpit confine itself more particularly to the exposition of sound and earnest practical Christian truth, which will prove a much more perfect weapon than any argumentative discourse directly addressed against it.

THESE things as comely and pleasant, and worthy of honour from the beholder. A young saint, an old martyr, a religious soldier, a conscientious statesman, a great man courteous, a learned man humble, a child that understands the eye of its parents, a cheerful companion without vanity, a friend not changed with honours, a rich man happy, a soul departing with comfort and assurance.—Bishop Hall.

GOD is the God of love—Christianity is a religion of love. Jesus Christ was in incarnation of love. He was love, living, breathing, speaking amongst men. His birth was the nativity of love; his sermons, the word of love; his miracles, the wonders of love; his tears, the melting of love; his crucifixion, the agonies of love; his death, the sacrifice of love; and his resurrection, the triumph of love.

THE setting of a great hope is like the setting of the sun. The brightness of our life is gone, shadows of the evening fall behind us, and the world seems but a dim reflection itself—a broader shadow. We looked forward into the coming lonely night; the soul withdraws itself. Then stars arise, and the night is holy.—Longfellow.

If you have ever tried if you must have been struck with the few solid thoughts, the few suggestive ideas which survive the perusal of the most brilliant of human books. Few of them can stand three readings, and of the memorabilia which you have made in your first reading, on reverting to them you find many of them were not striking, or weighty, or original as you thought. But the word of God is striking; it will stand a thousand readings, and the man who has gone over it the most frequently and carefully, is the surest of finding new wonders there.—Rev. James Hamilton.

THE Scriptures appear to be the best reading in retirement, especially for the poor, and those who have little leisure. They are the fountain; other books are streams, and streams are seldom entirely free from something of the quality of the soil through which they flow. Who would not draw the water of life for himself from the spring-head? The Scripture come immediately from God, and lead immediately to Him! There is a boundless variety and fullness in them. They are always new. They entertain while they teach, and profit while they please. There is always something in them that bears upon our own character and condition, however peculiar it may be.—Jay.

In its own sphere, Power is greater than Suffering; but, in this sphere, Suffering is greater than Power. Power creates; Suffering cannot create. Power provides; Suffering cannot provide. But can Power redeem? Oh, no! it is Suffering, and Suffering only, that redeems. Power can illumine the obscure constitution; Suffering can do that. But can Power correct the perverted character? Oh, no! Suffering, and Suffering alone, can do that. Power, like the lightning, strikes a single object; Suffering, like the cloud, baptises the world with its tears, and bends the rain of peace over mountains all rustling with thanksgiving, and valleys of silent beauty all sparkling with praise.—Thomas H. Stockton.

Steps and Stages.

I recollect, when a lad standing in a field watching the process of brick making. The clay, being dug, was softened with water and placed in a cask, in which was made to revolve a perpendicular shaft, to which was fixed a number of knives arranged so as to mix the clay to a required consistency, and cut it into lumps of the size sufficient to make a perfect brick, which fell out at the bottom of the cask, and was taken up by a boy in attendance, and placed on the moulder's board, who, by his skill and quickness, soon produced from his frame the correctly-shaped bricks ready for the kiln, in which they were hardened by the heat.

I have since thought how much this sets forth the work of the Sunday-school teacher. The teacher in the junior class is moultering and preparing the clay for the moulder (the senior class teacher), and as the digging, grinding, and mixing the clay is a work of some sacrifice and labor, so also the junior class teacher finds it difficult and perplexing to break in the waywardness of the youth of his charge. Now, the moulder could not get on without the preparatory work of his fellow-laborer (grinding of the clay); so neither would the Bible-class teacher find his work so easy without the preparatory effort of his junior fellow-workman in the Lord's vineyard. This should encourage the desponding and ready-to-halt, tired teacher of the babes, because, though his work may not bear the stamp of equal dignity, yet it is, nevertheless a necessary stepping-stone to the success of the teacher of the young men. Both are employed by the same righteous Master, and both shall "ave the divine plaudit when the "Lord of the vineyard" shall call His laborers and give them their reward.