

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, N. S., MAY 14, 1873.

THE TEACHER.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1873.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, May 18th.

Joseph makes himself known.—Gen. xlv. 1-8.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph: doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence." Genesis xlv. 3.

COMMIT TO MEMORY.—Verses 1-5.

SUMMARY.—"God is his own interpreter, and he will make it plain."

ANALYSIS.—1. The disclosure. vs. 1-4. The explanation. vs. 5-8.

EXPOSITION.—Links supplied.—The last words of our last lesson, which still linger sadly in our ears, were the sorrowful refusal of Jacob to let his dear Benjamin go down to Egypt, lest mischief should befall the youth, lest his own grey hairs should be brought down with sorrow to the grave. But the pleadings and pledges of Judah, and the remorseless logic of the famine (chap. xlii. 1-14) brought the old man, reluctant as he was, to give his consent. So with the lad, with double money, one half, the price of their first purchase, to their dismay found in their sacks; the other half, the price of the new purchase, which they hoped to bring, and with generous, conciliatory presents, the nine returned. It was an anxious, it was to be for them, and, indeed, for the race, an eventful journey. With remorseful memories of their brutality to Joseph, feeling, as we last week saw, that God, as the avenger of blood, was on their track, knowing only too well the customs of despotic monarchs, and having already tasted of the wrath of "the lord of the land" of Egypt, they entered the realm with a dread, a dread which was only less than the combined forces of the fear of starvation and of the consequent extinction of the whole family, and the sense of duty to Simeon. How did they seek betimes to avert mischief, by making explanation to Joseph's steward (chap. xliii. 15-25), and by presenting to Joseph their presents in lowly prostration, as the dream of sheaves had depicted them? Then came the feast with the unknown Joseph, when the order of their seating perplexed and disturbed them. Chap. xliii. 26-34. Then in the early dawn of a new day they started home, their number complete, their relations with Egypt all friendly, their sacks full of grain, their desire for free traffic in the future granted. What a burden was lifted from them. The happy escape. How glad of heart were the brothers as they turned their faces homeward, and started in the dusk of the morning. Ah, but soon an officer overtakes them; some one of them is a thief; the search, and ah, horrible! the cup is in Benjamin's sack. They cannot give him up. They all go back together, chap. xlv. 1-14, and such a plea as that of Judah, so full of filial love, of fraternal pity, of generous self-sacrifice. Spare my father; spare my brother, but spare not me, take me, not him. Chap. xlv. 15-34.

Verses 1.—Then, when Judah with tears, with agony of tone and manner, had gone through his recital and his plea, and when all the other nine whom Joseph had such reason to doubt, had given such convincing proof of faithfulness to their venerable father, whom they had formerly so outraged as to rob him of his son, and to the lad Benjamin, whom they would naturally have hated as full brother of Joseph and the father's favorite; when they had shown such deep tenderness of feeling, so unlike the terrible cruelty which he had experienced from them more than twenty years ago, and which had been so burned into his memory—Then Joseph could not refrain himself. He had acted a part thus far. He had hidden from them his character, his feelings, and his purposes, but he had neither motive nor power to do so longer. He had a deep, rich, ingenious, affectionate nature. Hence all the more bitter had been "the anguish of his soul" when sold, all the more earnest his longings for home, and the love of home in the land of strangers. Suddenly he finds himself in the completed band of brothers where such strength of love is shown, such tender memories are revived, such devotion and constancy appear—he is melted. He cannot keep down his feelings. He cannot longer act a part. He must make himself

known. Yet it was not fit that the eyes of strangers should look upon the scene—that he knew was to follow. Hence those that stood by him, i. e., his Egyptian attendants, are bidden to leave the room, that there may be "no man with" him as he throws off the mask, and makes himself known to his brothers.

Verse 2.—And he wept aloud.—He had strength of will to control himself against such an outburst until he had cleared the room of Egyptians, and now, the restraint removed, nature has her own way. Can we wonder that he wept? He was not the man to harbor malice, and delight in revenge. If he had been, he would never have wept, but with fiendish delight have wreaked his wicked vengeance on his helpless victims. In the presence of such an event we feel the nobleness of forgiveness as contrasted with the meanness of revenge. We feel, too, that tenderness of heart which can be moved not only to tears, but to a child-like weeping, is no proof of a weak nature. Joseph was as mighty and heroic as he was gentle and tender. Christianity is not contrary to the true nature of man. The open, loud expression of grief in the East was, and is, far more common than with us, and is not to be specially commended. Egyptians in the vicinity heard and reported to others, especially to Pharaoh.

Verse 3.—Joseph said. Apparently not till after a season of weeping, too violent to allow of speech, and during which the brothers must have been amazed, confounded. So did mystery tread on the heel of mystery. I am Joseph. Spoken in the Hebrew, the native tongue of the family. As he says to the brothers in their own familiar speech, I Joseph, doubtless the whole truth burst at once upon them, explaining all that had so perplexed and troubled them in their dealings with him. Doubtless now they see in his form, his features, his eye, his whole person, changed though he is, the well-remembered boy of former days, for such recognition is wont to come quickly when attention calls it. They were troubled at his presence. So much troubled that they could not even answer a question. Struck utterly dumb. The question asked seems almost to have been framed to banish fear. It turned attention from themselves to the father. Doth my father yet live? "My father." Oh, forlorn man; so long without a father, now to have one. He knew that the father lived, once and again and again had his brothers told him, but his heart asks yet again, Can it be, is my father yet alive?

Verse 4.—Come near to me. He saw their cowering dread. He knew its cause. They had wronged him. They naturally thought him to be like themselves, and like men generally, vindictive. They did not know his heart, the depth of forgiving love in it. Joseph is a type of the great "Saviour of life." These brethren are types of sinners who have misused the Saviour. Seen in his might, with the eye of an aroused and alarmed conscience, the sinner shrinks from him, misjudges him. But in the words of Joseph, he speaks, "Come near to me, I pray you." We have his words, "Come unto me." And they came near, answering the appeal of a deathless love. He repeats that he is Joseph, and adds, Your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. That very one so cruelly treated, yet none the less ready to take them to his heart. "Come near me."

Verse 5.—Now therefore. In view of considerations which he is about to name. These are two—first the fact that it was God who ruled in the affair; second, because of the glorious end which he had in view. God did send me before you. The first fact. Men act. Passion sways them. They plan, and will, and accomplish. They have no thought of God. They seem to be in their own hands. But God rules. He has a will. He controls. Unconsciously they serve him, not with a willing service which he approves, but the wrath of men praises Him. It was not in that one case, or in a few like it, that human will, even in wickedness, do God's will. It is always true. To preserve life. The end was good. They may and should now rejoice in the end, but not count themselves the less guilty.

Verse 6.—Two years. Making it more than twenty-two years since Joseph was brought to Egypt. "Earing," i. e., "ploughing," which the Hebrew means. "To ear," is an old English word from the Anglo Saxon root erian, to plow, cognate with the Latin arare." See Ex. xxxiv. 21; Deut. xxi. 4; 1 Sam. viii. 12; Isa. xxx. 24.—Speaker's Commentary.

Verse 7.—Preserve you a posterity, etc.,

not to kill them, as they feared. Sent for their good, not their harm. Verse 8.—Not you, but God. Said not to lessen the sense of guilt, but to increase confidence in him, and joy in God.

QUESTIONS.—Where did our last lesson leave Joseph's brothers? What was the father's determination? What happened between that and to-day's lesson? Chaps. xliii. and xlv.

Vs. 1. Explain the words "could not restrain himself"? What was there in Judah's speech to touch his heart? Chap. xlv. 18-34. Why did he wish to have no strangers in the room? What does this verse show as to Joseph's character?

Vs. 2. Is it unmanly ever to weep? Had Joseph a strong and heroic spirit? What effect has the Christian religion on the natural affections? How should the Egyptians generally, and especially Pharaoh's house, learn of this weeping? vs. 16.

Vs. 3. What were Joseph's first words? Their effect on the brothers? Why this effect? How came he to ask again about his father?

Vs. 4. Did Joseph know why the eleven were troubled? What did he request? In what language, think you, did he now speak?

Vs. 5. Does he try to comfort them? What would he have done if he had been revengeful? What reason did he give why they should not be grieved? Did this lessen the guilt of the deed?

Vs. 6-8. What is meant by "earing"? Would his brothers be likely now to believe his prediction? What does verse 7 show of the severity of the famine?

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. Scripture Catechism, 117.

SUNDAY, May 25th.—Joseph sends for his father.—Gen. xlv. 19-28.

GOD IS LOVE.

A SABBATH SCHOOL CONCERT EXERCISE.

Each child should have a large letter belonging to the verse repeated, showing it whilst repeating his verse, and until the Exercise is finished.

G My little friends and schoolmates dear To-day have met with me, To spell for you a pleasant line Which I'll begin with G,

O And I will do my little mite The precious words to show; And for this worthy purpose, I Will lend my great, round O.

D My letter ends the holy name Of him we love and fear; 'Tis D—I'll turn it round to view, And you will see it here.

I My mission is an humble one, Yet to do good I'll try; To help all, when I'm needed, so I now will furnish I.

S My little aid is needed now, To give this song success; So joyfully I bring in view My crooked letter S.

L And now another word we spell— A word endeared to all; And as I see my turn has come, The letter L I'll call.

O Although my letter you have seen Upon the platform here, Still our sweet word, without an O, You could not tell, I fear.

V As no one in our little band Has brought the letter V, I hope it will not come amiss If now supplied by us.

E I will close the joyful tidings— Soon our motto you will see; All can read it very plainly When I add the letter E.

All repeat, or sing in chorus. God is love—His mercy brightens All the path in which we rove; Bliss He makes and woe He lightens; God is wisdom—God is love.

Youths' Department.

A CURE FOR NAUGHTINESS.

Little Mary had been very naughty. She had spoken wrong words, had put on a very cross look, and had refused to obey mamma. Her mother took her by the hand to talk with her, and perhaps to put her in the closet for punishment. But first she said in a low, sad voice.

"What has got into my little daughter to-day, to make her behave so?"

"I know," instantly answered the child, "it's Satan."

Her mother was greatly surprised at little Mary's prompt answer. She has often told Oscar, who was Mary's older brother, when he was naughty, that it was Satan who made him do wrong. Satan hates God and everything good, she had said, and tries as hard as he can to keep people from pleasing Jesus. Above all, he likes to make little children do wickedly. Nothing gratifies him more than to

make them disobedient, contrary and unamiable. But she had not supposed that Mary, who was not yet three years old, could understand this; and was astonished to hear the child say what she did.

"I know," said Mary, the second time: "it's Satan, and I know what to say to him, too."

"What is it, dear?"

"What Oscar says: 'Go away, naughty Satan. I belong to Jesus.'"

By this time Mary was quite good and pleasant again. Satan does not love to stay with those who keep close to Jesus. So, little boys and girls, when you feel naughty, you will know what to do. Run right to the dear Saviour, and say, "Go away, Satan, I belong to Jesus," and the tempter will surely let you alone. And we who are grown up will remember it too. This is just what the Bible tells us; "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."—Congregationalist.

CHILDREN'S PRAYER-MEETINGS.

Of children's prayer-meetings, in connection with the Sunday-school work, the Independent judiciously says:

Brief prayer-meetings immediately following the ordinary Sunday school session, for the benefit of children, are in favor in some localities. Good judgment is peculiarly called for in the conduct of meetings of this kind. Only those who have special facility in praying with and for children are likely to lead profitably the devotions of such a gathering at such an hour. Words of counsel should be inspired of God's Spirit to prove useful there. Well managed meetings of this character are helpful to Christian children and to young inquirers. But they must be an improvement on the ordinary church prayer-meeting to do a good work for children.

SPEAK FOR JESUS EVERYWHERE.

A young lady entered a cheerless room in one of the lanes of our city, with a few articles of comfort for the poor sufferer, who had fallen from a building a few days previous, and with a broken limb, was stretched upon a bed of suffering. Daily this young lady visited this home of poverty, with supplies for the sick one and his family. She was a follower of Jesus, yet feeling the subject would not interest the sufferer, and hesitating how to approach him with the message of God's love, she waited, losing opportunities to speak for her Master.

One bright morning, as she was placing her delicacies so temptingly beside the sick one, and the more substantial gifts were given to his family, surprise and grief filled his heart, as with tearful eyes the sufferer exclaimed, "Dear lady, I do think you must love the good Lord, to be so kind; may I make so bold as to ask if you do? I did not like to ask," he added, seeing her hesitancy, "but, Oh, He is a blessed Master to serve, and I hope you have found it out." These words reminded her that she had failed to own her Lord, she had not acknowledged that she was working for Him, had not spoken boldly for Jesus, leaving results with Him. As she confessed her love for Jesus, and saw the brightened eyes and smiling face of the sick one, she resolved never again to fail in the duty and pleasure of speaking for the blessed Master. If we are wholly the Lord's, and our hearts are filled with love to Him, how can we fail to speak of his love? Too often, like this young lady, we forget to leave all results with the Lord. We wait for more strength, or more light, to speak aright, forgetting that the dear Saviour can bless our weakest endeavours, and make them rebound to His glory, if we but ask for His strength to be made perfect in our weakness.

THE FIRST SABBATH SCHOOL.

A little French boy, in one of the Sabbath Schools of Paris, was asked by his teacher if there was anything in the Bible about Sabbath Schools. After a moment's hesitation, the pupil replied that he would tell him the next Sunday.

THE FIRST SABBATH SCHOOL.

At the appointed hour the lad appeared and from document in hand clearly set forth three distinct propositions, viz., that the first Christian Sabbath School was held in the temple, at Jerusalem; that Christ himself was the first Sabbath School teacher, and that he had for his pupils the Jewish doctors of the law, of whom he asked and answered questions, which greatly astonished these teachers in Israel.

THE STUFF THAT DREAMS ARE MADE OF.

We find in an old medical journal an interesting compilation of accounts of remarkable dreams. Not all, nor nearly all dreams are produced by impressions made upon the mind during sleep, but this is a frequent exciting cause. A story is told of an officer on board a transport, whose companions could produce in him any kind of dream by whispering in his ear. They often amused themselves in this manner. Once they conducted him through the whole process of a quarrel which ended in a duel. When the parties were supposed to have met, a pistol was put in his hand, and he fired it off. The report awoke him. At another time they found him asleep on a locker, and made him believe that he must swim for his life. They then pretended that a shark was pursuing him, and he must dive. In attempting this he fell off the locker and woke up.

A physician, who was sleeping in a room that smelt strongly of cheese and was swarming with rats, dreamed that he was imprisoned for a political offence, in a huge cheese, that the cheese was attacked by an army of rats, and that the rats had begun to gnaw at him.

A young woman, who had the habit of sucking her thumb while asleep, tried to break herself by covering the thumb with aloes before she went to bed: when she awoke, the aloes were all sucked off. She had dreamed that she was crossing the ocean in a steamer made of wormwood, with plates, dishes, chairs, and everything of wormwood, and that there was a bitter smell all over the ship. There was so strong a bitter taste in her mouth, that on her arrival at Havre she asked for a glass of water; but the attendant brought her an infusion of wormwood, which she gulped down. On her requesting a Paris physician to extract the wormwood from her body he told her that the only remedy was ox-gall, which he gave her by the pound. The bitter taste of the remedy was as bad as that of the wormwood; and to get rid of it she applied to the Pope, who told her that she must make a pilgrimage to the plain where the pillar of salt stood which was formerly Lot's wife, and must eat a piece of salt as large as her thumb. She reached the object of her journey, and then deliberated as to what part of the figure she should break off. The result was, that, as she had a bad habit of sucking her thumb, she should break off and suck that part of the statue. On putting the broken fragment into her mouth she awoke and found that she was sucking her own thumb.

A Mr. Maury caused a series of experiments to be performed on himself when asleep, which afforded very satisfactory results.

First experiment: he caused himself to be tickled with a feather, on the lips and inside of the nostrils. He dreamed that he was subjected to a horrible punishment. A mask of pitch was applied to his face, and then torn roughly off, taking with it the skin of his lips, nose, and face.

Second experiment: A pair of tweezers was held at a little distance from his ear, and struck with a pair of scissors. He dreamed that he heard the ringing of bells. This was soon converted into the tocsin, and this suggested the days of June, 1848.

Third experiment: A bottle of eau de Cologne was held to his nose. He dreamed that he was in a perfumer's shop. This excited visions of the East; and he dreamed that he was in Cologne, in the shop of Jean Marie Farina. Many surprising adventures occurred to him there, the details of which were forgotten.

Fourth experiment: A burning lucifer-match was held close to his nostrils. He dreamed that he was at sea (the wind was blowing in through the windows), and that the magazine of the vessel blew up.

Fifth experiment: He was slightly pinched on the nape of the neck. He dreamed that a blister was applied. And this recalled the recollection of a physician who had treated him in his infancy.

Sixth experiment: A piece of red-hot iron was held close enough to him to communicate a slight sensation of heat. He dreamed that robbers had got into the house, and were forcing the inmates, by putting their feet to the fire, to reveal where their money was. The idea of the robber suggested that of Madame d'Abantes, who, he supposed, had taken him for her secretary, and in whose memoirs he had read some account of bandits.

To be bodily tranquil, to speak little and digest without effort, are absolutely necessary to grandeur of mind or of presence, or to proper development of genius.