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THE TEACHER.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1873.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, June 8th.

Joseph and Pharaoh.—Gen. xlvii. 1-10.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness." Prov. 16: 31.

COMMIT TO MEMORY.—Verses 7-10.

NOTES.—Verse 1.—Joseph did not neglect the respect due to the king. He did as he promised, xvi. 31.

Verse 2.—Five men. Jewish tradition says, Zebulun, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. Acts 7: 13. Joseph may have done this to enable Pharaoh the better to remember his brethren, and that they might have a better opportunity of conversing with him.

Verse 3.—Shepherds. Rather feeders and owners of cattle of all descriptions. This was as Joseph had directed, chap. 46: 34.

Verse 4.—To sojourn. That is, for a temporary residence only. They knew of God's promise to Jacob, chap. 46: 6, and expected to return to Canaan. In this they were disappointed; the promise was fulfilled to their descendants by the deliverance of Israel as a nation from Egypt. No pasture. This shows how severe the drought had been.

Verse 6.—The best of the land. That is, perhaps, the best for their purpose, that of shepherd. Yet the modern district answering to Goshen is reported to bear the highest valuation, and to yield the largest revenue of any in Egypt. Rulers over my cattle. Because being, from their life, headmen, they would possess greater experience than the Egyptians to whom the calling was one of ignominy. See notes in preceding lesson.

Verse 7.—Blessed Pharaoh. For form of oriental blessing at meeting, see Gen. 43: 29; Ruth 2: 4; 3: 10; 1 Sam 15: 13; Psalm 129: 8; at parting, Gen. 24: 60; 28: 1. Compare Luke 10: 5; 24: 36. The customary salutation to a king was one of reverence and recognition of his royalty, Dan 2: 4. But the custom of an old man blessing a king or governor is still observed in some regions of the East. "I was frequently asked," says the missionary Wolff, "by Jewish and Mohammedan princes to bless them, being considered as a Mullah [church official] and having a venerable beard."

Verse 8.—How old art thou? His venerable appearance impressed the king and elicited this question. The age of man was less in Egypt than in Canaan.

Verse 9.—Pilgrimage. His whole life had been a wandering one, without a fixed abode. Few, as compared with those of his fathers. Abraham died at 175; Isaac at 180. Gen. 25: 7; 35: 28. And evil. An exile from home in his youth; deceived and wronged by his sons in his old age.

THOUGHTS FOR THE CLASS.—Verse 3.—Shepherds were an abomination in the eyes of the Egyptians, the lowest caste. Jacob could give no glowing account of achievements, nothing but "few and evil have the days of the years of my life been." Yet the civilization of Egypt has long since crumbled to dust; and the truths which the descendants of the despised shepherds transmitted to the future are still the world's heritage, and the world's life. God chooses his instruments, not for their greatness, but for his own will and for reasons uninterpreted. The founders of the theocracy were shepherds, Deut. 7: 7, 8; the founders of the Christian church were fishermen, Luke 5: 1, 11; see also John 7: 48. Out of the weak he makes strength to come. So our strength is no cause for glorying; our weakness no cause for despair.

Verse 4.—To sojourn. Canaan was their home; Egypt only their sojourning place. So we have our land of promise. Even the fairest of this earth is but a sojourning place. Heb. 14: 11-16. As the Egyptians should have lived in Goshen, so should we live here, ever looking forward to a better country.

Verse 6.—Before thee. For Joseph's sake Pharaoh gave to Jacob and his sons all they wished; for their own sakes, he gave nothing. We are to approach the Great King in the name of our elder Brother, by whom we receive all grace. John 14: 13, 14; Hebrews 7: 25. Compare Romans 1: 5.

Verse 7.—The saint and the king. To the world the king is the embodiment of earthly power, who bids thousands and they obey him; of glory, whom all Egypt crowns. In truth the saint is the greater potentate, for he has subdued his own nature, more glorious because for him God his Father has a crown laid up in store. So the saint blesses the king; not the king the saint. Prov. 16: 32; 2 Tim. 4: 8.

Growth and glory. Contrast with Israel blessing the king of Egypt, Jacob fleeing from his brother's threatened anger; Israel made to stand before the king with Jacob the exile; Israel made perfect through suffering with Jacob the supplanter. Though the pilgrimage has been evil, the fruit is glorious; tears were the sowing, but the dignity of a son of God is the result of God's schooling. Hebrews 12: 11.

Verse 7.—Thought for the young. The king honors himself by paying honor to old age; how much more should youth respect age. Lev. 19: 32; compare Ex. 20: 12.

Thought for the aged. "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness." Prov. 16: 13; compare Job 12: 12.

Verse 9.—Life in the beginning looks to the youth bright, full, long. Life at its close, to the old man, is seen to be sorrowful, empty, short. This life is worse than nothing, save as it prepares for a life to come.

Verse 10.—A fruit of industry. In reflecting upon the deeper spiritual lesson of Israel's life, let us not forget the lesser, yet important lessons that lie upon the service. "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings." The contrast between the cunning hunter and the plain man, Gen. 25: 27, is one very common in our daily life; the contrast between brilliant but fitful energy and sober, plain, prosaic industry.

QUESTIONS.—Vs. 1.—What was Joseph's first duty after receiving his father and brother?

Vs. 2. What did Joseph do besides what he had promised? Why?

Vs. 4. Did Joseph's brethren wish to permanently abide in Egypt? What was now the condition of Canaan? What were the reasons for their wishing to remain in Goshen?

Vs. 5, 6. What answer from Pharaoh? Did Joseph need any such permission from the king? Why did he make his answer to Joseph rather than to the five brothers? What is meant by "rulers over cattle"?

Vs. 7. When did Joseph introduce his father to Pharaoh? For what had the five brothers been introduced? Why should Pharaoh wish to see the old man? What did Jacob do on meeting the king? Was this a mere greeting and act of politeness?

Vs. 8. What question did Pharaoh ask? Can you give any reason why such a question was asked?

Vs. 9. Why did Jacob call his life a pilgrimage? Is every man's life a pilgrimage? To what? How old was Jacob? Would we call such an age small? How old were his father and grandfather when they died? Why do men die younger now? Wherein had Jacob's days been "evil"?

Vs. 10. What did Jacob do for Pharaoh at parting? What reasons for gratitude to the king had he? Was this blessing prophetic, like that received by Jacob from Isaac at the time of the deception? How may each of us have a peaceful end to his life? Is it wise to neglect the great salvation?

Scripture Catechism, 120, 121.

SUNDAY, June 15th.—Prophetic Blessings.—Gen. xlviii. 1-16; xlix. 8-12.

HASTE TO THE RESCUE.

Not long since, a man, while under the influence of liquor, fell over the side of a mountain, and would have been dashed to pieces, but was caught on a projecting rock, where he remained a whole night. The next day, seeing a man, he called for help; and said he "would give all he had, to be rescued." An alarm being sounded, many hastened to deliver him. Two persons were let down by a rope to where he was; and then, fastening a rope around his body, he was drawn up, and thus saved from death. This illustrates the condition and deliverance of the sinner.

1. As to his danger—there was only a step between him and death.

2. The occasion of the danger—his own sin. If men are not saved, sin lies at their own door. Our sins separate us from God.

3. His earnest desire for deliverance. "All that a man hath will he give for his life." The sinner truly aware of his danger is willing, with Paul, to "count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord."

4. He did not save himself—he could not. Jesus came to us, just where we were, took hold of us, lifted us up, placed us in safety, and established our going.

5. The voluntary and united efforts of the people to deliver this man should be a lesson to those already saved, to labor for the salvation of others.

Youths' Department.

NANNIE'S WISH.

BY MARY E. BRADLEY.

"O dear!" said little Nannie Lee, "How tired of lesson-books I am! I know what I would like to be: I'd like to be the pretty lamb That Lucy took to school one day, To make the children laugh and play."

"That lamb had easy times indeed, And all the lambs do, as for that; They never have to write and read, Or learn their notes with sharp and flat; They can't wear out their frocks and shoes, And needn't mind their p's and q's!"

"Out in the pleasant meadow lot They nibble clover-heads all day, Or lie down in a shady spot To sleep when they are tired of play; Nobody says to them, 'My dear! What dirty face and hands are here!'"

"They never have to comb their tails, As I'm obliged to comb my hair, Or bother with their finger nails, Or hear the mother-sheep declare That such a slovenly, careless child Was quite enough to drive one wild!"

"I really wish I was a sheep!" Said silly little Nannie Lee, And all at once she'd dropped asleep, And in her dream she seemed to be A little lambkin snowy-white: Now you can fancy her delight.

She hopped and leaped and frisked about—"Ah me! how very nice it seems!" She longed to clap her hands and shout; But lambskins, even in one's dreams, Are lambskins still, and must be true To what their nature bids them do.

Our lamb could only jump and frisk, And bleat "ba-ba!" with all her might, And give her woolly tail a whisk To testify her heart's delight. She nibbled clover white and red, And thought it sweeter far than bread.

But by-and-by, to her dismay, There came a dreadful butcher man; He came, ah me! to strike and slay As only butcher people can. The lambskins scampered left and right When they beheld him—well they might!

With fearful strides he marched along; Poor Nannie trembled for her life, For in his hand so brown and strong He held aloft a shining knife. She tried to run—but could not stir—And like a hawk he pounced on her!

Ah! then she gave a dreadful scream, Her mother flew to her in fear. "Why, Nannie! have you had a dream? What is the matter with you, dear? Wake up!" and gave her such a shake That Nannie started, broad awake.

She sat bolt upright in her chair, She stared around in wild surprise, And pulled her tumbled yellow hair, And rubbed her sleepy, wondering eyes; "O dear!" she cried, "how glad I am, That I am really not a lamb!"

"A lamb!" Her mother laughed outright At such a queer excuse: "If that's the reason of your fright, I think you are a little goose!" "You wouldn't," sobbed poor silly Nan, "If you had seen that butcher-man!"

—Heath and Home.

CHOOSING AN OCCUPATION FOR A YOUNG MAN.

If a boy is constantly whittling sticks, find parents say that he has "marked constructive ability;" or if he can whistle one or two notes of an air correctly, "he will be a great musician," or if he can draw with reasonable accuracy, "that child is a born artist." If these presumed or assumed evidences of genius are acted upon, and those in authority seize arbitrarily upon the young man and force him into a trade or art, on the ground of their being better able to judge than he is for himself, the possibility, nay, the probability is that he will turn out a Harold Skimpole of whose class the world has far too many already. He sketches a little; tinkers a little with tools; drums a little on a piano; and in time falls into line with the rank and file of the noble army of incompetents and revilers of fate. He may protest with all his strength in his earlier years that he is not fitted for the occupation chosen for him; he may demand to be transferred into some other calling that his soul hungers after; it is all in vain if some one in authority be the same parent or guardian, says: "Your profession has been chosen for you, and you must follow it; your elders have had more experience than you, and can tell better, by reason of it, what you need;" and so the young man is condemned for life. He goes moping all his days and refuses to be comforted, simply because his heart is not in what he is doing. He is out of his element; he disturbs the machinery of the world; he is

as bad as a broken wheel on a train; everything with which he is connected goes halting and bumping and jumping because of him. If he does not reach the highest place in his profession his elders, with astonishing inconsistency, upbraid him and say that he has no ambition, no energy, no desire to succeed; when the simple fact is that he has no qualification to command success.

"How can I know about a thing I don't know nothing about?" exclaimed an exasperated and badgered witness in the box. "How can I have inspiration to preach, when I am always thinking about machinery; or paint, when I am always wishing to preach, when divine truths fire my heart to go forth and turn men from the error of their ways?" A man out of his place says these things at heart, if not in actual words, and his whole life is embittered by the blindness of his elders who would not see, but claimed the right because they had the power, to squeeze a human heart into the corner they thought it should fill. For it is crushing the heart out of the man to make the boy travel in a circuit he is unfitted for. All his energies and ambition reach forward to one goal; all his nature is bent upon that one thing, and because you cannot see as he sees, O parent or guardian! because you are not him, and do not love it, you destroy his future power. It is a serious responsibility to assume: to direct the calling in life a young man shall follow, an action to be taken only upon great deliberation. Whatever he undertakes he must stick to. In the early years of his life, when the world expects but little of him, he must study or work hard to be qualified for the later ones, when it exacts a great deal. He cannot be always young; he cannot have two youths; he must give his young life, his bright hopes, his aspirations to the work in hand. What if his heart is far from it, and he is longing with all his strength for that other calling which you have put out into the world when he is of age, as some foreign parents do, and select a wife for him. With equal consistency you might say: "I have had more experience in the world than you; you can live happier with this woman than one of your own choosing," yet this is an action you would shrink from committing. Is not a man's profession the same in degree as his wife? Does he not live by it as with her? Are not all his hopes centered upon it, his happiness bound up in it? Is not the contentment which springs from a congenial occupation in some respects the same as conjugal affection? It certainly is; for unless a man love the work to which he applies himself his labor is of no force, of little worth. He is half-hearted, simply because he lacks the inspiration which enthusiasm lends to every occupation, even the humblest. The shoemaker who likes to make shoes makes better ones than the convict enforced to do so, and the same is true of every work under the sun.

Let every young man choose his own occupation in life. In any event, let him choose it. If he has no particular bias or bent, let him find something to do all the same. A parent or guardian may say: "My son, it appears to me that your walk in life lies this way," and point out the advantages likely to accrue or that can be absolutely given him if he adopts the suggestion, but this is all that should be done. If he revolts, or objects, and says, "I cannot," do not retort with "you shall, or you are no son of mine." You will live to repent it. You will wear sackcloth and ashes for it. Humble yourself a little before you overthrow him. A boy has a right to his choice. How can you force him to learn a trade for which he has no aptness, except that he has been seen to make things that a child naturally amuses himself by. You cannot; you have no right. Consider the matter somewhat. If he is a tractable, affectionate and docile boy, so much the worse; you use his natural affection as a vehicle to work your will with him, not seeing that in after life he will become a listless, moody, inefficient laborer in the vineyard, because you have trained him to a stake, or spread him on a wall, instead of allowing him to grow free and unfettered as he should. Consider this matter in some other light than your own inclinations. He will doubtless live many years after you are gone. How shall he best perpetuate your name and family? By following his own natural inclinations, or by trying to force his nature to run on a track too wide or too narrow gauge for him? Think over it!—Scientific American.

A stern duty—the rudder's.

Missionary Intelligence.

(From the Missionary Magazine June 1873.) THE RELIGIONS OF JAPAN.

BY REV. J. CHAPLIN, D. D.

II. SUN WORSHIP.

The worship of the sun is not enjoined by the Sinto religion, yet there are members of this sect who do practice it. Every morning, going out of their houses, they look toward the east, watching for the sun, and at his (or, as the Japanese would say, her) appearance, they bow the head, clasp the hands, and, spitting three times upon the ground, offer a prayer to Amateras for her blessing. Amateras Omi-Kami signifies "the great shining spirit in the heavens," or the sun. Whether there is any connection between this practice and the Zoroastrian adoration of the sun, we cannot say, but the resemblance between Amateras and Mithras, the Persian god of day, is certainly suggestive.

FOX WORSHIP.

In Japan the fox is regarded, among the lower classes, as a sacred, or rather a supernatural animal, having great influence over the affairs of men; and the Japanese literature abounds in marvelous stories of his cunning and miraculous power. To accomplish his ends, which are sometimes very mischievous, he can assume at pleasure the form of a man, a woman, a priest, etc. Hence it is considered very important to gain his good-will; and in different parts of the country there are temples in which special offerings are made to him. Inari, the tutelary deity of the rice fields, is supposed to hold a peculiar relation to foxes. Near the beginning of the year, multitudes of the ignorant class of people frequent Sinto temple, near Yedo, sacred to this divinity, to whom they make offerings, and presents of money, in order to insure favourable crops. But the foxes must also be propitiated; they being understood to have held a conference in the neighborhood, the previous night, the proceedings of which, as grave or gay, are believed to affect the harvests and the affairs of families. The offerings were, therefore, in part, to secure their friendship. Near Miako there is a much larger temple of like character, attached to which, in the adjoining grounds is a small temple or chapel where resides the spirit of a fox, who is regarded with peculiar awe, and who, or the more cunning priests through him, receives valuable propitiatory gifts.

BUDDHISM.

Buddhism was introduced into Japan from Corea and China, in the sixth century, and succeeded ere long in quite superseding the primitive Sinto faith. In its doctrine of a future life of rewards and punishments, it supplied one great defect of Sintoism, but it brought in a new set of gods, and with it idolatry. It however inculcated several important virtues, as benevolence, self-denial, etc.

The Japanese mind is somewhat of the English cast, more given to what is practical than to what is theoretical or transcendental. Humbert says that Buddhism is "a flexible, conciliating, insinuating faith, accommodating itself to the genius and the usages of the most diverse races."

SECTS.

There exist in Japan what profess to be the pure Sinto and the pure Buddhist religions, but the prevailing system is a mixture of the two, Buddhism, however, having absorbed, rather than blended with, or displaced, Sintoism. Shingon, (true speech) is the name given to that class of Buddhists who unite the primitive and the imported religions. Its members worship both the Kami, or Sinto gods, and the Hotoke, or Buddhist divinities.

This sect has a superstition about evil spirits. These are believed to come from the northeast, sign of the tiger, and therefore no house is built facing in that direction, neither do people sleep with their heads pointing that way. On a certain day in the year, the people undertake to drive away the evil spirits who may be prowling about on mischief. To do this cannon are sometimes fired in the direction of their headquarters, the northeast. Another method is as follows: Some person having put a roasted peach into a small box, which is a sign of good luck, comes into a room where the family are seated, waving the box to and fro towards the different members, and then back towards the door. The spirits are thus expelled from the house. Sometimes plants with sharp pointed leaves are fastened to the outside of the house, near a door; it being supposed that the spirits in seeking to get in would run their eyes against the sharp points, and be