

## Our Young Folks.

## A True Story.

One cold day in winter a lad stood at the outer door of a cottage in Scotland. The snow had been falling very fast, and the poor boy looked very cold and hungry. "Mayn't I stay, ma'am?" he said to the woman who had opened the door. "I'll work, cut wood, go for water, and do all your errands."

"You may come in, at any rate, until my husband comes home," the woman said. "There, sit down by the fire; you look perishing with the cold;" and she drew a chair up to the warmest corner; then, suspiciously glancing at the boy from the corners of her eyes, she continued setting the table for supper.

Presently came the tramp of heavy boots, and the door was swung open with a quick jerk, and the husband entered, wearied with his day's work.

A look of intelligence passed between his wife and himself. He had looked at the boy, but did not seem very well pleased; he nevertheless made him come to the table, and was glad to see how heartily he ate his supper.

Day after day passed, and yet the boy begged to be kept "until to-morrow;" so the good couple, after due consideration, concluded that as long as he was such a good boy, and worked so willingly, they would keep him.

One day, in the middle of winter, a peddler, who often traded at the cottage, called, and, after disposing of some of his goods, was preparing to go, when he said to the woman:

"You have a boy out there, splitting wood, I see," pointing to the yard.

"Yes; do you know him?"

"I have seen him," replied the peddler.

"Where? Who is he? What is he?"

"A jail-bird;" and then the peddler swung his pack over his shoulder. "That boy, young as he looks, I saw in court myself, and heard him sentenced, 'Ten months.' You'd do well to look carefully after him."

Oh! there was something so dreadful in the word "jail." The poor woman trembled as she laid away the things she had bought of the peddler; nor could she be easy till she called the boy in and assured him that she knew that dark part of his history.

Asheamed and distressed, the boy hung down his head. His cheeks seemed bursting with the hot blood, and his lips quivered.

"Well," he muttered, his frame shaking, "there's no use in me trying to do better; everybody hates and despises me; nobody cares about me."

"Tell me," said the woman, "how came you to go, so young, to that dreadful place? Where is your mother?"

"Oh!" exclaimed the boy, with a burst of grief that was terrible to behold—"oh! I hadn't no mother! I hadn't no mother ever since I was a baby! If I only had a mother," he continued, while tears gushed from his eyes, "I wouldn't have been bound out, and kicked, and cuffed, and horsewhipped. I wouldn't have been saucy and got knocked down, and ran away, and then stole because I was hungry. Oh! if I'd only had a mother!"

The strength was all gone from the poor boy, and he sunk on his knees, sobbing great choking sobs, and rubbing the hot tears away with the sleeve of his jacket.

The woman was a mother, and though all her children slept under the cold sod in the churchyard, she was a mother still. She put her hand kindly on the head of the boy, and told him to look up, and said from that time he should find in her a mother. Yes, even put her arms around the neck of that forsaken, deserted child. She poured from her mother's heart, sweet, kind words, words of counsel and of tenderness. Oh! how sweet was her sleep that night—how soft her pillow! She had plucked some thorns from the path of a little sinning but striving mortal.

That poor boy is now a promising man. His foster-father is dead, his foster-mother is aged and sickly, but she knows no want. The "poor outcast" is her support. Nobly does he repay the trust reposed in him.

"When my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up."—*The Standard Bearer.*

## Young People and Church Work.

Young men and women gather around them an interest peculiar to their age, an interest which should not be lost in church work. A fault here largely exists, but one which we are glad to believe is being gradually corrected. We would heartily add our contribution to this end. Most of persons having lived to some age will recognize the fact that formerly the church and active Christian work was more confined to older persons than it now is. Church offices, participation in public religious exercises and teaching in Sunday schools was practically less shared by the younger. They felt restrained from taking free and vigorous hold in these. The more general prevalence of Sunday-schools and prayer-meetings has done a good service in this respect. It has trained the younger class to more freedom, and more capacity, too, for work. Judicious pastors have seen the end here to be gained, and made themselves and their work more familiar to them. Yet there is a great want of activity, especially in many localities, on the part of the younger class, which ought by every means to be removed. The remedy lies largely with pastors and older members. They should not leave out of view the fact that it is their imperative duty, as well as the interests of the church, to enlist the younger class in Christian work and activity. They should not hold their religion or their zeal as peculiar to their own position or age, and as not proper to be shared and exercised by young people. Their warm and enlivening Christian spirit should please, attract and cheer the younger to freedom in religious thinking and doing. This does not mean at all an undignified manner or a trivial spirit, but the outgoing of a true, live-hearted religion toward this interesting and serviceable class in order to benefit them and to do service for Christ.

There is often heard the complaint that our young people can not be enlisted in religious matters. We think too little pains is taken to learn the cause and discover the remedy. The pastor, the church, and in fact everything pertaining to religion, are somehow or other brought to be regarded by the young folks as belonging to father, mother, and the older people, and not as belonging to them or as for them. Pastors should break up such a state of affairs, thrust themselves out toward the young people, and make them feel that they have here an interest, a pleasing duty and a great privilege.

We will not forget that the remedy of the evil stated lies also largely with the young people themselves. They are slow to consider well and measure properly their capacity to do service in the church and in Christ's cause. They are diffident, and hesitate to attempt an activity in Christian works, under the impression that it requires capacities and qualifications they do not possess. They should remember they are held responsible only for the talents they have, not for those they have not. They should also remember that talents are capable of increase, however few they may be. All that is required and all that is wanted is simply more freedom and readiness to serve the church in the measure of ability they possess. Why that strange and inexcusable feeling on their part which keeps them back from thinking of, speaking about, and doing what pertains to church work? They should overcome it, and take a lively interest and an active part here. The way is open for them, and their help is of much account. Get the heart right. Let it be lit up with the light of the Christian life, and let that light shine out freely and brilliantly in all possible activity in and for the church. Then it will soon be a familiar field. All restraint will be removed. It will very soon not be difficult to live and labor as a Christian young man or woman, even as a Christian boy or girl. The amount of service to the church which they can and ought to render is very great. They carry with them an interest and influence which without them is not only lost to the church but which in the end is much against her progress—a current drawing away from her.

We would earnestly appeal to every young person to consider the matter here suggested to them. What reason have they for withholding from the church the service they can and ought to tender? Why are they not free to act and labor in her work and mission? With them her efficiency will be increased and her success accelerated. Without them her difficulties will be multiplied, and their own well-being imperiled both in time and eternity. Let them give to her, and so to God, the beautiful incense of their young, cheerful and vigorous life.—*Herald and Presbyter.*

## Teaching Children Courage.

Courage is a vital element of Christian chivalry. Without it, indeed, neither truth nor fidelity to promise can be hoped for. The coward is sure to lie when truth means punishment, and sure to retreat from his engagements when they involve peril. We need valiant souls that have learned to endure and scorn pain, and face danger fearlessly and promptly when duty requires. Some parents evade this vital part of training by glosses and deceptions. A mother who has taken her boy to the dentist's to get a tooth out will often say, if he is shrinking, "Sit still, my boy; it won't hurt you." Now she knows it will hurt him, but thinks if she can only get him by this device to sit still and let the dentist get hold of the tooth, then his discovery of the pain will not hinder its extraction. This is a double mistake. It destroys her boy's confidence in her; for he detects her in a lie. And though it gets the boy, this time, to sit still, it is under the delusion that there is to be no pain; whereas he should be taught to face the pain and to scorn it. This makes the difference between cowards and heroes. A regiment of poltroons could march up to a battery as cheerfully as a regiment of heroes if they thought there were no enemy at the guns. The difference is that heroes know the danger, and face it valiantly.

## Keep to One Thing.

We earnestly entreat every young man after he has chosen his vocation to stick to it. Don't leave it because hard blows are to be struck, or disagreeable work performed. Those who have worked their way up to wealth and usefulness do not belong to the shiftless and unstable class but may be reckoned among such as took off their coats, rolled up their sleeves, conquered their prejudice against labour, and manfully bore the heat and burden of the day. Whether upon the old farm where our fathers toiled diligently, striving to bring the soil to productivity, in the machine shop or factory, or the thousand other business places that invite honest toil and skill, let the motto ever be, Perseverance and Industry.

## Anagram.

From the word *incompatible* the following 127 words may be made: I, in, it, imitable, ice, into, can, compatible, came, cant, cone, Colman, cole, coal, colic, colet, cabinet, cable, cab, cabin, Colin, call, comet, comic, combine, cane, Cain, colt, coma, on, once, one, omit, mope, map, most, man, men, moan, mint, mole, malt, mile, me, mat, mane, main, mate, meat, pin, pate, poem, pomace, point, Po, pint, pit, pot, polite, polt, polo, plait, plate, pen, at, Abel, ale, all, aloe, ant, an, tap, tea, tab, top, tone, tin, ton, table, tale, tail, tiel, toe, tie, tame, time, ton, tomb, bit, bite, boil, bile, blot, clot, bane, bain, bon, bo, boat, bin, lame, limb, lain, lane, lie, lint, lamb, lion, nib, entomb, no, nimble, nice, net, nit, not, nib, nail, name, Nain, note, amen.—*Thomas J. Martin, Moy.*

I never place much reliance on a man who is always telling what he would have done had he been there. I have noticed that somehow this kind of people never get there.

## Sabbath School Teacher.

## LESSON IX.

Feb. 25. THE ARK BROUGHT TO ZION (2 Sam. vi. 1-11).

COMMIT TO MEMORY, v. 15.  
PARALLEL PASSAGES.—1 Chron. xiii. and xv. 25-28.

SCRIPTURE READINGS.—With v. 1, read Prov. xi. 14; with v. 2, read Ex. xxv. 22; with v. 3, read 1 Sam. vi. 7; with vs. 4 and 5, read 1 Sam. vii. 1, 2, with v. 6, read Numb. iv. 15; with v. 7, read 1 Sam. vi. 19; with v. 8, compare 2 Sam. v. 20; with v. 9, read 1 Sam. vi. 20; with vs. 10, 11, read Gen. xxxix. 5; with vs. 12-15, read Zech. vi. 13.

GOLDEN TEXT.—The Lord hath chosen Zion: he hath desired it for his habitation.—Ps. cxxvii. 13.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—Great fear is due unto the Lord.

There are two few cases of rulers making the Lord's work and honor their first care. Too often the rewarding of their partisans or the strengthening of their position is their first work. Not so with David. His first care after acquiring power is to secure the place appointed for God's "rest" (2 Sam. v. 7). His next is to bring up the ark into it; in which enterprise he engages the leading persons of "all the people" to the number of thirty thousand. It would be good for them to be interested in such a work (v. 1).

There are too few cases of ordinary men giving "things pertaining to God," the foremost place. They stand aside till other things have been done, and then take their chance out of the residue; and men wonder after all that God does not send the blessing! Let us remember the rule (Matt. vi. 33) and hear the question (Mal. i. 6). Thousands intend to "get settled" in church, after they are well settled in the world. They pay the penalty of contempt of God in loss, spiritual or temporal—often both.

## THE ARK REMOVED FROM BAAL.

(V. 2.) There was no necessity for many persons to move the ark from Baal (Josh. xv. 9), or Kirjath-jearim (1 Chron. xiii. 6), about ten miles only. But it is not to be treated like a trunk or parcel. It is God's ark. Dignity, state, solemnity, attendance are all due. And it is best that it should not be left to a few official persons. Let it be the common cause, as religion and the service of God are our common cause. The church is not for the ministers, but ministers and churches for the people.

The ark was the sign of God's blessing and favor. In honoring it, God is honored; the service ought therefore to be joyful. It was right to give this symbol the highest and most honorable place. Its dignity is pointed at in the end of the verse, "Upon which is named the name, the name of Jehovah of Hosts, who sits between the cherubim."

(V. 3.) But zeal and heartiness are not all that God requires in His service. There must be regard to His recorded and expressed will. When we gratify a friend of our own motion, we may take our own way, and the motive is everything. When we serve the Lord, His will is of the greatest moment, and may not be disregarded.

## THE SIN AND ITS PUNISHMENT.

No inquiry seems to have been made as to the mode of proceeding. The Philistines (1 Sam. vi. 7) instructed by their "priests and diviners" (v. 2), had made a new cart—in a reverent spirit. This precedent seems to have been followed here. But what was well enough in Philistines—who had not the law—was not necessarily right in Hebrews who had. They had directions as to the way of removing the ark (Numb. iv. 15).

Either from haste, excitement, or forgetfulness, this rule was disregarded. They set the ark on a new cart (see Luke xix. 30, and Matt. xxvii. 60), and brought it out of the house still called by Abinadab's name (though he was in all likelihood dead), on the hill; his sons or grandsons driving the cart.

(V. 4.) The tragedy that followed, was so grave and impressive that all the details are dwelt upon. "Abio went before the ark."

(V. 5.) A joyful procession marching to instrumental and vocal music, in which David and the representative men took part, went before. Psalms like the 24th, would be appropriate.

(V. 6.) At the threshing-floor of Nachon, the cart was shaken, and the ark appeared insecure. It was expressly forbidden, even to the Levites, to touch it "lest they die." God thus conveyed an idea of His own holiness. Uzzah, in forgetfulness of this, sought to steady the ark, which was falling or in danger, (the words are ambiguous), and "took hold of it."

(V. 7.) The event showed that the Lord was displeased. His death was instantaneous, "by the side of the ark." What a warning to all who suppose that they must take their own way to keep up, or God's ark will fall, and that way often in self-will, pride, scorn, persecution or hatred (see James i. 20). His course seems to us exorable; but men needed to be taught that God is not like Dagon, or "gods made with hands."

(V. 8.) The procession was stopped; all was dismay. David was displeased, or as we may charitably hope "grieved" (see 1 Sam. xv. 11; Jonah iv. 1, 9), but he acted like one vexed and despairing. He might have inquired "of what error or omission have I been guilty?" and repaired it, but he did not. He called the place *Perez-uzzah* (see 2 Sam. v. 20), not in glad, but in sad memory of the event.

## THE ARK WITH OBEDIENCE.

(V. 9.) He was afraid—as if God could not be pleased—and gave up the idea of bringing the ark into Zion. "How shall the ark of God come unto me?" He needed further teaching, which God mercifully gave him, with time for reflection, by His providence.

When a plan of ours for others receives a check, we are apt to throw it up (we do not set so for ourselves), as if the disinterestedness of our service was ill-regulated by any lack of success—a sign of some mixed

motive, usually. "They do not trust my wisdom, or give me my place, or appreciate my service; then let them do without it!" This is self, not "Christ in us." Had He so acted! The ark was taken to the house of Obad-edom, called the *Gittite*, from (probably) Gathrim-mo (see Josh. xxi. 25). As he was a Levite (see 1 Chron. xv. 18, 21), he was a proper person to receive it, and he did not fear.

(V. 11.) During the three months of the ark's stay there, the favour of God was signally and obviously (we are not told how) on the household. It has been quaintly said, "the God of heaven pays liberally for his lodging."

## THE ARK IN ZION.

(Vs. 12-15.) David reflected on hearing this, resolves to carry out his intention, corrects (1 Chron. xv. 2, which see specially) the error, and owns it—a sign of grace—and with sacrifices expressive of dependence, humility, thankfulness, and every expression of enthusiastic joy, conveys the sacred symbol to the place where Melchizedek reigned, Abram was blessed, and his own typical throne set up. David was girded with an ophod; he was doing priestly no less than kingly duty. He rejoiced and danced with enthusiastic gladness, which offended his wife, and (as difference of religious feeling often does) made a lasting breach between them. From this we may learn, and the teachers can expand and illustrate such lessons as these—(others have been mentioned).

1. God is to be honored in His institutions—word, day, worship, sacraments.  
2. He is to be served not after our taste, or fashion, but after His own will. Will worship is not true worship.  
3. He honors them that honor Him. It is good to make efforts in our lives and our homes for the Lord. Nobody loses by reverent regard for God's ark.

4. God's service is not grievous but joyous. Let us serve Him with mirth.  
(It will be a useful exercise for the teachers to find out, and to fix in the minds of the pupils, at least one text for each of these four lessons; and to show in connection with No. 3, the value of "grace before meat," and of "family prayer.")

## SUGGESTIVE TOPICS.

The ark—what it was—where it was—why—David's desire—how laudable an example—his method of procedure—gain of it—the steps taken—the error in them—the net of Uzzah—the judgment—the lesson—the effect on the procession—on David—the error of his course—the lodging found for the ark—the result—the influence of God's providence—David's second movement—error corrected—proof of this—the sacrifices—the temple of David—his dancing, dress, significance of it—and other lessons.

## Systematic Study of the Bible.

Prof. Troy, writing for the *Sunday School Times*, concludes an excellent article upon the systematic study of the Bible, with the following good advice:

"Two fundamental rules for Bible study may be given: 1. Be honest and diligent in study. Spare no pains to find out the meaning of the Scripture, and be willing honestly to accept the meaning when it is found. 2. Make the Bible its own interpreter by careful comparison of different passages. Only, in making such comparisons, study the various passages with their contexts well. And study each book of the Bible in and by itself. Other things being equal, he who most deeply imbibes the spirit of the Bible will be its best interpreter."

"Of course, commentaries are not to be undervalued. The teacher will find it to his interest to pay the higher price for the better exegetical work. The commentary must be studied closely, three things being always borne in mind: 1. Every commentator omits much that is valuable. 2. Every commentator is liable to be biased and partial in his views. 3. No mere study of commentaries can give the freshness and realness of knowledge that is gotten by one's independent investigation."

## Skill in Teaching.

Speaking of the means used to perfect our teachers for secular schools, and urging similar efforts for Sunday school teachers, *The Baptist Teacher* puts the case in the following forcible form:

"How shall skill in teaching be secured? By a long and blundering experience, through which some, like Christian in the Slough of Despond, will flounder, but in which more will be hopelessly swamped, and from which many will turn back in disgust? Who wants to subject his children's training to such stupid experimenting? Who would pay school tax if work were so badly done? No. We demand that the acquisitions of wisdom in this matter of teaching, as in all other matters, be handed down from one generation to the following. Let the young be lifted up to the plane attained by the older, and thence let them begin their still higher ascent."

## Training Teachers.

Our English cousins have the true idea as to the teacher's training. Their methods differ from ours in some respects; but, if the true end be reached, the means of reaching it matters but little. Mr. H. V. Harris, in the London *Sunday School Chronicle*, states the case as follows: "I hold that it is the duty of the Church not to send soldiers into the field, even if they be volunteers, until they have trained and drilled the well as to their general plan of action and handling of their weapons. Teachers are not miracles of creative power; they do not, like mushrooms, spring up in a night; they are not at once converted from the world into efficient Sabbath School labourers. True, there are those who have a natural gift for teaching; but there are a far larger number who require this faculty to be induced, and educated, and who when they have received wholesome training as to the best method of leading out the children's thoughts to apprehend the truth will be efficient and successful."

## BRITISH AND FOREIGN.

ARRANGEMENTS are being made at the Cape of Good Hope for the importation of Coolie labour, and the Government will allow 17 per head for every Chinaman delivered in the colony up to 1000.

The presbytery of Longwallmet at Strathconan last Thursday week for the ordination and induction of the Rev. Donald Macfarlane to the pastoral charge of the Free Church congregation, which has been without a minister since the Disruption, but has numbered most faithfully to the Free Church.

The Joint Committee of Graduates of the Catholic University and Queen's College, Dublin, who have for some time been meeting with a view to devise a settlement of the University question, have unanimously decided to commit to Mr. Butt the Parliamentary charge of the Bill which they have drawn up. Mr. Butt has consented to take charge of the measure, reserving to himself the right to modify some of its details. The Bill proposes to establish one great national University for Ireland, to which three colleges are to be attached, viz., Trinity College as a Protestant institution, a Roman Catholic college, and a mixed or secular college, the latter being one of the existing Queen's Colleges, probably Belfast.

At the meeting of the Royal Geographical Society on Monday, 13th, were read from Lieutenant Cameron, commander of the Livingstone East Coast Expedition, descriptive of his journey from Lake Tanganyika to the West Coast. He speaks of the interior as mostly a magnificent and healthy country, of unspeakable richness. He had with him a small specimen of good coal. Gold, copper, iron, and silver ore were abundant, and he was confident that with a wise and liberal expenditure of capital one of the greatest systems of inland navigation in the world might be utilized. All the productions in Southern Europe might be made profitable; and with a capital of from one to two million sterling to begin with a great company would have Africa open in about three years if properly worked.

At a meeting of the United Presbyterian Presbytery of Orkney last week, on the motion of the Rev. Mr. Runciman, a declaration was carried to the effect that recent legislation having the appearance of granting greater liberty to that section of the Church which is by law established in Scotland, and special reference having been made to a reunion of Presbyterianism in Scotland upon the basis of a so-called liberation of the Establishment; and further, a proposal having been made in some quarters to move for a Royal Commission, apparently with the view of concurrent endowment, this Presbytery feel called upon to declare that the liberty granted to the Establishment is neither in form nor substance the right of the people, which has been contended for by this Church, and that they are opposed to the principle itself of a State Establishment and endowment of religion, because it is inconsistent with liberty of conscience, and assumes there is somewhere on earth a human infallibility. The declaration, which extended to considerable length, was unanimously adopted.

We have to record the death of the Rev. Matthew Clark at his residence, Killstroll, Ardstraw, county Tyrone, aged eighty-four, closing a ministry which extended over fifty-five years. Mr. Clark was called to minister in the neighbourhood in which he was born and brought up, in the large congregation of Ardstraw, one of the very old Presbyterian settlements in Ulster. Ardstraw is also remarkable as one of the oldest settlements in the United Kingdom, Christian worship having been established there at least as early as the fifth century, and until recently some of the ruins of the old Cathedral of Ardstraw were visible. In the graveyard adjoining, St. Eugenius, one of the disciples of St. Patrick, was interred, and there are local evidence that long previous to the fifth century the same place was a centre of Pagan rites. There is now no place of worship in the immediate neighbourhood except the flourishing Presbyterian Church, of First Ardstraw. After forty years of active duty in the ministry Mr. Clarke retired, and the Rev. Leslie A. Lyle was ordained as his assistant and successor. Mr. Clarke, who graduated in Glasgow University, was admired as a very popular preacher.

In a Roman Catholic chapel in Leith a strange exhibition is now on view. At the head of one of the aisles of this chapel a considerable space has been railed off, and within it there is a representation of the stable at Bethlehem, on the night of the Lord's birth. Canvas or pasteboard has been manipulated so deftly as to give a good idea of a stable formed in the rock. It is littered with straw, amongst which an ox and an ass are tramping in search of food. In the centre there is a manger with the Babe within it, its parents near in postures of adoration. A lantern hung from the roof sheds light on the scene. The stable however has some queer surroundings. All the wonders of an ornamental garden rockery are accumulated together in front of it. A fountain plays in the centre of the garden, gas jets being so disposed as to give a sparkle to the water as it spouts upward and falls broken into the basin. In this scene there are stuck figures of sheep and their shepherds, elephants, horses and other animals; and besides these the kings of the earth are represented in all their glory, with crowns on their heads and sceptres in their hands, the trains of their gorgeous robes being borne behind them by diminutive pages. These monarchs come to behold the Infant Saviour, who with head slightly turned in their direction, and arm uplifted, seems as if beckoning them or regarding them with much fixity and attention. The whole scene is of the most theatrical character, and it is full of gross absurdities. While the palm trees and other plants are powdered with snow, and the dresses of the shepherds are also partially covered with it, the gaudy finery of the kings by no means suggests such extraordinary weather. We must not omit to mention the boxes that confront the visitors for the reception of their contribution towards "the Christmas crib."