

Our Young Folks.

Be Gentle

"He shall not break the bruised reed."—Jesus.

Be gentle;— The rain which quickens buried grain, Which brings the spring's embroidered train, Without whose virtues toil is vain, Is gentle.

Be gentle;— The dew which in the night descends, Which all the weak and bruised friends, With nature's beauty joins and blends, Is gentle.

Be gentle;— The light which covers all the earth, Brings all its glory ripe to birth, From all its glory's fountain and birth, Is gentle.

Be gentle;— For little buds, however weak, And little flowers, if they could speak, Your tender mercy would bespeak, And say, be gentle.

Be gentle;— Because the rain, and dew, and light, So kindly to their work align, The feeblest tell them with delight, And say, be gentle.

Be gentle;— For He the Great One hath decreed, He will not break the bruised reed, And now from all His sorrows freed, He says, be gentle.

Be gentle;— For He by whom the strong are blest, Still guides the children to His rest, And as He folds them to His breast, He says, be gentle.

Be gentle;— O surely hearts by Christ made free, Must one and all in Thee agree, And join in love's own melody, And say, be gentle.

A Train in Collision with Elephants.

Big stories come from big lands—take the land of Niagara for an example. The land of the Himalayas, too, has its sensational narratives on a grand scale; and these, with the spread of the Anglo-Indian press, are obtaining wider notoriety every day. The sea serpent of American waters has a rival in the gigantic octopus of the Indian Ocean, which the other day dragged down under water a schooner in full sail, the captain of which presumed to fire at the floating monster. But the latest anecdote from India, though sensational enough, is thoroughly credible. It resembles closely an incident which is well known to have occurred several years ago, when the railway from Madras to Shoranore, on the Malabar coast, was first opened out for regular traffic. This time, however, the scene is laid on a railway in India.

As a train was proceeding at a fair speed the engine driver noticed a herd of elephants advancing towards him along the line. He immediately sounded the whistle and his assistant put on the brake. In an instant, however, they were into the herd. The leading elephant, a huge tusker, was apparently only enraged by the whistle, and charged the advancing train. There was a tremendous concussion, the elephant was knocked off to one side, mutilated and writhing, and the train, after a series of violent jolts which nearly threw it off the line, came to a standstill against the bodies of two other animals of the herd. There was not a great deal of damage done, but the passengers were much frightened, and the engine was considerably battered about the front.

The tusker was despatched by an English gentleman who was travelling in the train, and his tusks secured, after which the train proceeded on its journey. The remainder of the herd scampered away, and turned when about a mile off on a knoll, looking in a dazed, stupid kind of way at the train as it moved off.—London Globe.

Only a Pin.

Only two or three days ago, an overseer in a cotton mill found a pin which cost the company three hundred dollars. "Was it stolen?" asked Susie. "I suppose it must have been very handsome. What was it, a diamond pin?" "Oh, no, my dear! not by any means. It was just such a pin as people buy every day, and use without stint. Here is one upon my dress."

"Such a pin as that cost three hundred dollars!" exclaimed John. "I don't believe it?" "But mamma says it is a true story," interposed Susie.

"Yes, I know it to be true. And this is how the pin happened to cost so much. You know that calicoes, after they are printed and washed, are dried and smoothed by being passed over heated rollers. Well, by some mischance, a pin dropped so as to lie upon the principal roller, and indeed became wedged into it, the head standing out a little from the surface.

Over and over went the roller, and round and round went the cloth, winding at length upon still another roller, until the piece was measured off. Then another piece began to be dried and wound; and so on till a hundred pieces had been counted off. These were not examined immediately, but removed from the machinery and laid aside. When at length they came to be inspected, it was found that there were holes in every piece throughout the web, and only three-quarters of a yard apart. Now, in each piece, there were from thirty-five to forty-five yards, and at twelve cents a yard that would count up to about five hundred dollars.

Of course, the goods could not be classed as perfect goods, so they were sold as remnants, at less than half the price they would have brought had it not been for that hidden pin.

Now, it seems to me that when a boy takes for his companions a profane swearer, a Sabbath-breaker, or a lad who is untruthful, and a little girl for her playmate, one who is unkind or disobedient, or in any way a wicked child, they are like the roller which took to its bosom the pin. Without their being able to help it, often the evil influence clings to them, and leaves its

mark upon everybody with whom they come in contact.

That pin damaged, irreparably, forty hundred yards of new print, but had company has ruined thousands of souls for whom Christ died. Remember, "one sinner destroyeth much good," therefore, avoid evil companions.

Prayer—Its Effective Force.

A few years ago, a prominent minister in New York, while preaching a sermon on this subject, related the following incident:

A certain Christian woman was in the habit of selecting, from among the congregation where she attended, a young man for whom she not only prayed, but continued to pray until he was converted. At the end of twenty years she had the joy and satisfaction of knowing that, through the agency of her prayers, twenty souls had been converted. What the cause most needs is concentrated prayer and continued effort. No true Christian will pray to God to convert a soul, and then sit down with folded hands expecting God to do His part of the work. A word in season, fitly spoken, will sometimes accomplish a vast deal of good. God has ordained to save the world through human agencies, therefore every professed follower of Christ has a portion of the work allotted to him.

Let us think for a moment what large inducements we have to pray. On the one hand, God has promised to answer all true and earnest prayer; and surely we cannot doubt the promise of our Heavenly Father. On the other hand, the only condition is that we ask of Him in faith, and He will grant our petition. It is my most sincere belief that God has heard and answered every sincere prayer that has been uttered since the foundation of the earth, and will continue to hear and answer every sincere prayer that shall be offered up even unto the end of time.

A short time since, a professing Christian, while attending a protracted meeting that was being held in an obscure hamlet in a neighboring State, was asked by the minister conducting the exercises to lead in prayer. He did so, and at the close of the services he found a note pinned to his overcoat, which had been left near the entrance of the room, with these words written on it:—"Your prayer has led one soul more to God." Was not this sufficient reward for so small an effort?

Many instances might be related where God has made direct answer to prayer. The Bible is full of such instances; and yet God does not always see fit to grant the required blessing at once, or perhaps not at all, at least not in the way and manner the seeker expects, for the simple reason that we do not ask right. God, in His infinite wisdom, knows far better than we can what is best for us, and if we pray with a willingness to acquiesce in His divine will, we shall be satisfied, whatever His will may be, whether it be to grant or withhold the desired blessing.

There can be no growth in grace in the soul without constant prayer, and just the instant the soul ceases to grow in grace that instant it begins to lose ground. There can be no stand-still; there must either be a constant growth and expansion of all the graces, or else a continual shrinkage. O that Christians could be brought to see the necessity for more earnest work in the Master's vineyard. For has not the Saviour said, "Go work in my vineyard." This command coming as it does from our Great Leader, ought to be incentive enough to spur us on, and yet how few of Christ's followers are doing the work He has a right to ask and expect of them.—Interior.

Watch for Others' Sake.

Let us, therefore, be merciful, and imitate the cranes, who, when they set off for their appointed place, fly up to some lofty eminence, in order that they may obtain a view of the lands which they are going to pass. The leader of the band goes before them, chastises those that fly too slowly, and keeps together the troop by his cry. As soon as he becomes hoarse, another takes his place; and all have the same care for those that are weary; so that if any one is unable to fly, the rest gather together and bear him up till he recovers his strength. Nor do they take less care of each other when they are on the ground. They divide the night into watches, so that there may be a diligent care over all. Those that watch hold a weight in one of their claws, so that, if they happen to sleep, it falls on the ground and makes a noise, and thus convicts them of somnolency. Let us, therefore, be merciful as the cranes; that, placing ourselves on a lofty watch-tower in this life, we may look out for ourselves and others, may lead those that are ignorant of the way, and may chastise the slothful and negligent by our exhortations. Let us succeed alternately to labor. Let us carry the weak and infirm, that they faint not in the way. In the watches of the night let us keep vigil to the Lord, by prayer and contemplation.—Antony of Padua, A.D. 1195, 1281.

Sin Put Away.

"Blessed is that man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." Our sins cannot hinder us, nor withdraw us from prayer; for they are gone, they are no sins, they cannot be hurtful to us—Christ dying for us—as all the Scripture, both of the Old and New Testament, witnesseth—"He that taketh away our sorrows." Like as when I owe a man a hundred pounds: the day is expired, he will have his money, I have it not, and for lack of it I am laid in prison. In such distress comes a good friend, and saith, "Sir, be of good cheer, I will pay thy debts;" and forthwith payeth the whole sum and setteth me at liberty. Therefore, though our sins condemn us, "we have an advocate with God the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." We have one advocate, not many; neither saints, nor anybody else, but only Him and no other, neither by the way of mediation, nor by the way of redemption. He only is sufficient, for He only is "the door;" let Him have all the praise. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world."

Sabbath School Teacher.

LESSON XLII.

Oct. 15, 1876. STEPHEN'S MARTYRDOM (Acts vi. 51-60).

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 57-60. PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Deut. ix. 6; Matt. xxiii. 37, 38.

SCRIPTURE READING.—With v. 51, read Ex. xxxii. 9; with v. 52, read Mat. xxiii. 34, with v. 53, read Ps. lxxviii. 17; with v. 54, compare Acts v. 33, with v. 55, compare Mt. x. xxvi. 44; with v. 56, read Matt. iii. 16; with vs. 57, 58, compare 1 Kings xli. 13; with v. 59, compare Acts ii. 21, with v. 60, read Luke xliii. 34; with Acts viii. 1-4, read Acts xxii. 4, 5; also Luke xxi. 12.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death.—Phil. 1. 20.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—"Saints conquer even in death."

Two reasons exist, either of them enough to account for the taking away of Jewish privileges. (1) The temporary nature of the dispensation in the Divine plan, or (2) The unfaithfulness of the people to their trust. Charged with blaspheming Moses and the temple because expecting the end of the dispensation, Stephen argues out both these points. He has proved that many changes had preceded the temple, and that even its founder, Solomon, (v. 47, 48), and the great prophet Isaiah looked on it as incomplete, and a means to a higher end. He interweaves proof with all this, from the history of the evy (v. 9), apostasy (v. 39), idolatry (v. 42), and corruptness (v. 48) of the people, and when he reaches the beginning of our lesson for to-day, he has made out his case. His argument is complete, and he is here applying it with terrible distinctness. For the men before him were proving themselves the fit successors of those who sold Joseph, vexed Moses (v. 35), and worshipped idols. (Every teacher ought to make this point clear to the class, and the whole chapter then becomes connected and distinct to the mind.)

Listen to STEPHEN'S REJOINER TO THEIR CHARGE.

(Acts vi. 18). He likens the people—not the individuals—to an ox that will not bend its neck to the yoke—"stiff-necked;" for which he has the authority of Ex. xxxiii. 3, 5, and for the other word, "unreconciled" (i.e., heathenish, going back to the ways of the Gentiles from being God's people), he has the sanction of Moses (Deut. x. 16). No language could be stronger or more severe. See Judges xiv. 8; 2 Sam. i. 20; Isa. lii. 1.

That he is not dealing in personalities and abusing individuals, but speaking sober truth of the Jewish community, represented by the Sanhedrim, is clear from the form "ye do always resist," etc. He teaches; ye close your ears. He directs; ye disobey. He moves and persuades; ye obstinately refuse. And this "always"—it has been the history of the people from Moses downward. "As your fathers, so ye."

Do you want more proof? The prophets spake by the Holy Ghost. They were persecuted by the Jews even in Jerusalem (see Luke xlii. 38). More particularly the people had slain the herald of the Just One, as they had traitorously murdered himself. No charge of guilt could be more direct or terrible. It was well-fitted to convince them of sin. It was also a clear vindication of himself, now assailed for the sake of the Just One, for speaking of whom beforehand prophets had suffered. "In one word," he continues, "God gave you the law, and made you His peculiar people, employed angels to serve you in giving it, and ye have not—ye to whom it was committed—kept it." This law was recommended by the dignity and majesty with which it was given, "by the disposition of angels,"—a point which, though not emphasized in the Old Testament, is in the New. See Heb. ii. 2; Gal. iii. 19.

MARK THE EFFECT.

(V. 54.) The facts and arguments of this most telling defence are now brought to a point and driven home, and the effect is instantaneous. The tide of feeling, rising steadily as the drift of his illusions is perceived, is now irrepressible. Anger, hate, mortification (for they could not defend themselves), all united in the conflict. They were out to the heart, and gnashed ("grinned" Wickliffe had it) on him with their teeth, like wild beasts over their prey. Their spite and revenge urge them to kill him.

NOTE STEPHEN'S PREPARATION.

God makes his grace sufficient, and prepares his people for that which he is preparing for them. Stephen, filled with the Holy Ghost, in whose power he had spoken, and now receiving his aid in a new form as he needed it, gazing upwards, he had shown to him the glory of God, and the Saviour, who is usually represented as sitting (Eph. i. 20; Heb. i. 3; viii. 1), standing, as if to aid and receive his witnessing servant. Stephen reports what he sees—the heavens, as it were, opened (Luke xli. 21), and the Son of man (only used elsewhere by Christ himself), standing in the place of honor and dignity.

HIS MARTYRDOM.

To show unwillingness to hear, and dislike or horror at what is being said, men press their hands on their ears. So the multitudes now did. They were furious beyond all restraint or decency of law (see John xviii. 22). They shouted. They rushed on him. They crowded and pressed upon him: they tumultuously cast him out of the city, and set about stoning him, not as a crowd might take up stones as they lay around, but according to forms prescribed. It must be outside the city, according to precedent (Lev. xxiv. 14), and the witnesses who were to throw the great stones first (Deut. xvii. 7) had to put off their loose clothes, or upper garments (as we say, "take off their coats"), laying them at the feet of Saul, a comparatively young man, who was no doubt making himself conspicuous in the assault on Stephen, and here mentioned because he was soon to be conspicuous in another

way. He was recognized as one who would feel approving interest in the deed of blood they were about to do.

So they "stoned Stephen," the people in their passion having the sanction of the judges; and the Roman authorities unheeded or counted upon as not likely to take notice of such a quarrel among the Jews themselves. The translators needlessly inserted "upon God" in the description (v. 59). Stephen died "invoking and saying Lord Jesus." See Acts ix. 14, 21. He treats Jesus as divine, and asks of him what he, in dying, asked of the Father. Not only so, but, kneeling, either to die in the attitude of prayer, or from weakness and exhaustion falling on his knees, and imitating his Lord in the spirit and expression of forgiveness, and praying for his slayers, he "fell asleep" (1 Thes. iv. 14), the first of a long line, to be illustrious for ever, who loved not their lives even unto death, and who overcame by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony.

THE IMMEDIATE RESULTS.

It ought to have been added to the close of chapter vii. that Saul was a party to the killing of Stephen. He now comes into prominence. The death of Stephen was the taste of blood to the maddened crowd, and that very day a great popular movement was commenced against the church (v. 1), resulting in driving its members out of Jerusalem. The apostles only remained, the other believers taking refuge throughout Judea and Samaria.

As for Stephen's body, good men—not necessarily Christians, but devout, and opposed to violence—feeling as Joseph of Arimathea felt, buried it, and beat their breasts over it in token of respect and grief. Meantime Saul, like a beast of prey, was rushing from house to house, dragging forth known Christians and getting them put in prison.

But the dispersion did not hinder the spread of truth. They who were scattered told their story. Their very flight had to be explained, and the explanation led to the statement of the gospel.

The following points may be noted:

- (a) If the truth does not win, it outrages men. It cuts one way or another.
(b) Men have to glorify God in whatever way He wills, speaking for Him; or, if need be, dying for Him.
(c) He qualifies for every kind of service. Dying grace is given for dying hours.
(d) What appears irrecoverable loss, like Stephen's death and the scattering of the Church, God can employ for the best ends, defeating the very objects of His enemies by the forces they set in motion.

SUGGESTIVE TOPICS.

The point of Stephen's defence—the two things to be shown—the application of the argument—to whom—the charges brought—in what form—authority for them—the aggravation of Jewish crime—the effect on the people—their course—mode of killing Stephen—a prominent witness—why named—the effects of this tragedy—Saul's course—the refugees—what they did—the lesson to us.

Prayer for Sabbath Schools.

The following call for the observance of special days of prayer for Sunday-schools has been issued by the London Sunday-School Union and other societies in Great Britain, and is widely approved by workers on this side of the Atlantic. The similar season of last year received general recognition among our schools, and was frequently noticed as the beginning of special spiritual quickenings. The call, without doubt, will be still more generally observed this year, and with increasing gain in the spiritual blessings which such a course will bring to the schools.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER FOR SUNDAY-SCHOOLS. Sunday, October 22nd, and Monday, October 23rd, 1876.

"In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."—PHIL. iv. 6.

At a meeting of representatives of the Committees of the Sunday-school Union, and other Sunday-school Societies, it was decided to set apart Sunday, October 22nd, and Monday, October 23rd, as the days of United Prayer on behalf of Sunday-schools. The Committee of the Sunday-School Union desire most devoutly to recognize the gracious bestowment of spiritual blessings since their first call to United Prayer in 1872. During that year 9245 scholars in connected schools united themselves to Christian churches; and this number has yearly increased, until, in 1875, no less than 17,767 are reported to have been admitted into church fellowship.

The spiritual aspect of the work is evidently more clearly appreciated, whilst the increasing responsibilities resting upon the Christian Church to provide suitable religious instruction for the young, call for more earnest prayer and enlarged efforts on the part of all Christians.

It is suggested that the following arrangements should, as far as practicable, be observed:—

That on LORD'S-DAY Morning, October 22nd, from seven to eight o'clock, Intercessory Prayer with Thanksgiving should be offered in private by all Teachers.

That the opening engagements of the Morning School should be preceded by the Teachers meeting together for prayer.

That Ministers be requested to preach Special Sermons upon the claims of Sunday-schools.

That in the afternoon the ordinary routine of each School should be varied by the scholars being gathered for devotional exercises, interspersed with singing and appropriate addresses. To this service the Parents of the Scholars might be invited.

That at some time during the Evening the Teachers should, in concert with other Christians, meet for Thanksgiving and Prayer.

That on MONDAY Morning, October 23rd, between the hours of seven and eight, Teachers set apart a time for again bringing their Scholars in prayer before God.

That in the course of the day the Female Teachers of each School hold

a meeting for united prayer and thanksgiving.

That in the Evening each Church or Congregation be invited to hold a meeting, at which the interests of the Sunday-school should form the theme of the prayers and addresses.

It being the supreme object of all Sunday-school Teachers to lead their youthful charge into close and vital union with the Redeemer, the personal communion of the Teacher with the Saviour is essential, as well as a devout recognition of the fact that it is the Lord's will that each child should be brought to love Him, and to follow His commands.

The Committee affectionately urge their fellow-workers to pray especially for the early consecration of each of their scholars to Christ, relying on the Divine Word, "If ye abide in Me and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit."—WILLIAM GROSS, AUGUSTUS BENNETT, FOUNTAIN J. HARTLEY, JOHN E. THRESDER, Honorary Secretaries.

Presbyterian Children.

Are the children of Presbyterian parents of the present day as well instructed in Bible truths as they were half a century ago?

The question, to many persons, may appear to be a very strange one, while it is answered without hesitation in the affirmative. The general opinion, perhaps, is, that the standard of Bible intelligence is far higher in Presbyterian families now than it was fifty years ago. Just think, so we are told, of the many help—when Christian families now possess, or when they can easily avail themselves, which had no existence when many now living were children. We have now our numerous and at the same time cheap examinations, intended especially for family use. Then we have our Sabbath-school, that wonderful institution for the religious training of the young, and papers and books almost without number, in all of which the effort is displayed to simplify and render interesting Bible truths. We readily admit that many advantages and great help in the training of children now exist, which were altogether unknown half a century ago.

We furthermore readily admit that the Sabbath-school, under the control of the Church, has accomplished a missionary work, the benefits of which it would be idle to attempt to estimate, and yet we are not prepared to say that the children of Presbyterian families are better instructed in religious knowledge, or more intelligent in Bible truths than the children of Presbyterian families were before the Sabbath-school was ever thought of. The Bible was then the book read in every family. The child learning to read had often no books but the spelling book, the Bible and the Catechism. So, in the secular schools, the Bible was read, not simply by the teacher in the opening of school, but by the reading classes. A common practice in Christian families was the memorizing of the Holy Scriptures. Children were required at an early age to memorize the Shorter Catechism, and the reciting of it was common Sabbath evening exercise. At a more advanced age, Catechisms with proof texts. These exercises were accompanied by explanations, and other religious instructions, according to the intelligence and piety of the parents. The Sabbath was observed in a strictly religious way. Besides, the pastor of the church regarded it as a part of his pastoral work, to examine steadily the children of his charge, in the Shorter Catechism, explaining its doctrines, and enforcing personal duty. Now, we venture the opinion that the Sabbath-school has been the occasion of a terrible neglect of duty on the part of the Christian parents.

We venture the opinion that there is less religious home instruction than formerly, and that the instruction received by Presbyterian children at Sabbath-school, often from young, inexperienced, and partially informed teachers, does not compensate for what has been lost. Especially do our children fall behind children of the Church of former generations in careful doctrinal training. Now, I am not finding fault with the Sabbath-school, but with Christian parents who foolishly suppose, or seem to suppose, that it was designed to relieve them of parental obligation. This the Sabbath-school cannot do, nor can any other school.

Parental obligation grows out of the parental relation, and, in ordinary cases, admits of no transfer. Parents should thank God for the many helps now available in their efforts to religiously educate their children, but alas for those who leave to these helps, the work which God requires at their hands, and which they, in solemn covenant, promise to perform.—Transylvanian Presbyterian.

The Rev. R. A. Paterson, the Scotch evangelist, reports a recent notable conversion to Christianity, viz: Madame Hensel, a Jewess, well known in musical and literary circles as the author of a "Life of Gottschalk," and as the musical instructor of Patti. Madame Hensel was baptized into the communion of the Methodist church, recently, at Binghamton, N. Y., and it is reported, on good authority that she contemplates the work of an evangelist, like Mrs. Van Cott.

If you enjoy your religion, practice it. If you would learn of Jesus, speak of him to others. If you would know the truths of the Bible, teach them to others. If you would be more and more like Christ imitate His example in doing good. If you would grow into the stature of perfect manhood in Christ, exercise every tendon and muscle, and nerve of your spiritual frame in the service of God and the enjoyment of doing good, just as children who grow into healthy manhood continually exercise themselves in play. If you shut your soul up in the solitary chamber of its own religious experience and its selfish hopes, it will soon become pale, languid, diseased, nearly dead. This is why churches and Christians need so often to be "revived." They think of religion as a matter of private enjoyment, and they try to use it as a personal luxury. It will not be so used, and it soon departs.