

Christian Messenger.

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THE TEACHER.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1872.

SUNDAY, March 31st, 1872. REVIEW of the Lessons of the past Three Months.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

SCRIPTURE SELECTION.—Heb. x. 1-25.

SUMMARY.—Jesus our Saviour, because our Sacrifice, our Priest, our Lord, our Guardian, our Champion, our Comforter, our "all in all."

ANALYSIS.—I. Jesus Redeeming. Lessons I-III.

I. Jesus Redeeming. Lessons IV-X.

III. Jesus Rewarding. Lessons XI-XII.

SUMMATION.—Lessons I.—Acts ii. 32-41. Notice in this lesson the wonderful events and their natural order. (1) The exaltation of Christ to the mediatorial throne. (2) The consequent sending of the Holy Spirit according to promise. (3) The preaching of the gospel by the apostles under the Spirit's inspiration. (4) The impenitent convicted, alarmed, inquiring. (5) Multitudes converted and added to the church of Christ. These several events stand in the closest logical connection.

Lesson II.—Heb. ix. 22-28. The relation of this lesson to the last may be noticed. That showed us Jesus exalted, this shows why he was exalted. He became our Saviour in heaven because he did the work of a Saviour on earth. Hence this lesson shows us Jesus on earth, acting as priest but suffering as victim. So does earthly service precede heavenly reward. Here, a general feature is that the Jewish sacrifices were a shadow, and hence a true representation of Christ's sacrifice, though only a shadow, and hence an imperfect representation. The main points brought out are, (1) No blood, no pardon, or the necessity of a death in order to forgiveness. (2) Only Christ's blood expiates sin against God's eternal moral law, hence the necessity of Christ's death in order to our salvation. (3) This death was actually suffered, and hence expiation made. (4) The death once suffered atones for all sin, hence no repetition of the sacrifice. (5) The results of his death will appear in full at his second coming. In this, as in the last lesson, the points follow each other in natural order. The order here, however, is rather that of thought, than of fact, of cause and effect.

Lesson III.—2 Cor. xii. 1-10. Thus far we have learned of Christ's exaltation and of the atonement which led to it. We come now to the help which he gives his saints. This is a lesson drawn from Paul's experience, and his statement of it. In his experience two extremes met viz.: honor and shame, exaltation and humiliation. To show how he was honored, he testifies to the revelations made to him in his view of the eternal world. To show his humiliation, he testifies that God would not, at his thrice repeated entreaty, remove his thorn in the flesh. He in this way learned the lesson which he teaches us, that Christ blesses his saints not by taking them out of trial, but by supporting them in it and carrying them through it, that the greater the trial the richer the display of his grace, and hence that we should rejoice not so much in our escape from affliction as in a Christian endurance of it. A very practical, comforting lesson. Jesus, though exalted, is yet near in sympathy; "touched with the feeling of our infirmity." Jesus, Master, "Thou art so far, and yet so near." All have trials in some form, hence all meet him in just this form of gracious Helper.

Lesson IV.—Rev. i. 12-20. Christ did not complete his work as Teacher, Prophet, or Revealer, when on earth. This he told his apostles, and he also told them the reason. John xvi. 12. The Holy Spirit, in his work of inspiration, carried forward this work of Christ after his ascension, but in the book of Revelation Jesus himself appears in his former character of teacher; but how changed the circumstances. One reason why he thus in person speaks, is, doubtless, to reassure the church in her separation from him, the bridegroom, that he has a loving watch over her, his beloved, as though he were visibly present in the flesh. The words of this book come with an impressiveness and a preciousness that they would not have if otherwise communicated. If this be true

of them now, much more was it at the time when they were made, a time of persecution and trial, before men had learned that under the new Christian dispensation, "this world" was still to have its "course." See Heb. i. 1-2. The form in which Jesus appeared, a form of glory, kingly majesty, where all the symbolism showed him as a vigilant guardian and able defender, and holy avenger of his people, is exactly suited to give to the revelations utmost weight,—weight of comfort to believers, weight of terror to the ungodly. A fit and wonderful opening of a most wonderful book.

Lessons V.-IX.—Rev. chs. ii. iii. Features of the seven letters common to all, are the following: (1) They are directed, each to the angel of the church, to the church as represented. (2) Each has a threefold division. (3) The first division of each is a testimony of Christ to some one or more of his characteristics, according to the nature of the message which follows. (4) The second division of each is (a) special in character and application, pertaining directly to the church. (b) A combination of description, partly favorable, partly unfavorable, and of added words suited to the description. These words are commendation or condemnation, persuasion or dissuasion, menace or promise, as each case requires. (5) The third division is a general call to all to heed the message of divine wisdom. It further deserves notice; that Christ repeats in the letters the testimony concerning himself, given by him to John in the opening vision, with occasional pertinent variations and additions.

Lesson X.—Rev. v. 1-14. In this vision Jesus is still seen as a Revealer, for the breaking of the seals of the book was in order to make known the contents of the book, to reveal the future of the church. The dignity and authority of Christ are, however, made prominent, as the seals were broken by him in his own right, and this right was nothing less than his headship over the church, founded on his atoning work for the church. This explains why the effect of his appearance and act was so great. We find here set forth in succession, (1) The need of such a head, shown by the angel's call and John's tears. (2) The inability of the creature to be the head, for throughout the universe no creature ventured to answer the call. (3) The fact of Christ's headship, for he took the book. (4) The blessed importance of this fact to mankind, since the heavenly representatives of men sung for joy. (5) The wider bearings of the fact, for angels and indeed all creation united in grateful praise. (6) The divine glory of the head of the church, since this universal adoration was paid him.

Lesson XI.—Rev. vii. 9-17. This Scripture presents to view Jesus amid a vast multitude of saints, who have finished their earthly course of temptation and trial, their victory complete, the wilderness behind, home gained. (1) We see the vast throng. (2) We hear their shout of triumph, owning Jesus as their Saviour. (3) We hear the song of heavenly sympathy. (4) We learn whence they came, (5) and what awaits them,—a blissful inspiring scene.

Lesson XII.—Rev. xxii. 10-17. Here we have (1) A struggling church in a godless world, and Jesus absent. (2) The speedy coming of the Lord. (3) Remission, reward, and punishment. (4) The appeal of mercy to all who will, to come in penitent faith before he comes in just judgment.

Thus end the lessons of our first quarter. They are full of Jesus. They show how much this unseen Jesus has to do with our daily life, with the course of our world, with our endless future, whether it shall be of weal or of woe. So do they appeal to us to come to him, to stay with him, to abide in him, to live for him, to be his wholly and forever.

QUESTIONS.—Who is the "Exalted Saviour?" Acts ii. 32-33. Whose Saviour is he? 1 Tim. iv. 10; Matt. i. 21. Why called the exalted Saviour? Mark xiv. 62; Acts i. 9. For what was he exalted? Phil. i. 6-9. What promise of his is recorded in John xvi. 7? Has it been fulfilled? Acts ii. 33. What was the duty of the Jewish High Priest? Heb. v. 1. From what tribe was he taken? Heb. vii. 5. Of what tribe was Jesus? Heb. vii. 14. After what order was he priest? Heb. vi. 20. What did he offer? vs. 14. Why is he called the Great High Priest? Heb. ix. 11-23. Had he need to offer himself more than once for the sins of the world? Heb. ix. 28. Where is Jesus now? Can he help his people on earth? What did he once say to Paul? 2 Cor. xii. 9. Is not this true

of every Christian? Have we not all need of Christ's grace? Why? How may we have it?

To whom besides Paul did the glorified Jesus appear? Rev. i. 9. In what manner? Rev. i. 13-16. For what purpose? Ch. i. 11. Does this show his constant watch care over his people on earth? To how many churches severally did Jesus dictate to John letters? Ch. ii. iii. Their names? Ch. i. 11. Which letter was omitted in our lessons? What command to the Ephesians? Ch. ii. 5. What to the Smyrnians? vs. 10. What to the church in Pergamos? vs. 16. What to the church in Sardis? Ch. ii. 2-3. What to the Philadelphians? vs. 11. What counsel and command to the Laodiceans? vs. 18-19. Are these commands intended for Christians of all times and all places? What book did John see in vision? Rev. v. 1. Who opened it? vs. 5. What was the effect upon saints and angels? vs. 8-14. Why is Christ represented as a Lamb? Rev. ix. 17. What promise to his suffering disciples? vs. 17. Why is he called the Alpha and the Omega? Rev. xxii. 13. What call does he still make to sinners? vs. 17. Scripture Catechism, 27, 28.

ELISHA AND ISRAEL. SUNDAY, April 7.—The Mantle of Elijah. 2 Kings 2: 9-15.

THE SUPERINTENDENT'S PRAYER.

A superintendent's prayers for his teachers and scholars should be offered at home. His opening prayers in the school should be with them. He is to lead their devotions, rather than to perform his own in their presence. He must, therefore, see to it that every petition to which he gives shape is one which represents the best longings of their hearts, and that his ascriptions of praise are likely to be theirs. He should consider carefully, in advance, what are the needs and probable emotions of his teachers and scholars, and what they are likely to crave from or desire to render to God, as they assembled in Sunday school. Then he should, in simple language, pray to and praise their common Father in heaven, in the name of those whom he represents and leads. There are superintendents who never seem to ask the question, if their prayers are even understood by the members of the school. They recount the attributes of Deity, praise God or His works of creation and providence, and pray for blessings on all the world in general, but never once thank God for the privileges of the hour of Bible study, nor ask that the teachers be helped to teach, and the scholars be helped to learn in the passing hour. On the other hand, there are superintendents—and their number is increasing—who seek to pray just the prayers that the school needs to pray. Through them teachers and scholars find an utterance to God, and are brought nearer to Him. Some of these ask the school to repeat after them, sentence by sentence, the prayer they offer. When this is done, the superintendent is surer to use simple language, and to frame his prayer as the prayer of the whole school. Even when the school is not requested to repeat the prayer aloud, it should be counted as having a part in it. The superintendent who shapes his public prayers only in a view of his personal desires and emotions, wrongs the whole body of the school he assumes to represent at the mercy-seat.—Independent.

THINGS TO BE OVERCOME.

1. In the Scholar.—Irregularity of attendance. Lack of previous preparation. Inattention during the study of the lesson. Want of spirituality. 2. In the Teacher.—With his own heart. Inadequate preparation. Lack of skill in teaching. Want of prayer with study. Ignorance of duty and responsibility. No power over the affections. Cannot reach the conscience. 3. In the School.—Uncomfortable seats. Proximity of disorderly classes. Interruption by the Superintendent during the progress of lessons.

He who has struck his colors to the power of an evil habit, has surrendered himself to the power of an enemy bound by no articles of faith, and from whom he can expect only the vilest treatment. The liberty to go higher than what we are, is given only when we have fulfilled the duty of our present sphere. It is not disgraceful for any one who is poor to confess his poverty; but the not exerting one's self to escape poverty is disgraceful. Fools with bookish knowledge, are children with edged weapons; they hurt themselves and put others in pain.—Zimmerman.

Youths' Department.

THE CHILDREN'S PUZZLE.

Around a table strewn with books and toys, There sat a merry group of noisy boys, Half battling to display, with fingers swift, A puzzle in a box—their father's gift. With eager haste the lid is pulled aside; Delighted with the game as yet untried, The box is searched, and busy hands begin To seize upon the pieces packed within; Each youngster confident of being able To range the fragments scattered on the table Into a pattern perfectly combined, Such as the wise artificer designed. But soon impatience deems the process slow; Tempers are chafed, and difficulties grow; "I'm sure," shouts Tom, "that piece should fit in there." "It won't, then," Dick retorts, with snappish air. "This bit's too short," pouts Jack, "and that's too long." "I'm certain," grumbles Bill, "the puzzle's wrong!" Then Jack seeks help from Tom—Dick strives with Bill— Bedtime is near—the puzzle puzzling still. At length, when concord and content have fled, "Let's ask our father, boys," cries little Ned. The others yield to the suggestion bright— Papa, consulted, puts the puzzle right. Life's puzzle is as difficult to man; And he who cannot solve arraigns its plan. Each tries his own solution, vaunts his wit; While others find the theory won't fit, And substitute their own—all failures still— But none believe the cause, their lack of skill! The puzzle must be wrong—they talk, they write, Consult some fellow-child, grow cross and fight, Pronounce the Maker but a poor designer, And think they could have made a game much finer! The "Little Neds," as wiser Christians do, To solve life's puzzle—ask their Father too! —The Rock.

JUVENILE EXEGESIS.

"Charlie," said a friend of mine to her five year old son, "do you remember the Scripture verse you learned last Sunday?" "Yes, ma'am." "Well, repeat it, my son." "Be satisfied with what you've got, and don't pout." How's that for juvenile exegesis on the passage, "Be content with such things as ye have." Here's another: One of my infant class scholars, a bright little girl of four summers, in repeating her verse, said: "I love them that love me, and—and—they that seek me the first thing in the morning shall find me." Could a Hebrew of the Hebrews have gotten at the meaning more correctly?

ENOUGH FOR ME.

"What do you do without a mother to tell all your troubles to?" asked a child who had a mother, of one who had not; her mother was dead. "Mother told me whom to go to before she died," answered the little orphan; "I go to the Lord Jesus; He was my mother's friend and He's mine." "Jesus Christ is up in the sky; He is away off, and has a great many things to attend to in heaven. It is not likely He can stop to mind you." "I do not know any thing about that," said the orphan; "all I know is, He says He will, and that is enough for me." What a beautiful answer was that! And what was enough for this child is enough for us all.

WINTER.

The frost is here, And fuel is dear, And woods are clear, And fires burn clear, And frost is here, And has bitten the heel of the going year. Bite, frost, bite! You roll up away from the light The blue woodlouse, and the plump dormouse, And the bees are still'd, and the flies are kill'd, And you bite far into the heart of the house, But not into mine. Bite, frost, bite! The woods are all the clearer, The fuel is all the dearer, The fires are all the clearer, My spring is all the nearer, You have bitten into the heart of the earth, But not into mine. —Tennyson.

A JAPANESE BOUDOIR.

An American paper states that a lady of the Hon. James Brooks' party in Japan looked into a Japanese boudoir, and this is

her inventory:—Little or no furniture, no chairs, no bedstead—nothing but mats to sleep on. A toilet box was on the floor near the wall, about the only article of furniture in the room. In this box there were five drawers and two lacquer basins on top. In the top drawer of this box there was a metallic mirror, like our hand glasses. In the second drawer—the lady kept her powder, paint, wax, tooth powder, and brush. Two little drawers came next. In one she had her false hair, and in the other fancy pins, gilt paper, and other 'fixins' for her hair. In the lower drawer was her pillow, which is placed under the neck when sleeping on the mats, so as to prevent the hair from being rumpled. It is made of wood and covered with paper on top. The powder looks like starch, and when they use it, they mix a little water with it, and rub in like paste, and they have two brushes that they have to rub it off with. The paint looks green and turns red when put on the lips and cheeks.

"TAKE NO THOUGHT FOR THE MORROW."

A poor wood-sawyer, infirm by reason of age, came to a wealthy neighbor, seeking employment. The latter showed him a large, irregular pile of wood containing a hundred cords, and offered to give him as many dollars if he would cut the whole into proper lengths. The old man looked at the great mass and shook his head. "It is too much for my strength," said he: "I do not dare to undertake it." The owner of the wood then made another proposal: "Pack up one cord and saw it, and I will give you one dollar." The old man's countenance brightened. "I am not afraid to undertake that," said he; and he went cheerfully to work and before sunset had completed the task and received the reward. Then the owner made the same arrangement with him for the next day, and the second cord was finished before the setting of another sun. Thus day after day did he continue to cord his eight feet a day and saw it, until at length the whole huge pile was sawed. When he first looked upon it, it seemed far beyond his feeble strength, but by the simple arrangement of undertaking but one cord a day, he found his strength sufficient for the whole.

There are some people who build up in their imaginations a huge, irregular pile of Christian duties, and bethinking themselves of their weakness, get frightened at the prospect. There are passions and lusts to be subdued, bad habits to be avoided and good ones to be formed, sins to be shunned and temptations of every conceivable shape to be overcome. There are private duties, searching the Scriptures and searching the heart; there are prayers in private and prayers in public; there are pious conversations with friends and pious exhortations in the assembly; there are crosses, and self-denials, and persecutions and lions of every kind in the way; and where is the strength sufficient for all these things? But such frightful accumulations of Christian duty are the creatures of a perverted imagination. This is not the way that God presents His labor to the willing mind. He does not show us the huge, irregular mass of a hundred cords and bid us go to work upon it. He gives us, so to speak, but a cord a day. He lays before us today only the work of to-day, and we do not need the power of a spiritual Hercules to accomplish it. We need to ask God only for as much strength as will enable us to do to-day's work, taking no anxious thought for what is coming by-and-by.—W. & R.

FAITH ILLUSTRATED.

It is said that one day when Bonaparte was reviewing some troops, the bridle of his horse slipped from his hand, and the horse galloped off. A common soldier ran and laying hold of the bridle, brought back the horse to the Emperor's hand, when he said to the man: "Well done, captain." "Of what regiment, sire?" inquired the soldier. "Of the Guards," answered Napoleon, pleased with his instant belief in his word. The Emperor rode off; the soldier threw down his musket, and though he had no epaulettes on his shoulders, or sword by his side, nor any other mark of advancement, he ran and joined the staff of commanding officers. They laughed at him, and said: "What have you to do here?" "I am captain of the Guards," he replied. They were amazed, but he said: "The Emperor has said so, and therefore I am." In like manner, though the word of God, "He that believeth hath everlasting life," is not confirmed by the feelings of the believer; he ought to take the word of God as true, because he said it, and thus honor him as a God of truth, and rejoice with joy unspeakable.—Observer.