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THE TEACHER.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1873.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, July 20th.

The Baptism of Jesus—Matt. iii. 13-17; Mark i. 4-11; Luke iii. 22, 23.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Mark i. 11.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 13-17.

SUMMARY.—Jesus by his baptism foretold his death, burial, and resurrection for us; we, by our baptism, profess our death, burial, and resurrection with him, and in him.

ANALYSIS.—I. Request and refusal vs. 13, 14—II. Command and compliance vs. 15. III. The baptism vs. 16. IV. The Spirit's descent vs. 16. V. The Father's voice vs. 17.

EXPOSITION.—Verse 13.—Then. When occurred the events of verses 1-12. John was a few months the senior of Jesus, in respect to both age and office, in both respects a "forerunner." We notice that Christ did not come until John's preaching had attracted universal attention; made a profound impression, awakened intense curiosity. Even the spiritual authorities of the nation sent from its capital a delegation, to learn whether John were himself the Messiah. John i. 19-27. Multitudes had been baptized. John had thus far "prepared the way." From Galilee. In which province was Nazareth? To Jordan. John's preaching was "in the wilderness of Judea." vs. 1. This, says Dr. Hackett, "lay along the eastern border of Judea, towards the Dead Sea. It was a desert in the oriental sense; i. e., fit for cultivation at intervals, thinly inhabited, and resorted to mainly as pasture ground. It may have included also the western shore of the Jordan, north of the Dead Sea, which Josephus also designates as desert."

Vers. 14.—John forbade him. Hesitated and raised objections. vs. 11 shows, he knew himself to be inferior, character and person infinitely the inferior of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that this baptism in water was but a mere shadow and symbol of Christ's baptism in the Holy Spirit, and that from such connection with Christ's baptism, his had its sole, whole worth. And again John's was "baptism of repentance for [unto] remission of sin." Mark i. 4; comp. Matt. iii. 11. As its pre-requisite he required a confession of sin, vs. 6, as the evidence of inward repentance, and of that forgiveness of sins which God's grace ever grants in connection with repentance. This implied that the subject of baptism was a sinner saved by grace. How then could he baptize Christ? He felt sure that he was sinless, spotless, in need of neither repentance nor pardon, and incapable therefore of making a confession in evidence of either. And indeed Jesus, on asking baptism makes no confession, thus sealing as true this conviction. No wonder that these two causes, Christ's superiority and his perfect freedom from sin, made John feel that he was not a fit subject for this baptism; that he was quite above and beyond its need. Many a man besides John has been puzzled quite as sorely. I have need to be baptized of thee. Expressing the perplexity above described.

Verse 15.—Suffer it to be so now; i. e., consent in view of the circumstances in this juncture, for such is the force of the Greek word translated "now." Thus Jesus does not rebuke John for his hesitating and objecting, but rather approves him; i. e., approves the spirit which prompted it, but goes on to correct the error of judgment. For. Introducing the reason for his request so perplexing to the Baptist. Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. This does not mean that he submitted to baptism, like others, because this was a part of the Mosaic ceremonial requirement like circumcision, Luke ii. 21, for it was not; nor that he wished to honor John's baptism, and set an example for Christian disciples thenceforth. A meaning must be given to these words, in harmony with the nature of that baptism as "the baptism of repentance unto the remission of sin." The key to their meaning is given in Rom. vi. 3-5. Christ in his baptism lays at the foundation of his ministry the work of atonement, just so far as the nature of the case and the time allow. He is the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the

world, he has on him our sin and guilt, and because of this goes down into death under this load, as he is submerged by John in the Jordan, and rises with the load removed as he emerges and comes up out of the water. Symbolically, in his baptism he anticipates his death and resurrection. Thus he, like every saint, by baptism in symbol, died to sin and rose to righteousness; and we, in our baptism, are at one with him in his baptism. "We are buried with him by baptism into death," and with him also "raised up from the dead." Rom. vi. 4. Thus did he "fulfil all righteousness" as our Head and representative, so we by becoming one in him, shown in our baptism, fulfil in him all righteousness. We have a perfect righteousness because we have him. This shows why he could say not simply it becomes me, but us. He in thought joined with him those for whom he then symbolically, as afterward really, died. Whether John understood Christ's words does not appear. Enough, this answer, whatever meaning he may have given it. Then he suffered him; i. e., consented, and baptized his Lord and Saviour.

Verse 16.—Went up straightway out of the water. John baptized in Jordan, went down with the candidate into the stream, and standing in it, baptized him; i. e., immersed him, for such is the meaning of the word. The Greek has words to designate sprinkling, pouring, consecrating, purifying, etc., and if this ordinance was not to be administered by immersion, if immersion was not essential to the ordinance, why was this name, rather than some other, chosen for it? Why has our Lord given to the ordinance a name which has nothing whatever to do with the nature of the ordinance? Be sure he has not done it. He called it baptism or immersion, because immersion is essential to the ordinance, to the ordinance, I say, and hence, as far the ordinance is essential, in whatever respect or for whatever end the ordinance is essential, just so far, in just that respect, and for just that end, is immersion essential. If we may give up the ordinance; we may give up immersion; if we may put something else in the place of the ordinance, we may put something else in place of immersion; if we may ridicule and hold up to derision the ordinance, we may ridicule and hold up to derision the immersion in the ordinance. Whatever fate befalls the ordinance, that must needs befall the immersion given as in and of the ordinance. This appears not from its name only, but also from the circumstance in which it was administered, John iii. 23; Acts viii. 36, and the import affixed to it. Rom. vi. 4; Col. ii. 12; Acts xxii. 16. There is not a shadow of evidence in Scripture that anything is called baptism save immersion; in other words, that immersion was not always immersion. We do have in our common English version the phrases, "baptize with water," "with the Holy Ghost," Matt. iii. 11; but in the Greek, and as written by the inspired penmen, it is not "with," but "in," the very word used when it is said, "baptized in Jordan." The practice, uniform in apostolic times, continued to be uniform for centuries afterward. The traveller in Europe may still see in some of the old Papal churches fonts made, some of them for the immersion of infants, and some for the immersion of adults. The following is by Rev. G. W. Anderson, D. D.

BAPTISTERIES IN SWEDEN.—Sweden furnishes strong arguments for the Scriptural mode of baptism. In the Museum at Stockholm is a very large and interesting collection of antiquities. Among the number are eighteen baptisteries, or fonts. They are made of stone, on the average about two feet in diameter, and eighteen inches deep. They do not come down from the earlier Christian centuries. Hence their comparatively small size.

BAPTISTERIES IN GERMANY.—There is one at Magdeburg, in the Cathedral, which probably dates from the fourteenth century. It is more highly finished than those in Sweden. It is also larger, being about three feet in diameter, and a foot and a half in depth.

In the Church of St. Sebaldus, at Nuremberg, is a very remarkable baptistery. It is made of copper, and is one of the earliest specimens of the metal work of that old medieval city. Two things make it specially worthy of note; in it the Emperor Wenzel was baptized in 1361, and it is furnished with a grate beneath for the purpose of warming the water. It is three feet in diameter, and eighteen or twenty inches deep.

BAPTISTERY AT BERNE, SWITZERLAND.—In the Cathedral at Berne is a very massive

stone baptistery. It is shaped somewhat like an hour-glass. It is about three feet in diameter, and probably four feet from base to brim. Its depth is about twenty inches.

THE BAPTISTERIES OF ITALY.—Italy is dotted over with large buildings expressly designed as places for administering baptism. That at Florence, standing directly in front of the Duomo, is a handsome octagonal building. The famous bronze doors of Ghiberti are among the richest ornaments of the city. The baptistery itself was destroyed by one of the Medici, in the sixteenth century. It was twelve feet in diameter. This was, of course, large enough for the immersion of any person. Its dimensions are nearly the same as those of the handsome porphyry baptistery in the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris, in which, it is said, that Clovis was baptized, in the fifth century. The baptistery in Rome is said to be the one in which Constantine was baptized. Of course this is a mistake, but its history goes back to a very early date, to the third or fourth century.

These baptisteries, and pictures, and sculptures representing baptism, are scattered very widely over Europe. It would not be possible in any narrow limits to refer to them all. Only a few characteristic specimens need to be presented in order to show some things which a Baptist may learn in regard to the history of the ordinance in Europe.

While this holds true where the Western or Papal Church has been prevalent, the Eastern Church still practices immersion, as it ever has done. The Armenian division, however, places the person in water up to the neck, and with the hand pours water over the head. Like a dove. This form being emblematic of the Spirit's nature.

Verse 17.—The Father speaks; thus we have here the Trinity: Father, Son, and Spirit. Christ enters upon his ministry with the simplest yet grandest ordination ever known on this earth.

QUESTIONS.—Where did our last lesson leave Jesus? How old was he then? How old when he went for baptism? Luke iii. 23. What is known of his history meanwhile? Luke ii. 40-52.

Vs. 13. In what place did John preach? vs. 3. What do you know of this region? At what time did Jesus go to John? For what purpose?

Vs. 14. What did John do at first? What reasons for this? Explain the words, "I have need to be baptized of thee" vs. 11. What disposition does this show?

Vs. 15. Did Christ blame John for his hesitation? What lesson for us? What reason did he give why he should be baptized? What does his language mean?

Vs. 16. Where was Jesus baptized? vs. 6. Was he immersed? Do we ever read that water was baptized upon any one? What evidence for immersion in John iii. 23? In Rom. vi. 4? What objections to substituting something else for immersion? Why should the dove have been chosen as the emblem of the Spirit?

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. Scripture Catechism, 129, 130.

SUNDAY, July 27th.—The Temptation of Jesus—Matt. iv. 1-11.

Youths' Department.

A JOSTLE THROUGH THE BAZARS OF DAMASCUS.

BY REV. S. GRAVES, D. D.

Damascus claims to be the oldest city in the world, and so for aught I know it is. Certainly, its founding lies back of all history, and no city can successfully dispute its claims to this great antiquity. There is no city in the world which has kept its name and maintained a vigorous life through so many centuries of storm that have swept over the nations, like this same Damascus, which was a city of note when Abraham came from Chaldea.

But whatever may be said of its antiquity, it puts forth another claim which is hardly less disputable: viz., as the most beautiful city in the world. And seen, as we saw it, from the mosque-crowned summit of one of the hills which surround it, in the broad plain embowered in a wilderness of verdure—of orange, lemon, citron and palms, with the white domes and minarets lifted up above this sea of green and the "Abana," that godly river, winding round and through it; we felt, after a long, dreary ride over mountains and deserts, when all this life and verdure and beauty burst upon us, to yield the claim and sympathize with Mohammed, of whom it is related that when he first saw it, perhaps from the very spot where we stood, he refused to enter it, saying, "I have but one paradise and that is above." We were not quite up to Mohammed's enthusiasm,

and entered it without feeling that by so doing we seriously impaired our hopes of the Paradise above.

To nothing does the line of the poet Campbell apply with greater truth than to Eastern cities—"Tis distance lends enchantment to the view;" for alas, on entering even Damascus the spell is broken, and you are in the midst of a busy, crowded, filthy city, with not a bit of the romance left. The streets are narrow, unpaved and crooked. "The street called Straight," which of course we visited, and on which was the House of Judas, where Paul lodged, and which also of course we visited, is an exception. The House of Judas, or the site of it, is occupied by a Mosque; its court contains the tomb of some Mohammedan celebrity, and is accounted a very sacred place. But the institutions of Damascus are its dogs and bazars. Nobody owns a dog in Damascus, or, as I believe, is allowed to. They are the guests of the city, and enjoy all the liberties usually accorded to such honors. They lie around loose by day half asleep, in the middle of the streets, horses, mules, camels, men and women always turning out for them; and at night they set up such a unanimous, incessant and ferocious howl as to make night hideous and drive sleep far from the pillows of the weary traveler. Between the dogs and the Ramadan, which was in full blast at Damascus—a fast of the Mohammedans for a month, during which the faithful fast by day and feast and carouse by night—between the two, sleep was an experience enjoyed only in snatches, or not at all.

The dwelling houses of Damascus are low and exceedingly mean looking, built mostly of rough round stone, and plastered over by a vile, dusty-brown mud mixed with straw, which gives it its adhesive qualities, reminding one of the brick-making of ancient Egypt. The houses are built close up to the street, and present neither windows nor doors, which gives one a sense of the absence of all hospitality. A gate in the wall, however, leads into the court, to which, if you are fortunate enough to gain admission, you will be delighted with the air of comfort and often of refinement which opens to you. It was our good luck to have met on the steamer from Smyrna to Beirut a Turkish Bey who resided at Damascus, and who quite took to us Americans, and who sent again and again to our hotel to see if we had arrived in town, and who brought us to his home with much ceremony, and showed us all it contained—except his wives. His house, with the same shabby outside, was the abode of every eastern elegance and luxury,—marble-paved courts, fountains, with flowering shrubs and orange-trees growing about them, rich divans and costly furniture, inlaid with ivory and pearl. On leaving, he accompanied us to the gate, embraced and kissed us, what seemed a genuine, hearty good bye.

But I am a long time in getting to the Bazar, and into the jostle and jam which you experience in passing through them. The bazars are streets in which certain crafts are pieced, or certain articles sold. There is the Saddler's Bazar, the Silver-smith's, Goldsmith's,—the grain, the cotton, the silk, the aromatic, etc. bazars. They are covered by a reed or rush awning which extends from the roofs of the houses on the opposite sides, and are also the principal thoroughfare of the city.

The shops, or stores, are much like a good-sized bay-window without the window where the enterprising tradesman sits cross-legged half asleep, smoking his everlasting narghilly; when accosted, he wakes up but never gets up, for all his wares are within his reach. You buy or not; it is a matter seemingly of supreme indifference to him. How the creatures live and thrive is an unsolved mystery.

But while you are examining the dainty silks, or ravishing shawls, or testing the essence of sandal wood, or the otto of roses, you get a thump in the side, and look round to see a donkey with a pannier of stones piled high on his back; and behind him is a long string of them marching in stupid procession, every one of which threatens a repetition of the thump. You squeeze yourself into the smallest space, bend your body into your friend's "bay-window," and so, for that time escape.

Let us proceed. Our guide is before us; we must not take our eye from him, or we are lost to a dead certainty. Old men, with long gray beards and stately turbans and flowing robes, looking as though a pleasant or a human sympathy never came within a league of their dignified frigidly, are bumped up against you without disturbing the depths of their serene equanimity;

young men in short beards and red fezes, meet you slap in the face, bear-eyed filthy beggars; fierce, ill-savored muleteers, boys with very thin pants and the very dirty fragment of a shirt; women muffled in white sheets—so they look—all but the eyes and forehead, which are screened by a dark checkered veil; old crones with bundles of faggots on their heads men on horse back, on donkeys, a hugh camel with a bale of goods or half a cord of wood or beams of timber lashed to his back, push and jam and threaten to squeeze or trample you to death. Add to this every one talking at the top of their voice; every one intent, too, on some house, as the crowd meet and surge, and you have a Damascus Bazar jostle from which you escape with a thankful heart, wondering how it was possible that you have come forth without a broken head or back.

Damascus contains about 180,000 inhabitants, and, for an oriental city, is full of thrift. A large cotton factory has lately been established there, which is doing a good business, and the city bids fair to stand for ages to come, as it has for the ages that are past.

The house of Naaman, the Leper, outside the walls of the city is shown. For ages this has been a kind of hospital for lepers. It is beautifully situated on the banks of the Abana, and looks as though it might once have been the abode of wealth and splendour. The tradition is that out of gratitude for his recovery, Naaman gave his estates as a home for lepers.

The window through which Paul was let down from the wall in a basket, is pointed out in a bit of very ancient wall beside a very old gate; and also the place of his conversion.—Standard.

PIN-FEATHER COLLECTIONS.

We are indebted to Rev. Dr. Matlack, recently of New Orleans, for the following good story:

In 1869 a series of Missionary Meetings were projected among the Colored Methodist Episcopal churches of that city. At one of these it was arranged that an eccentric veteran, named Scott Chinn, should make the last speech and take the collection. The brother who preceded him greatly tried the old man's patience by the length of his address—a thing never done by a white man. "H! l' sple de metin!" said Bro. Chinn to the Doctor who presided. "He's too long in de wind"—"too much blowin'." "Be patient, be patient," said the Doctor. "O l'es patient enough," said he. "But de people's gettin' tired, and den dey wont gib de moncy." said the old philosopher. At length the long speech closed with an eloquent reference to the angel of the apocalypse flying through the heavens, having the everlasting gospel to preach.

Scott Chinn was on his feet in a moment. "I's been afeered some ob dese brodders would talk too long, and dat angel git clear out ob sight. Dat angel, bredren, is the Missionary Angel. He takes de eberlastin' gospel wid him where'er he goes—to ebery nation, kindred, tongue, people!" "Mighty Angel," shouted some in the congregation. "Mighty; Mighty!" repeated others as the excitement rose. Inspired with his conception and the enthusiasm of his congregation, his patriarchal form rose to its full height, and stretching out his hand towards the Angel who he seemed to see before him, he exclaimed, "O dou Angel ob de mighty wing, terry wid us a leetle while, in dis Missionary Meeting. We's de people your Lord sent you to find. Fold your wings and rest a while here. You's been flyin' so long, and you has many a long weary trabel before you. Blessed Angel! Ain't you berry tired? Den rest, for dis is de Lord's day, and de Lord's house, and de Lord's people."

Turning to the congregation, now up to the white heat of excitement, he continued: "Children, you may tank your stars, and de good Lord, dat dis Angel come dis way to day, and he's gwine to stay a while now. He's foldin' his wings and lookin' right at you now. He wants to see what we's goin' to do to send dis eberlastin' gospel round de world.

I tell you what we'll do, children, de Angel's wing broken a little, wid de big wind from de four corners ob de world. See! he needs some more fadders in de wing. He fly better, wid dis eberlastin' gospel, t'rough de midst ob de heaben to de enns ob de earth. Up, now, and bring on de fadders fur de Angel's wings."

In an instant the people were on their feet, filing into the aisles and marching in time to the swell of song, to the table in