

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, N.S., DECEMBER 31, 1873.

THE TEACHER.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1873.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, January 4th, 1874.

The House of Bondage.—Exodus i. 7-14.

GOLDEN TEXT.—1 Corinthians i. 25. The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Vs. 12-14.

SUMMARY.—The oppression of God's people does not effect their destruction.

ANALYSIS.—1. God's blessing on the Israelites shown by their increase vs. 7. 2. The burdens put upon the Israelites only showed the foolishness of the Egyptians 10-12. The labor demanded of the Israelites gave them greater powers of endurance and resulted in their increase vs. 13, 14.

EXPOSITION.—Verse 8.—In the previous course of Old Testament Lessons we proceeded as far as the death of Joseph. About sixty years after this event a revolution took place by which the old line of kings was overthrown, and Upper and Lower Egypt were united into one kingdom. The new king who had previously lived at Thebes probably knew nothing of the rural population, especially of the Jews who had been living in the land of Goshen. But finding subsequently that they were of another nation he would be jealous of their increasing numbers and power.

The Hebrews being foreigners and shepherds the new government would most likely connect them with the earlier shepherd kings against whom a strong dislike existed.

Verse 9, 10.—During Joseph's life-time they had prospered greatly and had received large grants of land. By levying upon them it was supposed their power would be restrained. This was a piece of worldly policy without regard to what was just and right; and worldly policy sometimes overlaps itself. The hardships they endured rather prepared them for a revolt than effected the object aimed at. All public works among the Egyptians were performed by slaves or captives.

Verse 11.—Treasure cities, or fortified places; suitable for placing treasures in in times of invasion, 2 Chron. xi. 12. Pithom or Patumus lay on the eastern branch of the Nile about 12 miles from Heliopolis. Raamses lay between the same branch and the Bitter Lakes. These were fortified cities built with a view of preventing an enemy entering the country from the Mediterranean.

Verse 12.—The strength of the people was equal to the occasion, and the measures employed did not accomplish the object sought. Grieved, disappointed and vexed.

Verse 13.—Bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick. Ruins of brick buildings are found in all parts of Egypt. Bricks baked in the sun were employed in all the public works, many are to be found still having upon them the names of the Pharaohs, about the time of the Exodus. On many ancient monuments are to be seen figures of Hebrews with their Egyptian taskmasters over them holding uplifted sticks in their hands which is here expressed by the term rigor, or severity.

The remembrance of their former privileges under Joseph would make this bondage all the more terrible to the Israelites.

Scripture Catechism, 160, 161. SUNDAY, January 11th, 1874.—The Birth of Moses.—Exodus ii. 1-10.

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1874.

From various quarters we have learned that the Lessons for Sabbath Schools as given in our columns during the past year have been highly acceptable,—and have been regularly used by both Teachers and Scholars. We have therefore decided to continue them during the ensuing year, 1874. In many cases we know that the more intelligent Teachers belonging to other denominations, also, have preferred these Expositions and questions on the International Series to those published by any of the other different bodies.

We give below the Series for 1874. It will be seen that it is a continuation of the plan on which the present year's lessons were constructed, and carries us on towards its completion.

The Expositions promised for the ensuing year will comprise a no less interesting

variety of matter illustrative of the lessons, from week to week; and, with the blessing of the Most High, we may hope that they will be made increasingly valuable as a means of unplanting the Word of God in the minds and hearts of young and old.

FIRST QUARTER OF 1874.

- 1 The House of Bondage..... Ex. i. 7-14.
2 The Birth of Moses..... Ex. ii. 1-10.
3 The Call of Moses..... Ex. iii. 1-10.
4 The Plagues Removed..... Ex. ix. 1-9 27-31
5 Jehovah's Promise..... Ex. vi. 1-8.
6 The First Plague..... Ex. vii. 14-22.
7 Jehovah's Passover..... Ex. xii. 21-30, 31-35.
8 The Exodus..... Ex. xiii. 17-22.
9 The Red Sea..... Ex. xiv. 19-31.
10 Bitter Water Sweetened..... Ex. xv. 22-27.
11 Bread from Heaven..... Ex. xvi. 1-5, 31-35.
12 Defeat of Amalek..... Ex. xvii. 8-16.

For the Quarterly Review the Committee suggest.

The Song of Moses..... Ex. xv. 1-11.

SECOND QUARTER OF 1874.

- 1 The Ten Commandments..... Ex. xx. 1-17.
2 The Golden Calf..... Ex. xxxii. 1-6, 19, 20.
3 The People Forgiveness..... Ex. xxxiii. 12-20.
4 The Tabernacle set Up..... Ex. xl. 17-30.
5 The Five Offerings..... Lev. vii. 37, 38.
6 The Three Great Feasts..... Lev. xxiii. 4-6, 15-21, 33-36.
7 The Lord's Ministers..... Num. iii. 5-13, 10.
8 Isaac's blessing..... Gen. xxv. 29-34.
9 The Smit on Rock..... Num. xx. 7-13.
10 The Serpent of Brass..... Num. xxi. 4-9.
11 The Brazen Serpent..... Num. xxi. 9-16.
12 The Death of Moses..... Deu. xxxiv. 1-12.

The Committee suggest for the Quarterly Review.

Mercis Reviewed..... Deu. viii.

THIRD QUARTER OF 1874.

- 1 The Beginning of the Gospel..... Mark i. 1-11.
2 The Authority of Jesus..... Mark i. 16-27.
3 The Leper Healed..... Mark i. 38-45.
4 The Publican Called..... Mark ii. 13-17.
5 Jesus and the Sabbath..... Mark ii. 23-28; iii. 1-5.
6 Power over Nature..... Mark iv. 35-41.
7 Power over Demons..... Mark v. 1-16.
8 Power over Disease..... Mark v. 21-34.
9 Power over Death..... Mark v. 22, 23; vi. 35-43.
10 Martyrdom of the Baptist..... Mat. x. 20-29.
11 The Five Thousand Fed..... Mat. xiv. 4-44.
12 The Syrochanaan Mother..... Mat. xv. 21-28.

Review of Lessons for the Quarter.

FOURTH QUARTER OF 1874.

- 1 The Deaf Mute..... Mark vii. 31-37.
2 The Evil Spirit Cast Out..... Mark ix. 17-29.
3 The Wind and Christ..... Mark ix. 33-42.
4 Blind Bartimeus..... Mark x. 46-52.
5 The Fig Tree Withered..... Mat. xxi. 12-14, 19-24.
6 The Two Commandments..... Mark xii. 28-34.
7 The Parables and Parity..... Mat. xiii. 38-44.
8 The Anointing at Bethany..... Mat. xxiv. 3-9.
9 The Betrayal..... Mark xiv. 42-50.
10 The Denial..... Mark xiv. 66-72.
11 The Crucifixion..... Mat. xxv. 22-39.
12 The Resurrection..... Mat. xxv. 9-20.

Review of Lessons for the Quarter.

Youths' Department.

For the Christian Messenger.

WINTERS EVENINGS.

BY REV. C. F. MYERS, PASTOR 1ST. SUTTON BAPTIST CHURCH, MASS.

Many persons are inquiring what way they ought to spend these long winter evenings. Whether in gay pastime, or in careful study. The latter is the more preferable. When the inquiry comes, what books should be read. In the first place we would say, that every person ought to read at least, one religious family newspaper, and one or more good Magazines, in addition to the local and daily papers.

Histories, and biographies, books of travel, and of Science, and the essays of great men should be carefully and diligently read.

Every person should endeavor to have access to a good full dictionary of the English language.—Webster and Worcester are the best; and should have access to an Atlas, an Encyclopedia, and a Gazetteer.

A few standard books ought to be owned by every young person, as much so as a jackknife is by a boy. If more books were bought, less money would be allowed to run down thirsty throats.

Sometimes wonder if persons ever think, when they spend money for cigars, tobacco, ardent spirits, physical indulgences, and unnecessary dress, that they had better spend that particular money in books, and good substantial periodicals?

Let those who read pause occasionally, and see if they comprehend what they read. Allow no words to pass, the meaning of which you do not understand. Some men read with their feet on the mantelpiece, if so, take them down, and look up all words about which there is any doubt. A word once conquered is a victory achieved.

Spare no pains to educate yourselves. Sit up evenings, and read and study. Drive away dull sleep. Spend a part of every day, in literary work. Recall what Eliza Burritt has accomplished.

All the capital you want, is brains, and time, and a few books, in order to be learned men and women. Do not dream

over the matter, until you are gray-headed. You have no time to lose. Commence at once, this very week, to husband these long winter evenings, and all the nooks and corners of time, and all spare minutes.

Don't lounge about the house, the Post Office, the Store, the Depot, and Shoemaker's shop. Try and develop what brains and faculties God has given you. No man is excused for being ignorant.

Every person ought to know more than he did twelve months ago. Schools and teachers help, but to a large extent, each person must be teacher as well as pupil. No person is truly educated who is not self-taught.

Every person ought to be familiar with the history of his own country, its government, civil polity, geography, products and climate. And to some extent with the history of commerce, literature, and religion, his own race, and the race of mankind, the great national peculiarities of men, and the great epochs in civilization. All knowledge is within the reach of those hungering and thirsting for it.

I have gone to the public Libraries in Boston, and those in the contiguous towns to Boston, and inquired of the librarians, what books are most read. The information received, I am sorry to say, is not very creditable to the people.

The best books, and the solid literature are but little read. Novels, and some of them of a light, and trashy character, are the most perused by the reading public.

A person might as well attempt to put flesh on his bones, by eating candies, as to put knowledge into himself, by reading, the light, and useless, and unsubstantial literature of the times. People have time enough to read good books, if they only would. "Where there is a will, there is a way." Let the body go without food, rather than the mind without information. Besides books we have as educators, the lecture room, the pulpit, the Sabbath School, the experience of the aged, and all our many surroundings.

Books and periodicals should be regarded by the farmer, as much of an outfit, as a plough, a pitch-fork, a shovel, and a crow-bar. Every merchant should have books, as much so, as a yard-stick, a pair of scissors, a half gallon, and half bushel measure. It is utterly impossible for an intelligent man to get along without books, and good periodicals. The productions of the press are as necessary to the mind, as air is to the lungs. They are blessings with which none can dispense. Let every man and woman in youth, lay up information, so that their old age may be crowned with glory and honor.

DANCING vs. COURTESY.

I do not intend to enter at this time into a discussion of the propriety or sinfulness of dancing. It is enough for my present purpose to have it understood that a large majority of the members of evangelical churches do not approve of it. They are conscientiously opposed to it, and cannot allow themselves or their children to have anything to do with it. They believe that it is demoralizing and pernicious in its influence, that it is fatally successful in preventing religious emotion from entering into the mind and in dissipating it, when it has entered, that it is one of the most worldly of so-called "worldly amusements," and they would have little hope of their own piety, or of the conversion of their children, while its indulgence was allowed. However they are opposed to all dancing, and are too ignorant or too simple minded to make any distinction between "square" dances and "round" dances, and can only smile with the world at the folly of those professors of religion, who attempt to make and defend such a distinction.

Now the point I make is this—ought not their conscientious scruples to be respected? In a mixed company, to which they have been invited, and have come in good faith, is it right, is it courteous, is it gentlemanly and ladylike to disregard their serious convictions and introduce dancing, thereby compelling them to appear, by remaining, to endorse what they cannot, or to retire quietly from the company before the evening is half over, with the wish that they had not gone at all? Would it not be more courteous and respectful to omit the dancing (for surely dancing is not the only method by which intelligent men and women may spend an evening pleasantly together; if it has come to that, we may question their intelligence, or to notify beforehand these scrupulous Christians what they may expect, if they accept the invitation?

This would save them from both unpleasant dilemmas. The probability is that if Christians on such an occasion should consult their taste and preference, they would prefer to introduce a prayer meeting, as being a method of spending the evening altogether more agreeable to them and more profitable to all the guests. But how, think you, would such a suggestion be received? It would probably bring down upon the heads of those who made it not a little indignation, as having violated all rules of propriety and shown a condemnable disregard of the wishes of others; and those persons most indignant are the very ones who would have introduced their favourite amusement, which is of disputed propriety, without a thought or a care about the injured feelings of others. How far ought courtesy in such matters to extend? If it allows dancing, why not a prayer meeting? If it excludes one, why not the other? If, therefore, a part of the company insist upon having dancing in the back parlor, and thereby make a division among the guests, why should not the others feel at liberty to organize immediately a good, earnest prayer meeting in the front parlor? Every man according to his taste, and equal rights for all.

EPHRAIM PLAINTALK.

AN EXPERIMENT FOR GIRLS.

Is not a looking-glass a pleasant thing to look upon? If looking into one glass will show us pretty effects and give us some pleasure, what must happen if we look into two at once? Do not ask me, but go directly to the mirrors and ask them.

Take two looking-glasses of convenient size and stand them on their edges upon a table so that they open like the letter V. Next put your own face down at the opening of the V, and look in; you will find a whole circle of little girls already there to greet you. They watch you intently. If you smile, each one smiles in return; but the least frown from you will drive all their smiles away and sadden all their faces. You will surely be pleased with this "surprise party."

If there are too many guests for your convenience, then make the opening of the V wider by moving one or both the mirrors outward, and they will take their departure one after another, until only a single individual is left. But if the party is too small just make the opening of the V narrower by moving the mirrors gradually closer together, and the guests will enter, one by one, until your circle is crowded even to its utmost capacity. The opening of the V is the open door; open it more widely, and your guests depart; but that it more closely they not only remain, but others enter.

Open the mirrors until they shall make a right angle, that is to say, until one being lengthwise of the table, the other stands directly across it, and then put a vase of flowers between them. Three other vases make their appearance; there are four instead of one. Is it not a very pretty way to arrange bouquets?—What Next.

THE VALUE OF TIME.

One fine morning when Benjamin Franklin was busy preparing his new paper for the press, a lounge stepped into the store and spent an hour or more looking over the books, etc. Finally taking one in his hand he asked the price.

"One dollar."

"One dollar?" said he, "Can't you take less than that?"

"No, indeed; that is the price."

Another hour was nearly passed when the lounge said:

"Is Mr. Franklin at home?"

"Yes, he is in the printing-office."

"I want to see him."

The boy immediately informed Mr. Franklin that there was a gentleman in the store waiting to see him.

Franklin was soon behind the counter, when the lounge took in hand addressed him thus:

"Franklin, what is the lowest you can take for this book?"

"One dollar and a quarter."

"One dollar and a quarter! Why your boy here said I could have it for one dollar."

"True," said Franklin, "and I could have better afforded to take a dollar than to have been taken out of the office."

The lounge seemed surprised, and wishing to end the parley of his own making, said:

"Come, Mr. Franklin, what is the lowest you can take for it?"

"One dollar and a half."

"A dollar and a half! Why, you offered it yourself for a dollar and a quarter!"

"Yes," said Franklin, "and I had better taken that than a dollar than a half now?"

"The lounge paid down the price and went about his business—if he had any—and Franklin returned to his printing office.

HOW TO PREPARE.

What the teacher should do first—in time as well as importance—is to take that part of God's Word which is designated as the lesson, and bend the mind upon this, with no other helps than his own powers of analysis and thought. Of course he must look to God for help; but this God has already promised to the faithful student, who feels his need of wisdom. Then, when he has done his very best himself, may he resort to human "helps." His own thinking may then be corrected, difficulties be cleared up, more illustrations be gathered, and all the aid he needs to classify and complete his analysis or explanations be secured. But let the main dependence be upon God and the powers God has given. A lesson thought out for one's self is worth a good many reailed from somebody else. The teacher himself feels better for it, and the pupils know from the start that it is the result of prayerful study, rather than of rapid cramming of commentaries.—S. S. Lanner.

THE INVISIBLE CHILDREN.

Oh, it is not when your children are with you; it is not when you see and hear them, that they are most to you; it is when the sad assemblage is gone; it is when the daisies have resumed their growing again in the place where the little form was laid; it is when you have carried your children out, and said farewell, and come home again, and day and night are full of sweet, sweet memories; it is when summer and winter are full of touches and suggestions of them; it is when you cannot look up toward God without thinking of them; nor look toward yourself and not think of them; it is when they have gone out of your arms, and are living to you only by the power of the imagination, that they are the most to you. The invisible children are the realest children, the sweetest children, the truest children, the children that touch our hearts as no hands of flesh ever could touch them.

A GOOD LOAN.

I am going to tell you a story about three little children whom I met not long ago. They showed me their little wooden savings-bank, which their sick father had made for them; for he was too poor buy tin ones, such as you sometimes see in shop windows, and as some of you, perhaps, have. Each of the children had some pennies, which they had saved, instead of spending them for worthless notions that could do them no good. I asked them what they were going to do with their money. They replied, that they did not just the know, but would find some use for it.

Some time after this, I again visited the home of these children, and, peering up one of the little saving-banks, found it empty. Inquiring what had become of the money one of the children told me they had lent it away. I told them they should be careful to whom they loaned money, else they might never get it back again. "We have lent it," said they, "to one who is ever so rich!" "What! rich, and borrowing pennies," we exclaimed. They then told me this story:—

"One day, a minister of the gospel came along. He was poor and was on his way to a neighborhood in which the people were noted for their wickedness. He was going to preach to them. While riding along, his horse lost a shoe; and he had no money to pay a smith for putting it on. The horse was getting late from travelling without the shoe; and we emptied our savings-banks, giving him the money. And doesn't the Bible say, 'hat, if we give to the poor, we lend to the Lord? So you see, we have put it out at interest; and we have no doubt but we shall be repaid,—not, perhaps, in money but in blessings. Besides, by helping to preach on his way, we have helped to spread God's Word, which teaches sinners the way to get to heaven."

Don't you think, children, that we might all learn a lesson from the action of these little children? Some of us are not so poor as they; and yet do we do as much? They, like the widow, gave all; we give only a small part of that we have. Let us pray that the Lord will give us liberal hearts, so that we may not refuse to give liberally, according as he has blessed us with the means, for the spreading of His Word.—Gen.