

Christian Messenger.

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THE TEACHER.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1873.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, May 11th.

The Report from Egypt.—Gen. xlii. 29-38.

COMMIT TO MEMORY.—Acts v. 39.

The International Series suggests only ten verses of the forty-second chapter of Genesis, but the wise teacher will make himself acquainted with the whole chapter, and will bring out such truths as his class needs.

The seven years of plenty are followed by seven years of famine. Gen. 41: 53-57. Modern history gives us a picture of an Egyptian famine in the eleventh and twelfth centuries: the poor ate carrion and human flesh; whole villages were deserted; the road between Egypt and Syria was strewn with corpses; it was a banquet hall for wild beasts and carrion-birds.

The famine brought Joseph's brethren into Egypt to buy corn. In the governor of Egypt they did not recognize their brother, who had grown to manhood; but he recognized them; threatened them as spies; heard their Hebrew conversation with each other, and with difficulty restrained his tears while in their presence; dismissed them at last returning their money to their sacks secretly; but learned, yet without direct inquiry, of his father and his only own brother Benjamin; required them to bring Benjamin with them whenever they returned, and kept Simeon as a hostage to insure their obedience. (It is my impression, comparing verses 16 and 20 with the incidents in chapter 44, that Joseph wanted to have nothing to do with his cruel and treacherous brethren, wished them no ill, but wished not to reveal himself to them or have them come to Egypt; but that in his loneliness he wanted Benjamin and laid a strategy to get him there without disclosing himself to the others, but that God ordered otherwise. Gen. 42: 20, 34; 43: 4, 5.)

Notes.—Verse 1.—Corn.—Grain of any kind. Wheat, barley, millet, and rye, were all cultivated among the Egyptians; and recent discoveries show that so-called Indian corn was also known to them.

Verse 4.—Because Benjamin was the only remaining son of Rachel, Jacob's favorite wife, he was Joseph's only full brother.

Verse 6.—Sold to all the people.—That is, he superintended the selling. Bowed down to him. A common mode of Eastern salutation. They thus unconsciously fulfilled his dream, 37: 5-8.

Verse 8.—He would be altered more than they. He was seventeen when sold by them, was now over thirty-five; then a beardless boy, now a man; then in Hebrew raiment, now in official robes; they had no thought of meeting him; he expected to see them.

Verse 22.—Compare 37: 21, 29, 30.

Verse 24.—As a hostage for the return of Benjamin. Compare verse 19.

Verse 27.—There are three kinds of inn in the East; first, a mere place of rest or camping ground, where naked walls afford a little shelter; second, a house provided with an attendant, but in which the travellers are dependent for supplies on their own provisions; third, a more elaborate establishment where food as well as shelter is provided. The inn here referred to was probably either the first or the second of the above described.

Verse 28.—They were perhaps afraid, first of a snare and second of some unseen and mysterious danger as a punishment for their sin. Compare verse 21. This is indicated by the reference to God. "In a strange land and with an uneasy conscience they are easily alarmed."

Verses 30, 31.—Why did he speak to them roughly? Partly perhaps, the more effectually to disguise himself; partly for the reason indicated in the preliminary note, as a means of carrying out his plan to secure Benjamin: partly to arouse their conscience, which he succeeded in doing.

Verse 35.—Why did Joseph return their money? Was it still further to quicken their conscience or was it because he was unwilling to take money from his father and brethren?

Verse 36.—Evidently Jacob has suspicion that the supposed death of Joseph and the alleged captivity of Simeon are in some

way due to the misconduct of his sons. His reproaches of his ungovernable children are full of pathos.

Verse 37.—An extraordinary offer, judged by modern standards, but in accordance with the ancient custom of giving hostages; though of course Reuben did not expect its actual acceptance. The death of his two grandsons would not compensate Jacob for the loss of his son Benjamin.

THOUGHTS FOR THE CLASS.—Verse 6.—It is useless to fight against God. Acts 5: 39. The very means Joseph's brethren took to prevent the fulfilment of the dream led to its fulfilment. The means which the Pharisees took to destroy Christ, laid the foundation of Christianity. Acts 2: 23. The Roman Catholic priests bought and burned up Tyndall's Bibles in England, and so furnished him the means to get out a better edition, the basis of our present version. The persecution of the Puritans led to the establishment of New England on a religious foundation. Bunyan was imprisoned for preaching the truth, and wrote the Pilgrim's Progress in prison.

Verse 21.—For twenty years they had carried with them the memory of their brother's anguish, and now is the first evidence of any experience of sorrow for it. Time cannot efface guilt. We may forget our sins for a season, but they will rise from the dead to condemn us. "Son, remember," is the awful sentence God pronounces on the lost. Luke 16: 25.

Verse 28.—Fear leads them to think first of their sin, verse 21—then of their God. Fear is a poor foundation for a permanent religion, but it is sometimes the only motive which will awaken the dead conscience, or lead the hardened to repentance.

Verses 29, 30.—They bring back plenty in their sacks, but distress in their hearts. "When we go abroad we should consider that many accidents we little think of may befall us; when we return, we know not what a day may bring forth, and ought therefore to be always ready for the worst."

Verses 35, 36.—Jacob bereaved of two children, and having just cause of suspecting the nine of foul deeds, thinks all things are against him, yet all things are working for his deliverance, and for the fulfilment of the promise to him and to Abraham and Isaac. For this purpose they must be brought down to Egypt and protected there by Joseph the governor of Egypt. See, too, how Christian experience has its exaltations and depressions. This is the same Jacob that wrestled with the angel and prevailed.

Verse 38.—Unhappy the father who views his children with distrust, and to whom in old age they are not a solace and comfort, but a source of uneasiness, suspicion, and frequent sorrow.

OBSERVE.—As Joseph treated his brethren, so Christ treats us. He brings us first to a sense of sorrow for our sins, then reveals himself our Saviour from sin.—Christian Weekly.

Scripture Catechism, 116.

SUNDAY, May 18th.—Joseph makes himself known.—Gen. xlv. 1-8.

Youths' Department.

STORY OF A STAGE DRIVER.

I once knew a man who now in wealth, was once a stage driver, of whom I will here relate an incident:

He was striving to make a connection for the sake of a large load of passengers which he was carrying, and he broke down not far from the dwelling of an old curmudgeon. The driver went to borrow his lumber wagon to take his passengers on with. The man was absent from home and his wife refused to lend the wagon.

You are perfectly right, madam, said the driver, but I must have it. I shall take it, and settle with your husband for it when he returns.

He took it, and brought it back in good order. When he came to settle for it, the man met him—full of anger and thunderous with rage. After some expostulation he said:

I have come to settle with you for the wagon.

Well, you shall, said the man.

What shall I pay you for the use of it an hour or two?

You shall pay me \$50.

He made no objection to the charge, handed the man \$50, shook hands in the best good nature, and then mounted his coach and rode off, his passengers protest-

ing against his yielding to such an exorbitant demand.

Two or three weeks afterward he found this man hanging around his boarding-place, and said to him:

Good morning, sir.

Said the man, I came to see you about that wagon.

I thought I paid you for it. How much do you want?

That money has burned me ever since I took it from you. Here's your \$50—I can't keep it.

It was with difficulty that he could be made to take \$3—a fair price for his wagon. When the neighbors heard this story, and looked at the affair from beginning to end, they said:

Was it not the best way after all? Was it not beautiful?

A HOUSE IN CALIFORNIA ONE THOUSAND YEARS OLD.

The loftiest house, and the most perfect in the matter of architecture, I have ever seen, was that which a woodchopper occupied with his family one winter in the forest of Santa Cruz County. It was the cavity of a redwood-tree, two hundred and forty feet in height. Fire had eaten away the trunk at the base, until a circular room had been formed, sixteen feet in diameter. At twenty feet or more from the ground was a knot-hole, which afforded egress for the smoke. With hammocks hung from pegs, and a few cooking utensils hung upon other pegs, that house lacked no essential thing. This woodman was in possession of a house which had been a thousand years in process of building. Perhaps on the very day it was finished he came along and entered it.

How did all jack-knife and handsaw architecture sink into insignificance in contrast with this house in the solitudes of the great forest! Moreover, the tenant fared like a prince. Within thirty yards of the coniferous house a mountain-stream went rushing past to the sea. In the swirls and eddies under the shelving rocks, if one could not land half a dozen trout within an hour he deserved to go hungry as a penalty for his awkwardness. Now and then a deer came out into the openings, and, at no great distance, quail, rabbits, and pigeons could be found. What did this man want more than nature furnished him? He had a house with a "cupola" two hundred and forty feet high, and game at the cost of taking it. This Arcadian simplicity would have made a lasting impression, but for a volunteer remark, that nothing could be added to give life a more perfect zest. "Well, yes," said he, "I reckon if you are going to town you might tell Jim to send me up a gallon of whiskey and some plug tobacco." It will not do to invest a hollow tree with too much of sentiment and poetry. If that message had not been suggested, we should have been under the delusion to this day that the lives of those people, dwelling in a house fashioned a thousand years ago, were rounded to a perfect fulness, without one artificial want.—Overland Monthly.

Most of them would be at prayer about this time. And I looked up into the far blue sky, thought how fine a thing it would be to have a resting-place high enough just to hear the murmur of voices as they read a verse about and sung one of the old Psalms, before the impressive hush in which the father offered prayer. How grand would be the swell of sound when a whole village was going on its knees before God!

Sometimes we ask people to "lend a hand," and sometimes we hear them say "lend me your eyes." Here is a story about a boy who lent a pair of legs just to accommodate.

Some boys were playing at base-ball in a pretty, shady street. Among their number was a lame little fellow, seemingly about twelve years old—a pale, sickly-looking child, supported on two crutches and who evidently found much difficulty in walking, even with such assistance.

The lame boy wished to join the game; for he did not seem to see how much his infirmity would be in his own way, and how much it would hinder the progress of such an active sport as base-ball.

His companions, good naturedly enough, tried to persuade him to stand on one side and let another take his place; none of them hinted that he would be in the way, but they all objected for fear he would hurt himself.

"Why, Jimmy," said one at last, "you can't run, you know."

"Oh, hush!" said another, the tallest boy in the party, "never mind, I'll run for him, and you can count it for him," and he took his place by Jimmy's side prepared to act. "If you were like him," he said aside to the boys, "you wouldn't want to be told of it all the time."—The Little Christian.

A correspondent writes to the Country Gentleman strongly urging one or other of the following mixtures as manure for potatoes:—1. One part salt, two parts plaster and four parts of unleached ashes. 2. One part salt, two parts plaster, three parts lime and four parts of ashes; mix thoroughly and apply a tablespoonful on, or with the seed at the time of planting. Plaster (gypsum) alone is excellent as a top dressing. Ashes alone are always good for any crop, and potatoes want nothing better—trouble is to get enough of them.

Cream is allowed to mould and spoil. Silver spoons are used to scrape the kettles. The scrubbing brush is left in the water. Bones are burned that would make soap. Nice handled knives are thrown into hot water and spoiled. Dish-cloths are thrown where mice can destroy them. Tubs and barrels are left in the sun to dry and fall apart. Clothes are left on the line to whip to pieces in the wind. Pie crust is left to sour, instead of making a few tartlets for tea. Vegetables are thrown away that would warm for breakfast. Bites of meat are thrown out that would make hashed meat or hash. The cork is left out of the molasses jug and the flies take possession. Pork spoils for want of salt, and beef because the brine wants scalding. Coffee, tea, pepper, and spices are left to stand open and lose their strength. Potatoes in the cellar grow, and the sprouts are not removed until they become useless. The bread is sifted in a wasteful manner, and the bread pan left with the dough sticking to it. Cold puddings are considered good for nothing when often they can be steamed for the next day.—Exchange.

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LUDICROUS AND SERIOUS.

How often the serious suggests the ludicrous! How often too, is the former illustrated by the latter! A colored Baptist Association was held at a county seat containing about fifteen hundred persons, and the Presbyterian church was tendered for its meetings. On Sabbath morning a large assemblage was in attendance, and among them the circuit judge, sundry lawyers and doctors, and the very elite of the town. Our colored brother was preaching baptism as Paul did, because he believed it. The baptism of the great apostle being under consideration, the preacher said that many thought that because Ananias said to Paul (Acts xxii. 16) "Arise and be baptized," therefore he must have had water sprinkled or poured upon him in a standing position. "But," said the preacher, "here's Brother Jimison settin' behind me in the pulpit. Spose I say to him, 'Brother Jimison, you look sleepy; if you feel sleepy, get up and go to bed.' I s'pose, then, Brother Jimison must go to bed standin' up." The reductio ad absurdum was so clear that judges, lawyers and doctors shook their sides convulsively.—Western Recorder.

GOD KNOWS.

I know not what shall befall me, God hangs a mist o'er my eyes, At each step in my onward path He makes new scenes to rise, And every joy He sends me Comes as a sweet surprise.

I see not a step before me, As I tread on another year, But the past is still in God's keeping, The future His mercy shall clear, And what looks dark in the distance May brighten as I draw near.

A traveller says: "One of the most beautiful images that ever rose upon my imagination was suggested to me by a chance delay for two days among the lakes and mountains of the Trossach's Glen, Scotland. I happened to make the inquiry what became of villagers so suddenly disappearing at nightfall from the streets, and a sandy-haired Scotchman replied, 'Most of them would be at prayer about this time.' And I looked up into the far blue sky, thought how fine a thing it would be to have a resting-place high enough just to hear the murmur of voices as they read a verse about and sung one of the old Psalms, before the impressive hush in which the father offered prayer. How grand would be the swell of sound when a whole village was going on its knees before God!"

LENDING A PAIR OF LEGS.

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A WATERFALL IN VENEZUELA.—Mr. Brown, the government surveyor, in British Guiana, has recently discovered, near the head waters of the Massarund, what appeared to be an immense river descending bodily from the N. W. fall of the precipice of Reralma mountain. The summit of this cliff is known to be 2,000 feet in height, and the river, after tumbling sheer down that enormous wall, rushes over a glacier of about 3,000 feet at an angle of not less than 45°. According to the Indians, the fall belongs to the Caruni river, a tributary of the Orinoco, and is in the territory of Venezuela.

Say less than you think, rather than think only half what you say.

THE OLD MAN IN THE STYLISH CHURCH.

BY JOHN H. YATES.

Well, wife, I've been to church to-day—been to a stylish one— And seeing you can't go from home, I'll tell you what we done; You would have been surprised to see what I saw there to-day. The sisters were fixed up so fine they hardly bowed to pray.

I had on these carse clothes of mine—not much the worse for wear— But, then, they knew I wasn't one they call a millicaire; So they led the old man to a seat away back by the door, 'Twas bookless and uncushioned, a reserved seat for the poor.

Pretty soon in came a stranger with gold ring and clashing fine; They led him to a cushioned seat far in advance of me; I thought that wasn't exactly right to seat him up so near, When he was young, and I was old, and very hard to hear.

But, then, there's no accounting for what some people do; The finest clothing now-a-days, oft gets the finest pew. But when we reach the blessed home, and undefiled by sin, We'll see wealth begin' at the gate, while poverty goes in.

I couldn't hear the sermon I sat so far away. So through the hours of service, I could only "watch and pray;" Watch the doin' of the Christians near me, 'round about; Pray that God would make them pure within, as they were pure without.

While I sat there, lookin' all around upon the rich and great, I kept thinking of the rich man and the beggar at the gate; How, by all, by dogs forsaken, the poor beggar's form grew cold, And the angels bore his spirit to the mansions built of gold.

How, at last the rich man perished, and his spirit took its flight From the purple and fine linen, to the home of endless night; There he learned, as he stood gazin' at the beggar in the sky, "It isn't all of life to live, nor all of death to die."

I doubt not there were wealthy sires in that religious fold Who went up from their dwellings like the Pharisee of old; Then returned home from their worship with a head split high; To spurn the hungry from their door with naught to satisfy.

Out! Out! with such professions; they are doing more to-day To stop the weary sinner from the Gospel's shinin' way Than all the books of infidels; than all the has been tried Since Christ was born in Bethlehem,—since Christ was crucified.

How simple are the works of God, and yet how very grand— The shells in ocean caverns—the flowers on the land, He glides the clouds of evening with golden light from His throne, Not for the rich man only, nor for the poor alone.

Then why should man look down on man, because of lack of gold? Why seat him in the poorest pew because his clothes are old? A heart with noble motives—a heart that God has blest— May be beatin' Heaven's music 'neath that faded coat and vest.

I'm old—I may be childish—but I love simplicity I love to see it shinin' in a Christian's piety; Jesus told us in His sermon, in Judca's mountain wild, He that wants to go to Heaven must belike a little child.

Our heads are growing gray, der wife—our hearts are beating slow— In a little while the Master will call for us to go; When we reach the pearly gateways, and look in with joyful eyes, We'll see no stylish worship in the temple of the skies.

Say less than you think, rather than think only half what you say.