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BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1873.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, May 25th.

Joseph sends for his father.—Gen. xlv. 19-28

GOLDEN TEXT.—"The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice." Proverbs xxiii. 24.

COMMIT TO MEMORY.—Verses 25-28.

SUMMARY.—"Then sent Joseph and called his father Jacob to him and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls."

ANALYSIS.—I. Pharaoh's proposal. II. Joseph's compliance. III. Jacob's amazement.

EXPOSITION.—Verse 19.—Now thou [Joseph] art commanded by me Pharaoh. These are words of authority. Joseph, though "lord of all the land," was yet "second." "In the throne" Pharaoh was greater. If the narrative follows the order of events Joseph had already taken the liberty to invite his brothers and father to come with their families and possessions, and settle in Egypt in Goshen. vs. 10, 11. It is possible that the plan of this movement was first suggested to Joseph by the king, and that Joseph's proposal of it to the brothers is mentioned where it is in order to keep together his words of comfort to them. This saves Joseph from the appearance of too great forwardness in going, without the king's authority, a command which this verse seems to show, required the king's authority. Examples are numerous where the order of narration is not the order of events. Possibly, however, Joseph had full authority to summon his family to Egypt, and did so do, but the king's approval of his conduct was afterward given in the language of verses 17-20. His thought may have been that ultimately the family would become thoroughly identified with Egypt, as he had tried to make Joseph, especially by securing his marriage into the family of the priest of On. He may also have been gratified to find that his slave-ruler was of an honorable family, and not low-born. Or had Joseph, during those years, told the king the story of his early life? Was, on. "Carts and wagons were known early in Egypt, which was a flat country and highly cultivated; but they were probably unknown at this time in Palestine and Syria. The Egyptian carts, as depicted on the monuments, are of two wheels only, when used for carrying agricultural produce. Comp. l. 9; Ex. xiv. 6-28; Isa. xxxvi. 9. For your little ones, etc.—The command is comprehensive, and looked to a permanent settlement. Nothing was to be left to bind them to Canaan. Their home was to be in Egypt, because where all the members of the family dwell, old and young, there is home.

Verse 20.—Regard not your stuff. Various kinds of property, furniture, farming implements, etc., etc. Pharaoh says: "Leave them, never mind, you are to fare well here—come on, we will take care of you." A free promise, but meant, and as we shall see, kept. The good of all the land. Perhaps not merely the richest part of the soil, but the best of the products of the soil to sustain life, so making unimportant the sacrifice of immovable property. We notice the repetition in these two verses of the command given in the two preceding. This shows his hearty earnestness and sincerity. His mind was intent on the project, and so he presses it upon Joseph's acceptance.

Verse 21.—Did so. Gave their consent, fell in with the plan, and glad enough to do it. The famine urged them to it. Their envy was by this time killed by the well aimed blows given it by Providence and Joseph. Their pride was also appealed to, and natural affection with gratitude called them to come. Joseph was now having his revenge—such revenge as a noble mind delights in, and the gospel commands, returning good for evil, and thus heaping coals of fire on the offenders' heads. There is no revenge so sweet. Few understand it. Even Christians, not all mere professors, but true Christians, too little understand it. Christ in the heart, the spirit of God reigning within, will enable us thus to avenge ourselves. God help us to forgive and do good, to love our enemies, bless them that curse, and do good to everybody.

Verse 22.—Pharaoh's commands were

promptly carried into execution. But Joseph does not stop there. He wishes to show in addition his own peculiar, fraternal, and filial love, and so he carries his noble revenge still further by giving to his brothers and his father splendid presents. Changes of raiment. Costly garments to be worn on festival occasions, a common gift in those times and countries. Gen. xxiv. 53; 2 Kings v. 5. He gave one "change" to each of the ten brothers, but to Benjamin five, beside the three hundred pieces of silver. This partiality was justifiable, for Benjamin was his only brother of the same mother. The silver was about twenty pounds weight.

Verse 23.—To his father. Joseph must have cherished, in all the years of his separation, not only profound reverence for his father, but the tenderest affection; for he remembered how devotedly attached to him the father had been, how he had favored him, and doted on him. Now for the first time he can in return show his love to him. Ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt. A large load of presents, the precise nature of which is not stated. In addition to this was the needful provision for the journey to Egypt. He probably foresaw that Jacob would be very slow to believe that he really was alive, and "the lord of the land" of Egypt simply on the brothers' report, and he thus aided to the motive of affection, that of prudence. It was well he did as he did, as we shall soon see.

Verse 24.—So, does not here mean in this way, as described, but simply "and," connecting the two verses. They departed. With what feelings? Notice his parting advice: See that ye fall not out by the way. The word here translated "fall out," means "moved, disturbed, thrown into commotion."—Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon. It is used of anger, of grief, of fear, and of joy. Our translators understood it here of anger. It would not be strange if he feared that in view of what had been said and done, and what was still in prospect, there might arise among them angry dispute. Did he specially have in mind Benjamin as a possible object of their envy, as he had himself once been? He had good proof of their penitence, and of a better spirit in them than formerly, but he may have felt it well to caution them by a delicate reference to the old sin and trouble.

Verse 25.—Unto Jacob their father. Think of him, anxious, troubled, as he waits at home. Such uncertainties as to his children, and especially as to Benjamin. He waits their return, already too long delayed, with such feelings as only a father who has been in like circumstances can know. All the interest of the story now centres in the venerable sad old man. As we go up from Egypt with the eleven, our imagination runs on to the homestead. What a moment is coming! What a crowding of events into a moment! So it is in our world's history. Think of Eden and Calvary!

Verse 26.—They told him. With what effect? His heart fainting; or, more literally, was cold. Of course. He did not believe it, could not respond to it did not warm at the news. He did not believe it. How could he?

Verse 27.—They tell the story more at length. The wisdom of Joseph in sending such presents now appears. The spirit of Jacob their father revived. Ceased to be "cold," the warm blood of hope and joy was in it.

Verse 28.—And Israel, not Jacob, but the conquering Israel. vs. 25. Enough. He is satisfied with God and his providence. All things have not been against him, as he had darkly thought. I will go and see him before I die.

QUESTIONS.—Vs. 19. Who speaks? To whom? What is commanded? Had Joseph already proposed the same? vs. 10, 11. What led Pharaoh to favor this scheme? Did he expect the Hebrews would ever become slaves? Does this free invitation show more clearly the right of the Hebrews to leave Egypt at will? Were wagons common in Egypt? Chaps. 1. 9; Ex. xiv. 6-28; Isa. xxxvi. 9.

Vs. 20. What is here meant by "stuff"? Why the command not to regard it? What spirit does this show in the king?

Vs. 22, 23. Did Joseph do more than the king commanded? Name some other instances in which raiment was given as presents. Genesis xxiv. 53; 2 Kings v. 5. Why did he give Benjamin more than the rest? Can you tell how many pounds weight of silver in three hundred pieces? Why such lavish presents to the father? vs. 27.

Vs. 25. What charge did Joseph give his brethren? What need of it? To whom do these words now apply?

Vs. 26. What did the eleven tell their father? Do you suppose they confessed their own sin of selling him? What effect on the father? Why?

Vs. 27. How was he made to believe them? The effect of this belief? Was God better to him than he had feared? Vs. 28. What did he say? What lesson for us in this story? Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. Scripture Catechism, 117.

SUNDAY, June 1st.—Israel in Egypt.—Gen. xlv. 1-4. 29-32.

Youths' Department.

IN SCHOOL.

I used to go to a bright school When Youth and Frolic taught in turn, But, idle scholar that I was, I liked to play, I would not learn; So the Great Teacher did ordain That I should try the school of Pain.

One of the infant class I am, With little, easy lessons, set In a great book; the higher class Have harder ones than I, and yet I find mine hard, and can't restrain My tears while studying thus with Pain.

There are two teachers in the school, One has a gentle voice and low And smiles upon her scholars, as She softly passes to and fro; Her name is Love; 'tis very plain She shuns the sharper teacher, Pain.

Or, so I sometimes think; and then At other times they meet and kiss, And look so strangely like, that I Am puzzled to tell how it is, Or whence the change which makes it vain To guess if it be—Love or Pain.

They tell me if I study well And learn my lessons I shall be Moved upward to that higher class Where dear Love teaches constantly; And I work hard, in hopes to gain Reward, and get away from Pain.

Yet Pain is sometimes kind, and helps Me on when I am very dull; I thank him often in my heart; But Love is far more beautiful; Under her tender, gentle reign I must learn faster than of Pain.

So I will do my very best, Nor chide the clock, nor call it slow; That when the Teacher calls me up To see if I am fit to go, I may to Love's high class attain, And bid a sweet good-by to Pain. —Susan Coolidge.

EVILS OF NOVELS.

Peter had returned from school with a report of scholarship below the average. Said his father,

"You've fallen back?" "Yes, sir." "How is that?" "Don't know."

A basket of apples stood upon the floor. The father said, "Empty out those apples, and fill it half full of chips." The son obeyed.

"And now put those apples back." The son said, "Father, they roll off. I can't put in more."

"Put 'em in, I tell you." "But, father, I can't put them in."

"No, of course you can't. Do you expect to fill a basket half full of chips and then fill it with apples? You didn't know why you fell behind. I will tell you. Your mind is like that basket. It will not hold more than so much; and here you've been, the past month, filling it up with novels!"

Not a novel in the house from that day.

"NOBODY EVER TOLD ME."

Whilst driving out near an encampment of gypsies, I went in amongst them. After buying some of the skewers they were making, I learned that one of their number was ill. I begged to be allowed to see him. The father asked—

"Did you want to talk about religion to him?"

"No."

"What, then?"

About Christ."

"Oh! then you may go; only if you talk religion, I'll set the dog on to you."

In the caravan I found a lad alone, and in bed, evidently at the far end of the last stage of consumption. His eyes were closed, and he looked as one already dead. Very slowly in his ear I repeated the Scripture, "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." I repeated it five times without any apparent response; he did not seem to hear even with the outward ear. On hearing it the sixth time, he opened his eyes and smiled. To my surprise he whispered—

"And I never thanked him; but nobody ever told me! I turn him many thanks—only a poor gypsy chap! I see! I see! I thank him kindly!"

He closed his eyes with an expression of intense satisfaction. As I knelt beside him I thanked God. The lips moved again. I caught "That's it." There were more words, but I could not hear them.

On going the next day, I found the dear lad had died (or, rather, had fallen asleep in Christ) eleven hours after I left. His father said he had been very "peaceable," and had a "tidy death." There was no Bible or Testament in the encampment. I left them one of each. The poor man wished me "good luck," and gave me a little bundle of skewers the dear "boy-Jemmy" had made.—The Christian.

SCOLDING.

Scolding is mostly a habit. There is not much meaning in it. It is often the result of nervousness, and an irritable condition of both mind and body. A person is tired and annoyed at some trivial cause, and forthwith commences finding fault with everything and everybody in reach.

Scolding is a habit very easily formed. It is astonishing how soon one who indulges in it at all becomes addicted to it and confirmed in it. It is an unreasoning and unreasonable habit. Persons who once get in the way of scolding always find something to scold about. If there were nothing else, they would fall a scolding at the mere absence of anything to scold at. It is an extremely disagreeable habit. The constant rumbling of distant thunder, cawing, or a hand-organ under one's window, would be less unpleasant.

The habit is contagious. Once introduced into a family, it is pretty certain in a short time to affect all the members. If one of them begins finding fault about something or nothing, the others are apt very soon to take it up, and a very unnecessary badlam is created.

Women contract the habit more by frequent use than men. This may be because they live more in the house, in a confined and heated atmosphere very trying to the nervous system and the health in general; and it may be partly that their natures are more susceptible, and their sensitiveness more easily wounded. Women are sometimes called divine; but a scolding woman never seems divine.

WHO ARE INFIDELS?

Strictly speaking, an infidel is one who has apostatized. This is according to the etymology of the word. The first Christians used it, I suspect, as those in later times certainly did, to designate one who, after attaching himself to Christ, had become unfaithful, or had forsaken him. A distinction is thus made between the infidel and such as have never believed on Christ's name. He is a far baser person than the pagan, who having no knowledge of Christ, nor at any time confessing him as Lord, cannot be charged with unfaithfulness to him. But we need not use the term in this harsh sense. Though the infidel of to-day is one who dwells where Christ is preached, and who therefore may have fallen away from the Christian faith into his present state of unbelief, yet his heart does not plead guilty of the charge of treachery. He may have a conviction of honesty, and the approval of conscience in what he has done. All this we are ready to grant him; nor do we, in applying to him a term which usage has made current, mean anything beyond what he is ready to acknowledge, namely: That he has rejected Christ as the supreme authority in matters of religious faith. Such, I take it, is the most legitimate application of the word at present.

When Jenny Lind was in the United States she once attended the Bethel Church in Boston, where the well-remembered Father Taylor was pastor. The good man, who did not know that she was present, was requested, as he entered the house, to preach on amusements. The church was crowded, and the pulpit stairs were filled. The sermon opposed dancing, card-playing, and theatre-going, but approved music. The preacher paid a glowing tribute to the power of song, and to the goodness, modesty and charity of the sweetest of all singers, "now lighted on these shores." Jenny Lind was leaning forward, and clasped her hands with delight, when a tall person rose on the pulpit stairs and inquired whether any one who died at one of Miss Lind's concerts would go to heaven. Dignest and content swept across Father Taylor's face, as he glared at the interloper. "A Christian will go to heaven wherever he dies; and a fool will be a fool wherever he is—even if he is on the steps of the pulpit."

THE EARLIEST NEWSPAPER.

Authorities have differed widely as to the nation and city entitled to the honor of having started the first printed newspaper. For many years it was supposed that the credit belonged to England. It was claimed that the British Museum had a copy of the earliest paper in its collection. It was called the English Mercurie, and printed July 23d, 1588. But it has been shown that this copy, like specimens of rare old coins, was spurious, and gotten up for sale. Watts, the bibliographer of the Museum, who saw, on examination, that the type and paper were of modern origin, and did not belong to the sixteenth century exposed the forgery. It was an ingenious fabrication, pretending to give the news of the Spanish Armada, which was destroyed in the English Channel by Drake and Howard a day or two previous to the date of the sheet. There were seven numbers of this spurious Mercurie produced—four in manuscript, and three in print.

Voices have also claimed the honor of leading the way in giving newspapers to the world. The Gazette, thus named because it sold for a small piece of money called gazetta, it is asserted, was printed there in 1570, and it is pretended that copies of this paper of that date are in one or two collections in London. But late discoveries have apparently established the claim of the old German city of Nuremberg to this high honor. A paper called the Gazette, according to trustworthy authorities, was printed in that city as early as 1457—five years after Peter Schöffer cast the first metal type in matrices. Nuremberg, with the first paper in the fifteenth century, also claims the honor of the first paper in the sixteenth century. There is an anciently printed sheet in the Libri collection which antedates all others except the sheet of 1457, and the Chronicle of Cologne. It is called the Neue Zeitung aus Hispanien und Italien, and bears the date of February, 1534. The British Museum, it is said, has a duplicate of this sheet.

Thus to Germany belongs the honor not only of the first printers and the first printing, but also of the first printed newspaper. It has also another claim to distinction. In 1615 Egenolf Eurmel started the Frankfurter Oberpostamts Zeitung, the first daily paper in the world. This journal is still published, and the city of Frankfurt is to erect a monument in honor of its founder and editor as the father of newspapers.—Harper's Magazine.

SPRING.

The sun is warm, the sky is blue, The buds are full, the grass is growing; I wonder if the signs are true, And winter really is going? 'Tis too good news it seems to me That gentle Spring at last is coming, This very morn I saw a bee— But he was humming!

The seeds don't seem to show as yet— I fear they've rotted altogether; The winter's been so very wet— But shall we have more settled weather? Those fleecy clouds, on high that wing, Can weep like Niobe's sad daughters; And we, perchance may find the Spring A spring of waters.

O, gentle Spring! betray us not, We can be dry, and yet hilarious;— And, pray, give back the watering-pot To January's old Aquarius; Where'er your tiny foot shall touch, Bid blossoms spring, the greensward fretting— For we've an appetite for such, That needs no whetting. —London Fun.

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he that winneth souls is wise. Whose loveth instruction, loveth knowledge.

As righteousness tendeth to life, so he that pursueth evil, pursueth it to his own death.

Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt, for the tree is known by his fruit.

The right to "stop over" on a through ticket "good for this day only" has been tried by the Supreme Court at Paris; and a verdict of \$750 was rendered for the plaintiff, Mr. S. W. Burnham, against the Grand Trunk Railway.

Better to strive and climb And never reach the goal, Than to drift along with time— An aimless, worthless soul. Ay, better to climb and fall, Or, sow, though the yield be small, Than to throw away day after day, And never strive at all.