

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, N. S., JUNE 26, 1872.

THE TEACHER.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1872.

ELISHA AND ISRAEL.

- SUNDAY, June 30th, 1872. April 7 1. The Mantle of Elijah - 2 Kings ii. 9-15. " 14 2. The Waters Healed - 2 Kings ii. 19-25. " 21 3. The Widow's Oil Increased - 2 Kings iv. 1-7. " 28 4. Is it well with the Child? - 2 Kings iv. 18-26. May 5 5. The Boy Restored to Life - 2 Kings iv. 29-37. " 12 6. The Little Captive - 2 Kings v. 1-7. " 19 7. The Leper Healed - 2 Kings v. 8-14. " 26 8. Gehazi's Sin - 2 Kings v. 20-27. June 2 9. Elisha's Defenders - 2 Kings vi. 8-18. " 9 10. God's Deliverance - 2 Kings vii. 1-11. " 16 11. Hezekiah's Prayer - 2 Kings xx. 1-11. " 23 12. Judah Carried Captive - 2 Kings xxiv. 10-16.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men." Psalm cvii. 8.

SCRIPTURE SELECTION.—Matthew xi.

SUMMARY.—The lessons of the quarter show the power, wisdom, justice, truth, and goodness of God, his sovereignty over the wicked and the good, over nations and individuals, over kings and menials, over life and death and nature, and invite to trust and service, yet warn against unbelief and rebellion.

ANALYSIS.—Mercy and judgment. 1. Toward Individuals. Lesson I-VIII. 2. Toward Nations. Lessons IX-XII.

EXPOSITION.—Lesson I.—This brings before us two prophets, both by divine appointment invested with the headship of the prophetic order in Israel. The one closes, the other begins, his official career. There is a transfer of office, of service, of power, and the symbol of transfer is the mantle falling one upon the other. This may show us how God can and does provide for the continuance of able and faithful leaders in his church. If a great and good man dies, God can make good his place if he will. He teaches us to trust him rather than men. The glorious ascent of Elijah shows us where the faithful servant of God is to have the reward of toil and sacrifice for the Master. Not here, but beyond.

Lesson II.—What God purposes to do, he will do. If he designates for office a servant, he can make men recognize that servant. We have in this lesson this recognition, in the first instance confirmed, in the second, compelled. Some men seem quickly to note and know heaven's ordinance. So was it at Jericho. The sons of the prophet had in them the spirit of prophecy. It was not so strange that they welcomed Elisha as Elijah's successor. But the men of the city also owned him, and paid him honor. They had a reward in the healing of the waters, which yet was not so much the true reward as its significant symbol. Then as now, and now as then, towns side by side are most unlike in attitude, God-ward. Bethel sees the prophet approaching, and what a greeting! Instead of the chief men going forth respectfully to welcome him, a rabble mob of children are sent through the gates to hurl at him the rude taunts with which their ears had been made familiar at home. At Bethel he smote. Usually he spared. The rage of the bears speaks still to us of the holy displeasure of God at such impiety.

Lesson III.—As God begins with his prophet, so he continues; "making bare his arm" in miracles which prove not his sovereign power only, but his character no less. Mercy and judgment both flash out, but mercy is the rule, judgment the exception, for the gospel is good news, and the present is not "the day of wrath." In this rough, selfish world, where so largely might makes right, and "the battle of life" gives small chance for the weak, it was indeed a fit and gracious thing for the Lord to prove himself the protector of the widow and the fatherless by a miracle which wrested from bondage the children, and from a long agony the mother, and gave them home and comfort.

Lessons IV, V.—Not less to be prized is the teaching of this miracle. A kind of double miracle is here, and the whole is a sort of antecedent announcement of the

final decision of the Judge, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." The double miracle is the giving of the son to the Shunammite, first in birth, and afterward in resurrection. She built the chamber and furnished it simply, not for ostentation, not to get favor, but in sincere, pure love of the Lord, and of the servant as being the Lord's. That for this she was so honored, is a fruitful fact. It testifies to the tender love which leads God so to identify himself with his disciples, as to judge their treatment his. For such deeds the reward may not be the recall of a friend from the spirit world, but it will be blessing in the spirit world.

Lessons VI, VII.—Many a man has said hard things about the Old Testament and its doctrine of God. It has been called narrow and full of Jewish bigotry. But in the miracle which meets us here we see no such narrowness. Divine mercy is not bounded by the Hebrew boundary lines. Even into a hostile, harassing, unjust nation, it goes and rests on him who had doubtless led the hosts of Syria to victory over Israel. In this case we also see how useful a sweet, loving child can be, how favors of greatest magnitude come to those in high station and power, from the lowest and least regarded. There is a most obvious and striking symbolism in the cleansing of the leper. We see symbolized in the leprosy, depravity; in the desire for cleansing, conviction of sin; in the visit to the prophet, the search for Christ; in the command to wash in Jordan, the command to repent and believe; in the contempt of the prophet's command, the sinner's rebellion against Christ's requirements; in the submission, the sinner's surrender; in the washing, the new birth from the Spirit; in the cleansing, the newness of spirit; in the joy and overflowing gratitude to Elisha, the emotions of the saved soul.

Lesson VIII.—There is with some a feeling that in Scripture the statements of judgments inflicted, the warnings, judgments impending, the voice of stern rebuke against sin, are so much evidence against the divine benevolence, are unlovely exhibitions of the divine character. This is a mistake. They are the clearest, highest proofs of love. Any of my neighbors will be ready to tell me truths pleasant to hear, but only my very best and truest friend will plainly and kindly show me my faults, and point out to me their consequence. Our mothers never gave us stronger proofs of their love than when in that love, for our good, and at the cost of their own feelings, they punished us. So does the story of Gehazi show divine love. It rebukes, warns, dissuades. It bids us not trust in our godly associations to keep us pure.

Lesson IX.—Here, too, is precious symbolism. One unarmed man and a nation seeking his life, thus far the world at large has not been on the side of God's truth. At times the preacher of righteousness or the private witness for the truth has been called to stand alone, hard pressed, and escape apparently impossible. But then, as always, the stronger side infinitely is the truth side.

Lesson X.—This shows that a state is as easily delivered, or as easily destroyed, as an individual. There is herein no distinction of great and small. To omnipotence the great is small, and the difficult easy. The nation ought to fear and trust God as well as the individual. Happy the people whose government is established in righteousness, and whose God is the Lord.

Lesson XI.—A nation in peril, its king sick unto death, his hope cut off by the word of the Lord, he driven upon God in prayer by his extremity, the gracious answer, the lengthened days, the miraculous sign, the speedy recovery, the temple praise,—these are points which flash forth for the individual and the nation great guiding truths.

Lesson XII.—Our series began in fire,—the fire of glory, triumph, joy; the ascending horses and chariots, Elijah borne to his home, to his throne. Our series closes in fire,—the fire of a terrible judgment, Judah's sin fruiting in a burning temple, first desecrated, robbed, in a long and shameful exile. "Behold the goodness and severity of God."

QUESTIONS.—How many miracles were described in the last twelve lessons? How many prophets named? Their names? Name besides these the principal persons of whom we have learned. Of these whom do you most admire? Why? How many of the lessons spoke of a child or of children? Tell about any of these children? What is it in that one that pleases you?

How were Elijah and Elisha parted? What was Elisha's last request to Elijah? 2 Kings ii. 9. What city first welcomed Elisha as a true prophet? vs. 18. What was done for it? vs. 21, 22. When was he mocked? vs. 23. What came of that? vs. 24. Why was the oil of the widow in Lesson III increased? ch. iv. 1. What does this miracle teach of God's character? How came the woman in Shunem to know Elisha? vs. 8. What did she do for him? vs. 10. How was she rewarded? vs. 32-31. Is Christian kindness always rewarded in this life?

Who and where was the little captive of Lesson VI? ch. v. 2. What good deeds did she do? Who was her master? What is his story? What was Gehazi's sin? What came of it? How was Elisha defended? Why the attempt against him? What city was miraculously delivered, Lesson X? Give the story of Hezekiah's prayer. Of Judah's captivity.

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. Scripture Catechism, 52, 53.

SUNDAY, July 7 — Peace with God. Rom. 5: 1-10.

Youths' Department.

THE LITTLE GIRL AND HER COPY.

A little girl went to writing-school. When she saw her copy, with every line so perfect, "I can never write like that," she said.

She looked steadfastly at the straight round lines, so slim and graceful. Then she took up her pen and timidly put it on the paper. Her hand trembled; she stopped, studied the copy, and began again. "I can but try," said the little girl; "I will do as well as I can."

She wrote half a page. The letters were crooked. What more could we expect from a first effort? The next scholar stretched across her desk, and said, "What scraggy things you make!" Tears filled the little girl's eyes. She dreaded to have the teacher see her book. "He will be angry with me and scold," she said to herself.

But when the teacher came and looked, he smiled. "I see you are trying, my little girl," he said kindly, "and that is enough for me."

She took courage. Again and again she studied the beautiful copy. She wanted to know how every line went, how every letter was rounded and made. Then she took up her pen and began to write. She wrote carefully, with the copy always before her. But O! what slow work it was! Her letters straggled here, they crowded there, and some of them looked every way.

The little girl trembled at the step of the teacher. "I am afraid you will find fault with me," she said, "my letters are not fit to be on the same page with the copy."

"I do not find fault with you," said the teacher, "because I do not look so much at what you do. By really trying you make a little improvement every day; and a little improvement every day will enable you to reach excellence by-and-by."

"Thank you, sir," said the little girl; and thus encouraged, she took up her pen with a greater spirit of application than before.

And so it is with the dear children who are trying to become like Jesus. God has given us a heavenly copy. He has given us his dear Son "for an example that we should follow his steps." He "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." "He is altogether lovely," and "full of grace and truth." And when you study his character, "I can never, never reach that," you say; "I can never be like Jesus."

God does not expect you to become like his dear Son in a minute, or a day, or a year; but what pleases him is that you should love him, and try to follow his example. It is that temper which helps you to grow, day by day, little by little into his likeness, which God desires to see. God loves you for trying, and will help you.—Observer.

A TURNING POINT.

"The turning point in my life," said a gentleman, "was, when I was a boy, not going to a low circus. Some kind of low show and circus came into our town, and of course all the boys were anxious to go. My mother did not want me to go. I might have stolen off. I had money enough in my pocket, the boys did all they could to persuade me, and more than all, people were going in crowds to see it. It is so easy to go with the multitude; it is so hard to make a stand, break away, and go the other way.

"That is exactly what I did. I mastered the situation." I mastered myself, and did not go.

"It was the resolution, then called out, and called out perhaps for the first time, which has, under God, served me many a good turn since, and made me what I am.

GOD GAVE.

One day last winter, a poor neighbor across the street came into our kitchen in great distress, because the hydrant was frozen.

We gave her a kettle of boiling water, and she soon came back with a brighter face.

"Sure, an' it did lots of good," said she. "I poured it in, and God gave me the water again, and I'm so thankful."

Do we always think of God as the giver of our common blessings? "Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

CURIOSITIES OF MEMORY.

John Kemble used to say that he could learn a whole number of the Morning Post in four days, and General Christie made a similar assertion; but it is not known how far either of them verified this statement. Robert Dillon could repeat in the morning six columns of a newspaper he had read over night. During the repeal debates in House of Commons thirty-seven years ago, one of the members wrote out his speech, sent it to the newspaper, and repeated it to the House in the evening; it was found to be the same verbatim as that which he had written out. John Fuller, a land agent in Norfolk, could remember every word of a sermon, and wrote it out correctly after going home; this was tested by comparing his written account with the clergyman's manuscript. Scalliger could repeat a hundred verses or more after having read them a single time. Seneca could repeat two thousand words on hearing them once. Magliabecchi, who had a prodigious memory, was once put to a severe test. A gentleman lent him a manuscript which was read and returned. The owner, some time afterwards pretending he had lost it, begged Magliabecchi to write out as much as he could remember; whereupon the latter, appealing to his memory, wrote out the whole essay. Cyrus, if some of the old historians are to be credited, could remember the name of every soldier in his immense army. There was a Corsican boy who could rehearse forty thousand words, whether sense or nonsense, as they were dictated, and then repeat them in the reversed order, without making a single mistake. A physician of Massachusetts, about half a century ago, could repeat the whole of "Paradise Lost," without mistake, although he had not read it for twenty years. Fuller, the great mathematician, when he became blind, could repeat the whole of Virgil's "Æneid," and could remember the first line and the last line on every page of the particular edition which he had been accustomed to read before he became blind.

One kind of retentive memory may be considered as the result of sheer hard work, a determination towards one particular achievement, without reference either to cultivation or to memory on other subjects. This is frequently shown by persons in humble life in regard to the Bible. An old beggarman at Stirling, known some forty years as Blind Aleck, afforded an instance of this. He knew the whole of the Bible by heart, inasmuch that, if a sentence were read to him, he could name the book, if a chapter and verse were named, he could remember the exact words. A gentleman, to test him, repeated a verse, purposely making one verbal inaccuracy; Aleck hesitated, named the place where the passage is to be found, but at the same time pointed out the verbal error. The same gentleman asked him to repeat the ninetieth verse of the seventh chapter of Numbers. Aleck almost instantly replied, "There is no such verse; that chapter has only eighty-nine verses."

BLUSHING.

Why do we blush? What is the cause? Can it be prevented? Why do the young blush more readily than the old?

In answer to these questions science comes to our aid and informs us that this sudden reddening of the face is due to a rush of blood into the capillaries of the skin. The influence of nervous conditions is strikingly exhibited by this phenomenon, the circulation of the blood, or rather the action of the heart being responsive to those emotions and passions which have immediate relation to the brain and nervous system.

There is a marked difference among in-

dividuals in respect to blushing. One who is very sensitive to praise or blame has large veneration, approbateness, and conscientiousness,—blushes on the slightest occasion; while one with those organs small will be comparatively indifferent to either,—will not be moved by censure or by applause, by the powers on earth or in heaven.

A vivid consciousness of one's poverty or ignorance, or other imperfection, tends to produce a feeling of humility, and this causes one to blush. Large self-esteem, with intellect, culture and competence, gives assurance, makes one feel always at home wherever he may happen to be, and this puts one above or beyond the disposition to blush. The old saying that "a guilty conscience needs no accuser," is based on the fact, that one under conviction shows it in his face; and a young rogue, when confronted with his wrongdoing, will usually blush just in proportion to his sensitiveness and consciousness of guilt.

The fact that one can not overcome his diffidence and look friend or foe in the face, is no evidence of sin or wickedness, as some suppose. On the contrary, it is often the case that the most innocent and virtuous are so bashful that it is next to impossible for them to look even an inferior squarely and steadily in the eye. He soon falters and assumes a downcast look in keeping with his modest and sensitive nature. Self-confidence, for the diffident, may be acquired, and though one would almost sink in his shoes the first time when he appears to speak before an audience, he will, by practice, overcome his timidity, or platform fever," as it is called, and when used to it enjoy the slight agitation as a mental luxury. At first he will be suffused with blushes, and his mind will be somewhat bewildered; soon, however, equilibrium takes place, and "Richard is himself again."

The temperament also has much to do with blushing. A nervous, sanguine temperament is much more susceptible than the lymphatic or bilious and a blonde than a brunette. The African, the Asiatic, and the North American Indian may feel a blush, though,—owing to the color of his skin,—he may not show it.

COACHING FOR ORDERS.—The attractive livings of the English Establishment have developed a system popularly called "coaching for orders." Clergymen are to be found, who, for a consideration, will assure the passing of a candidate when examined by the bishop's chaplain. The course of instruction consists partly in a knowledge of the contents of certain papers that have formed the subjects of examinations in the dioceses in years past. But particular information is given to the personal character of the bishops of the respective dioceses and of their examining chaplains; from which it appears that some bishops are very strict as to the knowledge of the Greek Testament by the candidate. Others pay respect to the rank of the aspirant to orders, as it will be a great loss to the Church to turn back men of position. Some examiners are strong in grammar; or in doctrine, or in sermon writing, or elocution. The candidate in order to succeed must find out these hobbies of his examiners and prepare accordingly. One bishop is satisfied with the construing of a few verses of the Greek Testament, another expects a general knowledge of the whole. Some dioceses are High Church; others are Low Church; and this must be an element in the candidate's resolve, whether he shall select Oxford, or London, or Carlisle. Only think of the Timotheus of the Apostles' days being thus "coached" into a good fat incumbency!—Can. Baptist.

WHO SHOULD PARTAKE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER?

This is the title given to two letters in the Watchman and Reflector, by Rev. John Goadby. It is in the minds of many Christians a somewhat undecided question. As it is right that all Christian people should be able to give an intelligent and scriptural reply to the question, it may be acceptable and well to place the substance of the arguments in these letters before our readers. In the first one the writer enquires:— "Is the Lord's Supper an institution of Jesus Christ for His church or churches as collective bodies, or did He institute it for the observance of individual disciples, to be celebrated by them without reference to their church relation?"

—and he replies:— "It could not be for the church universal, because it could not be celebrated by it; then it must be for local churches, or for