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Aug. 14.

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, N. S., AUG. 14, 1872.

THE TEACHER.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1872.

STUDIES IN THE EPISTLES.

SUNDAY, August 18th, 1872.

Accountability to God—Rom. xiv. 7-13.

GOLDEN TEXT.—But I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. Matthew xii. 36.

SCRIPTURE SELECTIONS.—1 Thessalonians v. 1-10; 1 Peter iv. 12-18.

SUMMARY.—Having been purchased by the death of Christ, believers are his property and are under obligation to serve Him. The judgment will be of every individual.

EXPOSITION.—Christian Forbearance is demanded of believers. This should especially be the case with mature christians towards their weaker and younger brethren.

The observance of days and meats have always been made more or less subjects of religious scruples. The absence of directions in the New Testament respecting the days of Jewish observance, left it for the believing Jews in primitive times to use their own discretion as to continuing to observe them or casting them off at once, or gradually give them up. Forbearance was to be exercised between the Jewish and Gentile believers, and they were not to censure each other for doing or not doing, what was neither commanded nor forbidden. Verse 7 shows that the christian's life is continued on earth that he may benefit his brethren and the world, and not that he may secure any selfish ends. His life and death are both to be in the service of Christ, who is God over all blessed for ever. 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20; Gal. ii. 20; 1 Thess. v. 10; 1 Peter iv. 2.

Verse 8.—Christ owns us as his property and may dispose of us as he sees fit and right, and it is only for us to acquiesce in his disposal of us and ours, by life or death.

Verse 9.—The right of Christ to rule over death is one result of his own death. (1 Cor. v. 15; Acts x. 16.)

Verse 10.—"But why" &c., might be rendered: But thou (the weaker believer), why judgest thou thy brother? And thou again (the stronger) why despisest thou thy brother? This verse should read "the judgment seat of God." (Acts x. 42 & xvii. 31; Jude 14, 15.)

Verses 11, 12.—This quotation from Isaiah (xlv. 23), and the conclusion drawn from it are a strong confirmation of the Divine character of the Lord Jesus, and he has therefore a right to dispose of those for whom he died, whether they be living or dying. (Gal. vi. 5; 1 Peter iv. 5.)

Verse 13.—Let us not therefore assume the office of judge, and suppose that we have any right to dictate to our brethren, even the weak ones, but exercise our judgment over ourselves, and avoid what would discourage or offend others. "A stumbling-block," something over which others might fall and injure themselves in character, feelings or prospects. (1 Cor. viii. 9, 13; & x. 32.)

QUESTIONS.—With whom does the Apostle class himself in vs. 7? What shews the collective and what the individual form of address here used? What is living unto the Lord? What is dying unto the Lord? What part of Christ's work gives him the right to our lives? What were the things indifferent on which believers might judge and act for themselves: What is the great court of arbitration to which the final decision of all difficult matters is to be left? Who will eventually acknowledge Christ's decisions as just and right? Can parents or friends give account on behalf of their children? Who must give account for children? Who for teachers? Who for parents? How can we help weak believers? Would our denunciations of their attention to things indifferent, help them in preparing for the judgment? What should we endeavour to avoid on behalf of such?

Scripture Catechism, 63, 64.

SUNDAY, Aug. 25th.—Help One Another.—Rom. xv. 1-7.

Youths' Department.

"SORRY IS NOT ENOUGH."

"Allan! Where is Allan?"
A moment ago he was playing with his little cart in the yard, hauling dirt to the currant bushes. I cannot tell how many carts full he carried.—He was as busy as a little man. But Allan has gone. There is his cart.

"Allan! Allan!"
"I see here!" at last said a small voice from the back parlor.

"What are you there for?" asked his mother, opening the door and looking in. Allan did not answer at first. He was standing in the corner, with a pretty sober look on.

"Come out to your little cart," said his mother; "it is waiting for another run."

"I see not not been here long 'nuff," said the little boy.

"What are you here for at all?" asked his mother.

"I punishing my own self. I picked some green currants, and they went into my mouth," said Allan.

"Oh! when mother told you not to? Green currants will make my little boy sick," said his mother in a sorry tone.

"You needn't punish me said Allan; "I punish me own self."

His mother often put him in the back parlor alone when he had been a naughty boy, and, you see, he took the same way with himself.

"Are you not sorry for disobeying mother?" she asked Allan.

"I sorry; but sorry is not 'nuff. I punish me. I stay here a good while and have thinks."

Is not Allan right? Sorry, if it is only sorry, is not enough.—*Christian at Work.*

A CURE FOR ANGER.

Two little sisters, one seven and the other five years old were playing together, when a little difference arose between them. Lucy, the elder, feeling that anger was rising, said "I am getting angry; I had better go out of the room for a few minutes." She went out and soon returned with all the angry feelings gone. How she spent the few minutes I think most of our little readers will know, Lucy had not read her Bible in vain; she knew the meaning of these sweet and encouraging words, "Ask, and it shall be given;" and many times had she proved them to be true when fighting against her naturally hasty temper. How many sad scenes would be avoided if all children would follow the example of little Lucy!

If any one offend you, before answering try to call to mind this golden sentence: "A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger." And if you attend to it you will save yourself hours of regret and repentance.—*Children's Friend*

A LITTLE GENTLEMAN.—The other day, little Frank was sent by his mother to invite an old friend of hers to tea. He came home full of admiration for the lady and her kindness and politeness to him. At the tea table, she turned to him with—

"Frank, I have a compliment for you. Mother and sister both remarked, when you were gone, how well you did your errand, and what a gentlemanly boy you were."

Frank looked pleased, and the color came to his face. "Miss S," said he "that compliment belongs to mamma, not to me; for if I am a gentleman, she taught me to be."

Neat for eleven years, wasn't it? Comment and proof at once.

THE MOABITE STONE.

The following is a good review of Dr. C. D. Ginsbury's work on the Moabite Stone. The review is taken from the columns of the *English Guardian*:

This is the first and as yet the only independent work on the Moabite Stone which has been given to the English public. Several learned and able papers have, indeed, appeared on the subject in our Quarterly Reviews and Magazines,—but these, from their necessary limitations as to size and character, cannot rank as complete treatises. The book before us, on the contrary, aims at meeting the wants alike of the philologist, the antiquarian, and the merely literary reader. It is called the second edition, but is, in fact, the only one that has ever been fairly accessible to the public. The former edition was privately printed, and circulated gratuitously among the members of the British Association, but was "withdrawn from the market" after a very short opportunity for acquiring it had been allowed. This was for private reasons, not because, as is carefully explained in the Preface to this edition, the author had seen reason to alter his mind on any important particulars, much less had begun to have his doubts about the genuineness of the Stone itself.

The scholarship of the individual who should call that genuineness in question is, as Dr. Ginsbury says, "not worth a day's purchase." The stone is beyond all doubt of primary importance to the history and language of the Old Testament. It is a chronicle of wars and triumphs put on record by Mesha, King of Moab, who revolted from Jehoram, the son of Ahab, according to 2 Kings iii.; and goes on to state also the various buildings and works of public utility which he caused to be executed after he had delivered his native land from the tyranny of the Israelites. It will thus bear date about B. C. 900. It supplements in a very remarkable way the fragmentary and widely separated notices of Moab found in the Old Testament, enabling us, e. g., to offer an explanation of the strange announcement made in 2 Kings iii. 27, that the King of Moab found the allied Kings of Judah, Israel, and Edom too strong for him, he "offered his eldest son for a burnt offering;" that there was "great indignation in Israel," and they departed from him." The inscription of Mesha renders it evident that the allies, though successful in the early part of the campaign failed in the sequel. The Moabites, perhaps roused to frenzy by their King's act of desperation, seem to have again sallied forth from their city, and driven the invaders away. The inscription of Mesha gives a clear notion of the further progress of the war, which ended in the recovery by the Moabites not only of complete independence, but also of the whole district north of the Arnon, which had been wrested from the Amorites in the days of Moses by the transjordanic tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and a little earlier had been wrested by the Amorites from the Moabites. Thus Mesha restored the kingdom of Moab to the ancient limits and splendour which it had enjoyed before the invasion of Sihon, recorded in ancient Hebrew poetry of the days of Moses, as we learn from the Numbers xxi. 27-30; and the Moabites seem to have remained undisturbed and prosperous until the days of Isaiah. Hence is explained, what has always hitherto occasioned not a little perplexity to biblical scholars, the power, wealth, and prosperity which this Mesha, Isaiah, in his fifteenth and sixteenth chapters, declared "the burden of Moab."

These few remarks may serve to illustrate the vast importance of this ancient lapidary monument in reference to history. Scarcely less valuable is it in other particulars. It is the only original document of times earlier than the Maccabees, which is extant in the ancient Hebrew; for the language of Moab, as written by Mesha, presents but slight, though grammatically interesting, variations from the Biblical Hebrew. It is older than two-thirds of the Old Testament, and has come down to us without modification from transcribers and redactors, which cannot be said of any part of the Old Testament. It is by far the most ancient inscription as yet discovered in letters of this kind, and throws much new light upon the early history and palaeography of the Phœnician and the Greek alphabets. But we must refer our readers to Dr. Ginsbury's work itself for able and copious statements and illustrations of the many-sided importance of this discovery. He has taken great pains so to write and explain as to enable the novice in these studies to understand and appreciate the deeply interesting and very important matters here brought before him. The book, by no means a large one, contains a facsimile of the Stone; a reproduction of the inscription in the Square Hebrew character; a translation in English; essays upon the discovery of the Stone, the present state of its text, the relation of its inscription to the narrative of the Bible, and on its importance and literature; a very careful and elaborate commentary on its every word; and the various translations in German, French, and English, twelve in number, exhibited in a tabular form; and, finally, a complete vocabulary, in which are marked all the words and forms of words peculiar to the Stone. Nor must we forget to add that a very good map of the transjordanic country is prefixed to the volume,—a map which exhibits the results of the most recent investigation, and gives much aid in understanding the statements of this ancient chronicle.

It will be, of course, familiar to our readers that the Stone was broken by the Bedouins in November, 1869. The endeavours made by the emulous Consuls at Jerusalem to gain this precious relic for their several states aroused the attention of the Mahometan authorities; the Governor of Nablous made an attempt to possess himself of this treasure for which rival Franks were bidding so high, and the Bedouins, dreading the total loss of that which they had learned to prize through the eagerness of others to get it, broke the Stone and distributed the bits amongst their different families.

The Moabite Stone was originally nearly four-feet high, two feet in breadth, and rather more than fourteen inches in thickness. It is hewn out of the black basalt of the country, out of which, perhaps, the famous bedstead of Og was constructed; a stone which contains a large proportion of iron, and is, indeed, called iron by the natives. The inscription now in part lost had endured almost uninjured for twenty-five centuries. As the top and bottom of the stone were rounded almost to a semi-circle, the number of lines, and approximately that of the letters, can be ascertained from the two large fragments which still remain, and which comprise more than half the entire surface, including much of the upper and some of the lower margin. Dr. Ginsbury estimates that there must have been about eleven hundred letters in the thirty-four lines of which the inscription consists, of which six hundred and sixty-nine have been recovered. An impression, unfortunately only a hasty and imperfect one, was taken of the Stone before its destruction; and two or three independent "squeezes" of the other two large fragments have been taken, whilst a number of smaller portions, the most important of them containing thirty-eight letters, are also extant. Sufficient materials exist, it will be observed, for ascertaining much of the text, and for restoring with tolerable certainty very much more. And it is hoped that even yet some of the remaining portions may be discovered and saved.

THE MINISTER'S CHARACTER.

There is no profession, no effort, in which character is so absolutely essential to success as the Christian ministry. Men will retain a tipping lawyer, if he have power to sway juries, running the risk of finding him tipsy on the court day. The physician, whose skill in the healing art has made him famous, may be profane and licentious, and yet retain his patronage. The rakish artist, if genius moves his brush or chisel, finds a ready and remunerative sale of his masterpieces; while the statesman, or politician rather—alas for our times—fears the falling of his majorities less because of his moral delinquencies, than for the mandates of his party. Not so with the gospel minister. His purity of character is an indispensable co-efficient of his success. This is because Christianity is not a science, only a system of religious truth. It is this, but it is more. It is a life, a Divine, transforming power. It is efficiently preached when its truths are exemplified in the life of the preacher, as well as inculcated by his tongue. He preaches in vain who cannot point to his moral rectitude, his own saintly character, as a specimen of the transfiguring power of the gospel.—*Rev. Dr. Steele.*

THE LION'S RIDE.

When a lion wishes to have a giraffe for his dinner, he is obliged to be very careful how he goes to market. Giraffes are not

cheap articles of diet, even for a lion, and attempt to get a meal of that kind of meat always costs him a great deal of trouble, and sometimes costs him his life. Of course, the lion slips up very quietly towards the giraffe. He always does that, no matter what his prey may be, but in this case it is necessary to be very careful indeed, for he springs and misses the giraffe, the great beast may get a kick at him before he has time to recover himself, and a kick from a giraffe, whose hind-legs fly out like sledge-hammers, will make even a lion feel "considerable shuck up like." But even after the lion has safely landed himself on the giraffe's back, his dinner is not ready yet. The giraffe is a large and powerful animal, and away he rushes, as fast as his long awkward legs can carry him, and that is very fast indeed. Clitter, clatter! Spring and bound! Away he goes, with the lion hanging on like a good fellow, and the hyenas coming yelling after, hoping to have a chance to get something at the second table, for it is hardly possible that a lion can eat a whole giraffe. But it is not at all certain that there will be a giraffe for dinner at all, for if the frightened creature can get into the woods, he may be safe. Dashing among the limbs and trunks he may knock the lion off. And then look out Mr. Lion! The giraffe will turn on you as quick as lightning and kick the life out of you before you can get out of the reach of his heels, and those poor dear little hyenas will have to go hungry to bed. Although giraffes have frequently been known to get the best of lions in this way, they are not always so fortunate. If a thick wood cannot be reached, the strength of the giraffe will be exhausted, and the cruel beast upon his back will fix his teeth in his throat and drag the poor creature down and kill and eat him.—*Hearth and Home.*

DIABOLICAL DUALITY.

A good story is told in Washington of a genial young gentleman, unwillingly to omit recognition of an acquaintance, who, at a wedding reception, caught sight of a gray-whiskered and rather stately person, and, being satisfied by inquiry of his identity, immediately edged along to his side. "Good-evening, said he, extending his hand with cordiality. "I'm delighted to see you! We haven't met since we parted in Mexico."

"I rather fear," said the gray-whiskered magnate, "you have me at an advantage."

"Why, don't you recollect? But then I was very much younger," said the other, "with my father in Mexico."

"And, to tell the truth," said the other gentleman, "my remembrances of ever having been in Mexico are very indistinct."

"Excuse the question," said the young man rather desperately—"are you not Sir Edward Thornton?"

"By no means. I am Judge Poland of Vermont."

"A thousand pardons?" And the discomfited youth moved away.

But a few nights afterward, at another reception his eye was similarly caught, and the edge of his mortification having been worn off, he could smile at his mistake; and he accordingly once more made his way to the side of a gentleman with gray mutton-chop whiskers, and after a word or two on the weather and the scene, he suddenly said:—

"That was an awkward thing of me to take you for old Thornton, the other night."

"And who do you take me for now, may I ask?" said his companion.

"Why—why," said the embarrassed young man of society, "you told me you were Judge Poland, of Vermont."

"On the contrary, my name is Thornton," was the rather annihilating response. And the young man to this day calls it a case of diabolical duality.

BAPTISTERIES, EARLY AND LATE.—A friend now in Carlsruhe, Germany, in a very interesting letter says:—In one of the churches at Nuremberg we saw a curious thing. A large font of copper, in which the son of one of the Emperors, some 500 years ago, is said to have been baptized; underneath, in the pedestal, is a grate for fire. I said to the woman who was showing us the church, "That was to warm the water for baptism, I suppose?" "Yes," she said, "for they used to immerse the children in those days." It is singular to note the gradual changes. In Rome we saw the baptistry where the Emperor Constantine was baptized, a large baptistry; and the man said in showing it, "It was the custom to immerse in those days." At St. Sebald, in Nuremberg (several hundred years later), the font was of ample size for the baptism of an infant,—and now, you know, they make them no larger than a small basin.—*Free-man.*