

## Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, N. S., JULY 9, 1873.

## THE TEACHER.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1873.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, July 13th.

Flight into Egypt—Matt. ii. 13-23.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.” Psalm cxi. 11.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 13-15.

SUMMARY.—An angel directs; Herod is baffled; the holy child saved; prophecy fulfilled and salvation made sure.

ANALYSIS.—I. *The flight to Egypt.* vs. 13-15. II. *The massacre in Bethlehem.* vs. 16-18. III. *The return to Nazareth.* vs. 19-23.

EXPOSITION.—*Connection*—Last Sabbath introduced us to that wonderful babe, “the Son of God,” and “the Son of man.” The magi found the child not in a royal palace, nor yet in a “stable” or “grotto,” but in a “house,” verse 11, perhaps the inn, for the crowd had long since dispersed, and there was “room” now. They rendered to him a spiritual homage. Of the gifts it has been said: *Gold*, signifying all that is most costly to be given to Christ, the universal Lord. Psalm lxxii. 15. *Frankincense*, the fragrant incense of prayer offered through him and by him as our great High Priest within the veil. Ps. cxli. 2; Rev. v. 8. *Myrrh*. “They did it for his burial.” John xix. 39. Their acts may have been thus unconsciously prophetic as well as symbolic. “In their prostrations and presents the heathen would fall down and do homage.”

Verse 13.—*When they had departed.* Doubtless immediately after. *Behold.* A word which marks what follows as specially note-worthy. *The angel.* Literally, and exactly, an angel of the Lord. It was not that mysterious “Angel of the Covenant” whom we have so often met during the studies of the last six months. That being now in flesh, the infant to whom the heavenly messenger ministers. We are to expect, in connection with our Lord’s appearance, more external manifestations of both angelic and satanic influence, than at any other time. *To Joseph.* As the natural “head of the family,” the guardian of the child. *The young child.* Not your child, or your son, because of the miraculous conception. Chap. i. 20. *His mother.* Mary, designated from her relation to the child rather than the husband, because in the child all the interest centres. *Into Egypt.* Where Joseph, Christ’s type, had also found safety from murderous malice, and where the whole nation was saved from the destruction of the famine. It was not under Herod’s jurisdiction. God might have saved this child otherwise, apparently with less trouble and suffering to the parent and others. *Until I tell thee.* Good for us is this command, wherever we make our stay. We are under orders. We are to go when and where bidden, to stay or start as told. *Will seek.* It seems strange, perhaps, that it should be needful to seek out the child, but the signs of which Luke makes mention probable at such a time attracted no general attention, and never came to Herod’s ears, or to the ears of any of his advisers.

Verse 14.—*By night.* The very night of the dream, doubtless. Promptly, with haste, “flee.” How that warning must have startled the good man, and brought him instantly to full wakefulness. The child, the Messiah, God’s Son, in peril. It is not certain whether the family had been from the time of the birth, or had come up now a second time, possibly on occasion of a feast at Jerusalem. Luke ii. 39. Curious spectacle. Jesus Christ hurried away from his own chosen people for safety, the Son of God a fugitive, and in peril in his own world, among his own creatures! “The servant is not greater than his Lord.”

Verse 15.—*The death of Herod.* B. C. 4. See last lesson. *In order that it might be fulfilled.* Not that Joseph was consciously and purposely fulfilling Scripture. The Scripture quoted is from Hosea xi. 1. Its first reference in Hosea is doubtless to the infant nation Israel, but the Head of the true Israel is Christ, the real Son of God; and so that original calling is taken as a type of this, and Christ is said to fulfil the Scripture by his call thence. It was to him as to the Hebrews, a place of bondage as well as of refuge, for he was there as in some sort a prisoner. Thus we see again a type of his cause, as in its

weakness it is persecuted and roughly treated by the world. See Rev. xii. 6.

Verse 16.—*Then.* Referring back to verse 12. *Mocked.* As he thought, referring their conduct to contempt of him, since he knew nothing of God’s interposition. *Exceeding wrath.* He was of a notoriously violent temper, and jealous disposition and imperious will. *All the children.* Or rather, boys, male children. So reads the original. There was no reason for the slaughter of the girls. *In Bethlehem and all the coasts thereof; i. e.,* in the village and the surrounding neighborhood. *Two years old and under.* This gives to Herod’s wrath the fearful margin of something like a year and a half. See last lesson. We must suppose the slaughter to have been speedily, and, so far as possible, secretly executed.

Verse 17.—*Then was fulfilled.* Jer. xxxi. 15. Ramah was “six miles north of Jerusalem, on the road to Bethel.” The words of Jeremiah refer, first of all, to the Babylonian captivity; and Rachel, mother of Benjamin and Joseph, is thought of apparently as rising from her grave, and weeping over the desolation of the land. She was buried near Bethlehem, Gen. xxxv. 19, making still more natural the application to “the slaughter of the innocents.” This slaughter, like the captivity, was the fruit of Israel’s sin; but here, as in Jer. xxxi. 15, there is deliverance in prospect.

Verse 18.—*When Herod was dead.* The death of Herod was no less frightful than his life had been cruel and tyrannical. For some time previous to his end he had been the prey of a complication of diseases, and the remedies which the physicians prescribed served to increase rather than to assuage his pain. The fearful disorders of the body produced no wholesome relieving of his mind; on the contrary he grew more savage and ferocious, a terror, not merely to all about him, but to himself also. He died in torment, hating all men, and hateful to them.—How long it was between the flight and this death is not known. It was probably but a few weeks.

Verse 20.—*The land of Israel.* Left quite general, because God chose to leave the statement of the precise place until a later time. *They are dead, etc.,* instead of *he is dead.* We are not to think of several plotters and of several deaths, but one plotter and one death, yet wrought through many persons.

Verse 21.—*Arose.* Promptly as before, though with no such haste. *Into the land of Israel.* Within the limits, according to command, doubtless the southern border, the part first reached by the road from Egypt.

Verse 22.—*Archelaus.* “After the death of Herod, his kingdom was divided between his three sons, Herod Antipas, Archelaus, and Philip. Archelaus received the half containing Idumea, Judea, Samaria, and the cities on the coast with six hundred talents income. He never had the title king [“reigned,” i. e., governed], but only that of ethnarch. He seems to have been guilty of great cruelty and oppression. Josephus relates [Ant. xvii. 9 § 3; B. J. ii. 11, 3] that he put to death three thousand Jews not long after his accession.”—*Smith’s Dictionary of the Bible.* No wonder that Joseph, who knew his spirit, was afraid to settle within his limits.

Verse 23.—*Nazareth* “is situated among the hills which constitute the south ridges of Lebanon, just before they sink down into the plain of Esdraelon. Among those hills is a valley which runs in a waving line nearly east and west, about a mile long, and on the average a quarter of a mile broad, but which, at a certain point, enlarges itself considerably, so as to form a sort of basin. In this basin or inclosure, along the lower edge of the hill-side, lies the quiet, secluded village in which the Saviour of men spent the greater part of his earthly existence. The surrounding heights vary in altitude; some of them rise in height to four or five hundred feet.”—*Hackett.* Matthew makes no mention of the reason why the family went to Nazareth, but Luke informs us that this was their old home. The town was in miserable repute, so that even a Galilean could ask whether any good thing could come out of Nazareth. The conduct of the Nazarenes toward Christ, in after years, shows them in a bad light—Luke iv. 16-29; Matt. xiii. 54-58. *That it might be fulfilled, etc.* There is here no quotation from any prophet. The writer says “prophets,” because he refers rather to the substance of different prophecies concerning Christ. Christ was represented in the Old Testament as lowly, humble,

suffering, rejected, etc., etc. His home at Nazareth was a fulfilment of the spirit of these prophecies. How did our Saviour stoop to the lowest position that he might bring hope to the most needy, and teach us that life’s real, highest good consists in the possession, not of earth, but of God!

QUESTIONS.—Give the chief points of our last lesson. What spiritual meaning was in the offerings made by the magi to Jesus? Did they go back to Herod? vs. 12. Why not?

Vs. 13. Who appeared to Joseph? Why? Was the child in real danger of being murdered? Was he not perfectly safe in God’s keeping? Is every child of God safe, though in danger?

Vs. 14. Why did the family travel by night?

Vs. 15. When was Herod’s death? To whom did this prediction first refer? Hos. xi. 1. How can it be used of Christ?

Vs. 16. What was Herod’s state of mind? Why should he be so angry? What did he do? Was this like him?

Vs. 17. Read Jeremiah xxxi. 15. Of whom was this first written?

Vs. 18. Who was Rachel? Where buried? Gen. xxxv. 17-20. Why is it said that she wept? Why should Scripture written of the Jews of previous times, be thus applied to Christ and events connected with his person?

Vs. 19. What do you know of Herod’s death? Would you choose to die his death rather than that of the righteous?

Vs. 20. Why is it said, “they are dead?” What lesson does this verse teach us?

Vs. 22, 23. What do you know of Archelaus? Of Nazareth? Where “spoken by the prophets?”

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Scripture Catechism, 128.

SUNDAY, July 20th.—The Baptism of Jesus.—Matt. iii. 13-17.

## Youths’ Department.

## LITTLE STRAWBERRY-BLOSSOM.

In a damp green spot in the midst of a wood, hidden away from the sunlight by a wilderness of lady-ferns, there grew a little strawberry-blossom. Its broad leaves spread themselves out luxuriantly enough, but the solitary white flower was stunted and insignificant. The tall ferns and the foxgloves growing around rarely noticed the poor little pale thing.

“It seems hardly worth while,” the Foxglove would say, “to have so many leaves for such a very small flower, and it takes up a great deal of room;” and the lady-ferns quite agreed with her.

When remarks of this kind reached the little Strawberry-blossom’s ear she felt wounded and sad, for she could not help her own existence.

“Pardon me, beautiful Foxglove,” she would say, “I did not plant myself; I dare say I shall soon shrivel up and be out of your way. I wonder why I grew at all,” she thought; “it is very dark and lonely, and nobody wants me!”

One day a child came and gathered an armful of the fresh green lady-ferns, and then at last a bright sunbeam found its way in, through the break in the fern-forest, and lighted on the head of a tiny flower, making it glisten like a dewdrop or a pearl.

“I love you, little Strawberry-blossom, I love you,” whispered the Sunbeam; but the poor little flower had lived so long unsought and unloved that she could not believe it.

“Not me, kind Sunbeam,” she said, “not me; surely it is the Foxglove—the queen of the woods—that you love, with her splendid crimson bells, or the lovely wild rose climbing close by!”

“No, little Strawberry-blossom,” answered the Sunbeam; “it is you that I love, you are so gentle and retiring! I had hard work to find you out; but now I shall come every day, and stay with you all day long!”

“Listen to the Sunbeam making love to little Strawberry-blossom!” said the Foxglove to a lady-fern; isn’t it ridiculous! Her poor little head will be turned;” and even the sweet grasses and moss growing close around her laughed mockingly.

But she was too happy to heed them. All the long hot summer day the Sunbeam stayed with her; and when he said good-night, he promised to return the next morning. In the night a Glow-worm, passing by, stopped to speak to her.

“Oh! Glow-worm,” said she, “I am so happy! A Sunbeam has come—a real beautiful sunbeam—and he says he loves me, though I am such a tiny flower. And he’s coming again to-morrow!”

“Hum,” said the Glow-worm, who had seen a good deal of life. “Don’t make too sure of that. The Sunbeam is a great

traveller, and travellers are not always to be depended upon; they go here and there, and forget all about the last place they visited.”

“But he said he would come!” said little Strawberry-blossom, “and he is so great and good I think he will keep his word.”

“Well,” said the Glow-worm, “I don’t know much of him; I am more intimate with his cousins, the Moonbeams. I only wished to speak a word of friendly warning. My advice to you is to go to sleep and forget all about him.”

And little strawberry-blossom went to sleep and dreamed a bright happy dream. But behold! next morning when she woke, it was even duller and darker than usual; no Sunbeam was there. In truth, it was raining heavily, and the drops pattered through the fern fronds all around her head. But she did not know it was rain.

“Kind leaves!” she said, “are you weeping for me?” at which they all laughed!

“No, no, little Strawberry-blossom,” they said, “we don’t waste our tears on such a poor little thing as you! Did you really think your fine visitor would come back?”

Little Strawberry-blossom was heart-broken. She could not see beyond her green canopy, and she did not know that the sun was even then struggling hard with the clouds. At last he burst forth in all his glory and splendor; the rain drops caught the rays as they passed, and there rose over the wood a wondrous arch of colored light. Little Strawberry-blossom could not see the rainbow, but she felt a glow of warmth and happiness steal over her, for there was her own Sunbeam creeping in through the dripping ferns.

“Ah! little one,” he said, “did you think I had forgotten you?” and she hung her head with shame at having doubted him.

“You should have more faith, little Strawberry-blossom,” he whispered. “I was only biding my time!”

And through the bright summer days the Sunbeam came again and again, and in the atmosphere of love and warmth little Strawberry-blossom expanded and developed till she was no longer a pale puny flower, but a beautiful crimson berry, shining like a ruby in a setting of emerald.

Even the ferns and the Foxglove could not help admiring her, saying among themselves, “What can have happened to little Strawberry-blossom? She is quite changed!”

“And I will tell you who sent me to you,” whispered the sunbeam. “It was the glorious Sun himself. He is always there, high up in the sky, watching over all—even the tiniest bud, and he sends us into gloomy cheerless dwellings with messages of love for lonely hearts.”—*Good Words for the Young.*

## GIVE THEM SUNSHINE.

My sister if you have daughters growing up, don’t be afraid of the sunshine. Let it come freely into your house—it will bring with it neither malaria, contagion, nor death. On the other hand it will bring only cheerfulness on its laughing pinions—you can’t be sad in a beautiful room all ablaze with sunlight. True, it may kick a tint out of your unstably-colored carpet, now and then, but let them go—they are as nothing compared to the blessings which sunlight alone can bring to the household. Take away your dark curtains and pass the invigorator in. Move the vines off the window—a window is made for the admission of light and not to fill the office of a trellis for vines. If you must have a carpet with gay colors, buy one that will stand the test—there are plenty such. If they cost a little extra don’t mind it—a sickly daughter will eventually cost you, or somebody else more than the extras on a dozen fadeless carpets would amount to. Yes, mothers, give your children the sunshine. You could not give them a gift which would cost you less, nor yet one qualified to profit them more. It will make them what we in the country call tough and hardy. They require sunshine just as much as plants do. All scientific persons are now united in this decision. The world is full of delicate and weakly women, and my word for it, more of the cause lies in an effort on our part to make “fair ladies” of our daughters than in anything else.—*Mrs. Mary C. West, in Mobile Register.*

HOSPITALITY.—Small cheer and great welcome make a merry feast, where the heart is right.

## “DO YOUR BEST.”

“When I was a little boy,” said a gentleman, “I paid a visit one evening to my grandfather, a venerable old man, whose black velvet cap and tassel, blue breeches and huge silver knee-buckles filled me with awe. When I went to bid him good-bye, he drew me between his knees, and, placing his hand upon my head, said, ‘Grandchild, I have one thing to say to you; will you remember it?’ I looked into his face and nodded, for I was afraid to promise aloud. ‘Well,’ he continued, ‘whatever you do, do the best you can.’”

“This, in fact, was my grandfather’s legacy to me; and it has proved better than gold. I never forgot his words; and I believe I have tried to act upon them. After reaching home, my uncle gave Robert and me some weeding to do in the garden. It was Wednesday afternoon, and we had laid our plans for something else. Robert, vexed and ill-humored at his disappointment, did not more than half do his work; and I began pretty much like him, until grandfather’s advice came into my mind, and I determined to follow it. In a word, I did my best. And when my uncle came out, I shall never forget his look of approbation as his eyes glanced over my beds, or the furore he slipped into my hands afterward, as he said my work was well done. Ah! I was a glad and thankful boy; while poor Robert was left to drudge over his weeds all the afternoon.

“At fifteen I was sent to an academy, where I had partly to earn the money to pay for being taught. The lessons seemed hard at first, for I was not fond of study; but grandfather’s advice was my motto, and I tried to do my best. As a consequence of this, though I was small of my age, and not very strong, my mother had three offers of a situation for me before the year was out. When I joined the church, I tried to do the Lord’s work as well as I could; and often when I have been tempted to leave the Sabbath School, or let a hindrance keep me from a prayer meeting, or get discouraged in any good thing, my grandfather’s last words, ‘Do the best you can,’ have given me fresh courage, and I would try again.”

Let every boy and girl take this for their motto. Acted upon, it will do wonders. It will bring out powers which will delight yourselves and friends. “Do your best,” or as the Bible says, “whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.”—*Early Days.*

## BESSIE AND HER PETS.

Many of our young readers have pets of one kind or another, which we trust are kindly treated. The little girl in our story is surrounded by her pets, and dearly does she love them. Kind and gentle words they are sure to hear when they come at Bessie’s call; and many are the sweet “coo’s” she gets in return for them. Kind words are always echoed back. The dove is Bessie’s favorite bird, and often when stroking its soft, glossy feathers she repeats the words of the hymn taught her by her dear grandfather:—

## NOAH’S DOVE.

Dear little dove, when I think of you,  
I wish I may flee for safety too!  
A storm is coming, when Jesus will be,  
To those who love Him, like the ark to thee.

Dear little dove, you do not know  
Who ’twas that kept and sheltered you so;  
But I can read of the Son of God,  
Who to save my soul has shed His blood.

Dear little dove, you trusted in one,  
Who kept you safe till the storm was done;  
May I believe and be sheltered too!  
There’s an ark for me as well as for you.

## THE BRAIN WORRY.

Many of us pray to be delivered from sudden death, and do we not worry ourselves into it? If we do not we help it? To most of us it is not given to choose our lives, to avoid the rough places, to gently shoulder to one side disagreeable facts. We must climb over the rocks though they hurt us sore, and the difficulties, however they may annoy us, must be met with brain fret and wear until they are conquered, or we have passed them. They are as real, living, annoying as any tangible ache or pain could be; as bruising and irritating as the peas in the shoes of the pilgrims of old. Nervous health is one thing, and moral health and purely physical health is quite another and different thing. Calm and steady mental work is conducive to long life; but nervous emotion, mental work that is a constant urging, and, at the same time, is an unchanging of the even tenor of the mind, eats away the brain faster than any mental labor, no matter how hard, that is systematic. As men do not really die of heart disease as often as supposed, but of apoplexy, or congestion of the lungs, so they do not die of brain work, but of brain worry. Scott died of it, Southey, Swift, Horace Greeley, and probably Thackeray.—*London Times.*