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THE TEACHER.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1872.

JESUS, AFTER HIS ASCENSION.

SUNDAY, February 18th, 1872.

To the Church in Sardis.—Rev. iii. 1-6.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"He that overcometh the same shall be clothed in white raiment." vs. 5.

SCRIPTURE SELECTIONS.—Psalm l. Hebrews iii.

SUMMARY.—On a church of dead formalists rests Christ's special wrath, on any living disciples in such church his special love.

ANALYSIS.—I. Description of (a) The Lord. (b) The Church. vs. 1.

II. Admonition. (a) Command. (b) Threatening. vs. 2, 3.

III. Encouragement. (a) Fact. (b) Promise. vs. 4, 5.

IV. General Exhortation. vs. 6.

EXPOSITION.—Sardis was situated "on the left bank of the Hermus, and at the foot of Mount Tmolus, about thirty miles south east from Thyatira, and a little more than fifty miles south-east from Smyrna. It was the splendid and opulent capital of the kings of Lydia, of Croesus; the last of her kings, and the richest of monarchs. Cyrus, B. C. 548, with an army of 196,000, conquered this voluptuous prince with an army of 420,000. The treasures which Croesus delivered up to Cyrus have been computed at \$631,320,000. At present a few miserable huts occupy its place, and the black tents of the wandering Turcomans are scattered through the valley."

Self-witness.—vs. 1. "He that hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars." Seven is the symbol of completeness or perfectness. "The seven spirits" are the one Spirit of God in the fulness and completeness of his activity. So in ch. i. 4; iv. 5; v. 6; Zech. iii. 9. These Spirits Christ is here said to have. The same thought is in the other passages, expressly in v. 6, and Zech. iii. 9; by implication in the others, since as before the throne they were to execute the will of him who was on the throne. All power is Christ's. Matt. xxviii. 20. The world exists, and is governed by and for him (Col. i. 16), and hence the all-working Spirit does his will and work, and was by him sent, when and because he went to the Father. John xvi. 7-15. The Holy Spirit is one person. The seven spirits are not seven persons, but, as above explained, one, viewed in his completeness of activity. "The seven stars" are explained in ch. i. 20. These his ministers he has in his right hand as his instruments. Why Jesus here presents himself as having the Spirit in his fulness, and all his ministers, is perhaps, to arouse, and yet encourage the partially recreant angel, and especially to add weight to his words of life to the almost dead church.

The church described.—vs. i. "Thou," the angel, and yet the church as by him represented. In name alive, in fact dead. So little, and yet so much,—a few words, but a vast meaning. A name to live, doubtless, because the church organization was preserved, public worship maintained, and all the forms of service and life visible. The form of life, of godliness. "And art dead,"—the form without the power; body, but no soul,—no warm, beating, bounding life. No spiritual warfare. In name alive, in fact dead. Is that for their church, for their profession? The same sleepless, tireless Jesus speaks down to them from the skies. "I know thy works," thine, even thine. I know, never forget, never, and sometime, aye, soon will speak, am now speaking, will soon act, though now waiting.

First call.—vs. 2. "Be watchful." Or better, begin watching. Ezek. xxxiii. 2. This is specially for the pastor, the religious teacher; yet not for him only. "What I say unto you, I say unto all, for your brethren, for your Master." And strengthen the things which remain, the remains of spiritual and divine life of faith, hope and charity, and the fruits of these, in thine own and thy brother's heart. What general need of just this revival work, this calling men away from the gates of death out into the broad, open fields of a vigorous Christian life.

Reason for the first call.—"For I have not found thy works perfect before [my] God." The works are Christian duties to which God called. These are not "perfect," i. e., not fulfilled, the same word

as in Matt. v. 17. Hence the call to start up, and begin to fulfil them, to make life square to God's plan of it. And God does have a plan for our every life. The reason here given by Christ is not first because so little remains to be strengthened, but because duty has been so greatly neglected. And note well the phrase, "before my God," for the word my belongs here. We live and act under the eye of God, and this ought to make conscience sensitive and active. 1 John iii. 20.

Second call.—vs. 3. "Remember." The office of memory in respect to repentance and reformation is very important. Ps. cxix. 59; Zech. x. 9. It will have an office of torment for the finally impenitent. "Son remember." Luke xvi. 25. It is a bad sign when one tries to shut out the memory of past sin by present sin, adding fuel to the flame instead of quenching it in the open fountain. The old call is heard, "Choose ye this day," John xxiv. 15. No longer downward, turn and go up. The hour comes to many, many a Christian, when God sounds in his soul just this call,—lays upon him just this necessity of choosing, and that at once, for or against.

The peril.—vs. 3. Jesus here only repeats and urges anew the duty once and again urged when he was in the flesh (see Matt. xxiv. 42-51; xxv. 1-15), and which the apostles, especially Paul, had insisted upon. 1 Thess. v. 1-8. And so the peril is stated in the same terms. To the careless he will come suddenly in judgment, and to their harm. We see here and elsewhere, that God's grace is not given to take away our responsibility, or to take the place of our vigilance and activity.

The remnant.—vs. 4. "A few names," i. e., a few persons. The name represents the persons. See Acts i. 15. So we are taught to fear, love, etc., the name of the Lord, i. e., the Lord himself as known to us by his name. "Have not defiled their garments." The wedding robe is said to be holiness. Rev. xix. 8. Thus we see in this church, on the one hand, the mighty power of corrupt common sentiment and practice to drag men down and ruin them, and on the other, the possibility of a few standing against this, and walking in communion with God and purity of heart. Indeed, if all the world beside were against God, he could strengthen one single, solitary soul to stand in his integrity. Thus we are not to be excused, when with the many we go wrong. We must "stand up for Jesus," though no man stand with us.

The reward.—vs. 4. White is the symbol of purity, and white raiment of holiness. So often in Rev. See iv. 4; vii. 9. "To walk with Christ," is to have free, intimate fellowship, and converse with him. The faithful "are worthy" of this supreme honor, not as having earned it in a legal way, but as fitted for it in the way of grace. They have "the same mind that was in Christ," and are hence kindred in spirit.

The victor.—vs. 5. The condition of reward first, last, always is victory, through believing endurance to the very end. 1 John v. 4. Let no man hope for the reward for the past if he turn from duty in the present. Let no one try to find his evidence of present acceptance simply in his former experiences. To the promise of the white raiment, the Lord here adds two others. (1) Not to blot out the victor's name from the Book of Life, i. e., he will prove true to him, and never cast him off. "The Book of Life," called the Lamb's, in ch. xxi. 27, and here represented as kept by Christ. Comp. Rev. xx. 12. He that overcometh shall not be blotted out, but (2) his name shall be confessed by Christ before the Father and his angels. See this promise and its opposite in Luke xii 8-9. With such honor will Christ treat every one of his persevering saints.

The general call.—vs. 6. There is much in this lesson that specially fits our own time, and the condition of many a church and professor; much also for all, saint and sinner alike.

QUESTIONS.—What do you know about Sardis? What is meant by the "seven spirits of God"? i. 4; iv. 5; v. 6. What by the "seven stars"? i. 20. Why is Christ said to have the seven spirits? John xvi. 7. What is meant by having a name to live? vs. 1. In what sense dead? What censure is in vs. 2? What was to be remembered? vs. 3. What was to be done? Have Christians ever need to repent? What threat is added? What is this coming? Wherein like a thief's coming? See Matt. xxiv. 42-51.

What is meant in vs. 4, by "a few names"? What by the phrase "defiled their garments"? Jude 22. What

promise have they? vs. 4. What does this promise mean?

What is meant in vs. 5 by overcoming? What three promises to such as overcome? What is the Book of Life? What is meant by blotting out from it a name? Ex. xxxii. 32-33; Deut. ix. 14; xxv. 19; xxix. 20. What is it for Christ to confess one's name before his Father and the angels? Luke xii. 8-9.

Repeat vs. 6. What is it to have an ear? Why is it said "let him hear"?

Scripture Catechism, 15, 16.

Youths' Department.

HOW GOD TOOK CARE OF PATTY.

Patty lived in the country in a white house with green blinds. There was a nice yard with smooth-cut grass and great trees, where the birds would sit singing and swinging on the boughs. Patty had a swing, too, one that papa put up, of good stout rope, that would go up ever so high into the branches.

A short distance back from the house and garden stood three great barns filled with such stores of hidden wonders that Patty seemed never tired of playing in them. But perhaps she liked best to go with mamma, in the early spring-time, into the woods to gather the sweet wild flowers, and search for the delicate ferns and lovely, soft, green mosses. Or, who knows, maybe she liked better still to go into the fields where papa was at work, and make him a little visit.

One morning, it was in the harvest time, Patty was in the kitchen, Bridget was churning, mamma was baking, Patty was helping her mother, and the way she helped was by eating small lumps of sugar, and listening to a story mamma was telling. She wanted very much to roll out the crust for a pie, but mamma said she would help most by sitting still and listening to the story. The butter had come, and Bridget was gone to carry it down into the cool cellar, when the door bell rang; so mamma, dusting the flour from her hands, went herself to answer it. Patty, left alone in the kitchen, soon began to grow lonely; wondering what made mamma gone so long, and where was Bridget; then she opened the cellar-door and called in a sweet little voice, "Bridget! Bridget!" But Bridget was gone up the outside way, and so did not hear.

Patty waited a minute or two, and, getting no reply, she shut the door.

Out of doors it looked bright and sunny. Through the open window came the softened hum of the distant reapers. Patty thought she would like to go out to see papa, and so in another moment the little feet were trotting away across the fields. When she came into the wheat field, she could see the men going down one side, following the reaper, and leaving a shining row of bundles behind.

Patty tried to catch up, but they worked very fast, and by-and-by growing tired, she sat down to rest on a sheaf of wheat. By her side the uncut grain waved back and forth in the sunlight; an old beach-tree cast a cool, pleasant shade where she was sitting; it was very beautiful there. She sat quite still, thinking such sweet little thoughts.

Suddenly a bird flew out of the wheat near by, singing a rich, clear song. Patty clapped her hands in delight, and, as the bird rose higher and higher, and the notes grew fainter and sweeter in the distance, she fairly held her breath lest she should lose one of those delicious sounds.

"Perhaps there is a nest in there," thought Patty, when it was still again, and "in there" she went, looking with a pair of bright eyes eagerly about; and, yes, there it was surely, a nest and three of the dearest, sweetest, little birdies. Was there ever anything so funny as those downy little heads with the tiny bills wide open?

Such a nice place for a nest, too, Patty thought. It was like being in a golden forest in there, for the grain was high above her head, and she laughed softly all to herself thinking of it. The yellow straw laughed, too, a waving, murmuring laugh, and tossed its heads back and forth, back and forth, but never whispered to the child of danger, nor even told to the men, coming rapidly along, the story of the little girl hidden in its midst. The men came on, the machine leading them, the horses drawing steadily, and the knives cutting sharp and sure.

What was it, do you suppose, that made the farmer stop his team all at once? Did he know his little daughter was in danger? No, indeed, he thought she was safely cared for at home. But he was a noble man, with a large, kind heart, and he would not

willingly hurt the least of God's creatures; so he said to one of the men: "Here, Tom, come and hold the team. There's a lark's nest somewhere near the old tree yonder. I'll hunt it up, and you can drive around so's not to hurt the birds."

Ah, what a cry of surprise papa uttered when he found his darling Patty sitting there! How fast his heart beat, when he thought of the danger she had been in, and how thrilled and softened as he caught her up in his arms, covering her face with kisses, and saying, "It was the birds that saved her!"

When the first excitement with the men was over, and Patty had been carried safely home in her father's arms, and the men were going down the field again, leaving a wide uncut space around the lark's nest, somebody—it was a great, rough-looking man—said, while the tears glistened in his eyes, and his voice grew husky, "God bless the little birds."

HAPPY HOURS.

A REMARKABLE CONVERSION.

Adoniram Judson, the illustrious American missionary, was a minister's son; he was very able and very ambitious. He was early sent to college. In the class above him was a young man of the name of E—, brilliant, witty and popular, but a determined Deist. Between him and the minister's son there sprang up a close intimacy, which ended in the latter gradually renouncing all his early beliefs, and becoming as great a skeptic as his friend. He was only twenty years of age, and you may be sure it was a terrible distress and consternation which filled the home circle when during the recess, he announced that he was no longer a believer in Christianity. More than a match for his father's arguments, he steeled himself against all softer influences, and with his mind made up to enjoy life and see the world, he first joined a company of players at New York, and then set out on a solitary tour. One night he stopped at a country inn. Lighting him to his room, the landlord mentioned that, he had been obliged to place him next door to a young man who was exceedingly ill, in all probability dying, but he hoped that it would occasion him no uneasiness. Judson assured him that, beyond pity for the poor sick man, he should have no feeling whatever. Still the night proved a restless one. Sounds came from the sick chamber—sometimes the movements of the watchers, sometimes the groans of the sufferer, and the young traveler could not sleep. "So close at hand, with but a thin partition between us," he thought, "there is an immortal spirit about to pass into eternity, and is he prepared?"

And then he thought, "For shame of my shallow philosophy?" What would E—, so intellectual and clear headed, think of this boyish weakness? And then he tried to sleep, but still the picture of the dying man rose up to his imagination. He was a "young man" and the young student felt compelled to place himself on his neighbor's dying bed, and he could not help fancying what, in such circumstances, would be his thoughts. But the morning dawned, and in the welcome daylight his "superstitious illusions" fled away. When he came down stairs he inquired of the landlord how his fellow-lodger had passed the night. "He is dead!" was the answer. "Dead?" "Yes: he is gone, poor fellow: the doctor said he would probably not survive the night." "Do you know who he was?" "Oh yes, he was a young man from Providence College; a very fine fellow: his name was E—." Judson was completely stunned. Hours passed, before he could quit the house; but when he did resume his journey, the words "Dead! Lost! Lost!" were continually ringing in his ears. There was no need for arguments. God had spoken, and from the presence of the living God the chimeras of unbelief and the pleasure of sin alike fled away. The religion of the Bible he knew to be true; and turning his horse's head toward Plymouth, he rode homeward, his plans of enjoyment all shattered, and ready to commence that rough and uninviting path which, through the death prison at Ava and its rehearsal of martyrdom, conducted him to the grave at Maulmain.—Dr. James Hamilton.

LIMIT OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE

In the early days of my Christian life I sought to solve the mysteries I did not comprehend—to fathom the mind of the Almighty.

If, in those early days, some one had had the wisdom or humility to say to me what Dr. Clement recently said to me, "God's purposes and man's responsibility are mat-

ters too deep for us," it would have thrown great light upon my path. Or had I read and considered what was then not written, but what any one may now read in Wayland's Intellectual Philosophy, "The point in which the infinite and the finite come in contact, has been, and must ever be, hidden from mortal eyes;" and again, speaking of God's government of the universe and our moral responsibility, "Of the manner in which these co-operate, I think we must be content to remain in ignorance," it would have been of great advantage to me.

For the benefit of others searching to know more than is revealed, the above references have been made, yet the best is reserved for the last. James 1: 5: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him." Very few, it is to be feared, sufficiently value the efficacy of prayer, or "ask of God," as is both a duty and privilege, so we grope in darkness instead of walking in the light of His countenance.—American Messenger.

FAITH IN PRAYER.

A little girl in a wretched attic, whose sick mother had no bread, knelt down by the bedside and said slowly, "Give us this day our daily bread." Then she went into the street and began to wonder where God kept his bread. She turned round the corner and saw a large, well-filled baker's shop.

"This," thought Nettie, "is the place: so she entered confidently, and said to the big baker, "I've come for it."

"Come for what?"

"My daily bread," she said, pointing to the tempting loaves, "I'll take two, if you please: one for mother, and one for me."

"All right!" said the baker, putting them into a bag, and giving them to his little customer, who started at once into the street.

"Stop, you little rogue!" he said roughly: "where is your money?"

"I haven't any," she said simply.

"Haven't any," he repeated angrily; "you little thief, what brought you here then?"

The hard words frightened the little girl, who, bursting into tears said, "Mother is sick and I am so hungry. In my prayers I said, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' and then I thought God meant me to fetch it, and so I came."

The rough, but kind-hearted baker was softened by the child's simple tale, and he sent her back to her mother with a well-filled basket.

"NAE STRIFE UP HERE."

It is related that an Old Scotch elder had once a dispute with his minister at an elders' meeting. He said some things that nearly broke the minister's heart. Afterwards he went home, and the minister went home, too. The next morning the elder came down, and his wife said to him:

"Ye look sad, John; what is the matter with ye?"

"Ah," he replied, you would look sad, too, if you had such a dream as I had. I dreamed that I had been at the elders' meeting, and had said some hard things, and grieved the minister, and when he went home I thought he died and went to heaven: and I thought afterward that I died, too, and went to heaven, and when I got to the gate of heaven our came the minister, and put out his hand to take me, saying, 'Come along, John; there's nae strife up here—I am happy to see ye.'"

The elder went to his minister directly, to beg his pardon, and found he was dead. The elder was so stricken with the blow that two weeks after he also departed.

"And I should not wonder," said he who related the incident, "if he met the minister at heaven's gate, and heard him say, 'Come along, John; there's nae strife up here.'"—British Workman.

NOW AND THEN.

The two following paragraphs strikingly illustrate the changes in the United States during the generation between 1841 and 1871.

Five Dollars Reward.—Ran away from the subscribers, on the 23rd of November, last, the negro boy Oscar Dunn, an apprentice to the plastering trade. He is of g. life color, between 20 and 21 years of age, and about five feet ten or eleven inches high. All persons are cautioned not to harbor said boy under penalty of the law. William G. Patterson, cor. St. John and Common streets.—N. O. Picayune, 1841.

Died.—In New Orleans, Wednesday, Nov. 2, 1871, the Hon. Oscar J. Dunn, Lieutenant-Governor of Louisiana.