

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, N.S., SEPTEMBER 17, 1873.

THE TEACHER.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1873.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, September 21st.

The gracious Call.—Matt. xi. 16-30.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.” John vi. 37.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 25, 26, 28-30.

SUMMARY.—God resists the proud, but gives grace and glory to the humble.

ANALYSIS.—I. The Father's sovereignty. vs. 25, 26. II. The Son's authority. vs. 27. III. The sinner's invitation. vs. 28-30.

EXPOSITION.—Verses 16-19. The unreasonableness of the complaints against both John and Jesus are here illustrated by reference to what is so often seen in children when at play—they complain at one thing at one time and another at another. The people complained of John's severe morality, allowing him to be put in prison for charging Herod with adultery, and now objected to Christ because he performed his miracles so publicly, and did not separate himself more from society. In Luke vii it appears that Jesus immediately after this conversation went to dine with the Pharisee Simon, and there related the parable of the two debtors (verses 40-42.)

Verses 19.—But wisdom is justified of her children. The wise recognize what is right whether in the form of strict morality or in the dress of more genial society.

Verses 20-24.—The woes of these cities were fully realized. The people lived in luxury and refinement, but now the site of those cities is scarcely known. These wicked cities were nevertheless not in a worse condition than those who reject Christ. The threat was fully carried out.

Verses 25.—At that time. In this period of Christ's ministry, but not necessarily at the time of his uttering the preceding words of rebuke. Luke fixes the time more precisely, viz., on the return of the seventy, with their report of works and results. Luke x. 17-22. Answered and said. This word “answered” points to something not stated by Matthew, which gave rise to the words of Christ. Luke gives what Matthew thus hints at—the report of the seventy. Thus the one writer explains and helps out the other. The seeming discord is a real harmony. Thus often. I thank thee. The word so translated often means to confess or acknowledge, as, e. g., one's sins; and then to confess or acknowledge God's benefits, etc., as in praise and thankfulness. Rom. xiv. 11; xv. 9. Compare Rev. iii. 5; Phil. ii. 11. Father. His own—not to be taken with “heaven and earth.” See the same address used publicly in prayer by Christ, in John xi. 41; xii. 28; xvii. 1; Luke xxiii. 34. He used the term Father with a fullness of meaning which it can have in the mouth of none of his disciples; for he was God's own, only Son, by nature, and not merely a child by spiritual relationship. The 27th verse shows this. Hence his custom of saying, “My Father”—separating himself from all men, as holding a quite different relation to God from theirs. Lord of heaven and earth. Universal Sovereign, having power and authority to rule over all, and every thing. Father and Lord, love and sovereignty. His rule or lordship was not that of a tyrant, but of a father, and of Christ's Father. Because. Or, better, “that.” I praise thee “that thou hast hidden,” etc. The same construction is used in Phil. ii. 11, “confess that,” etc. Hid these things from the wise and prudent. The things hidden are, in general, the facts of the Gospel, and of God's grace in man's salvation, as revealed through the Gospel. The Gospel was indeed preached to “the poor,” verse 5, but equally to the rich, and to all. For the meaning of this word “hid,” see 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. Compare Matt. vi. 23. “The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not,” so that they have no spiritual appreciation of Divine truth. Because they make of this world a god, they have no affinity with the true God. So it is now. The wise and prudent. The unbelieving Jews were headed and led on by the Scribes and Pharisees—men who were the religious teachers and patterns of the nation. “The wise” are those possessing the higher forms of knowledge; “the prudent” are men of practical sagacity.

See 1 Cor. ii. Hast revealed them unto babes. This revealing, like the hiding, is internal rather than external—given to the spirit, not to the sense—experimental, not theoretical. It is made to “babes,” that is, men and women of a child-like spirit; those conscious of their own weakness and dependence, ignorance, and need of guidance; who are drawn, therefore, to look to God and trust in him; not self-sufficient and self-satisfied.

Verse 26.—Even so, Father. A word of consent, of rest, assurance that all is right, perfect harmony with the Father—such as is given us at some times in our experience, when we stand face to face with some dark and perplexing providences. We seem then to be raised up quite out of the realm of sight into the clear realm of faith, and we know and are sure that all is well, right, just. For [or that] so it seemed good in thy sight. The most perfect reason for satisfaction with anything is that it is according to God's good pleasure.

Verse 27.—All things are delivered unto me of [by] my Father. Here Christ is addressing, not as in the two preceding verses, the Father, but the disciples. For a like statement, see chap. xviii. 18, where, instead of “all things,” we have “all power,” or authority. See also Phil. ii. 9-11; Col. i. 14-20. We often find Christ spoken of as being made king, etc., as though God gave the government into his hands at some time; and in 1 Cor. xv. 24, we are taught that a time is coming when the Son will deliver “up the kingdom to God, even the Father.” When Christ says, “All things are delivered unto me of my Father,” he means that sinners are not to be dealt with in strict justice, according to desert, but through his grace is to have place.

And no man. Literally, “no one.” Knoweth the Son. The Divine nature of Christ was veiled from human sight, and he was not what to the common eye he seemed. And then, because he was Divine, only God could adequately know him—know him fully, perfectly—for only God knows God. Just as Christ here adds, Neither knoweth any man [one] the Father, save the Son. He asserts his own equality with the Father here as to nature, by declaring the relation of the one to the other to be that of equals. It was this communion of nature that made it possible for Christ to be Saviour, and to become Head over all things. Thus we have here an explanation of the statement that all things were delivered to him, and also of the statement following, that he to whomsoever the Son will reveal the Father, can also know him. He cannot know the Father as the Son does, with his full Divine knowledge; but to the fullness of his capacity. Because in Christ he is brought into fellowship with God, reconciled, made one, or at one, and so the life of God becomes his life. Christ is the vine, they are the branches—one life in him and them.

Verse 28.—Come unto me. How does he mean this? What is this coming? Not indeed a mere bodily coming; not a crowding around his form of flesh. The thousands thronged him were not helped by such coming. Nay, it was a coming in heart—by faith, by trust, by a sense of want. We see not the form of Christ, but he comes to us. These words are his call to us—Come unto me. Ye that labor and are heavy laden. With special reference to sin and guilt; for, first of all, he saves from these, and all other help is rather consequent upon his help. “Labor” is the active sense of an inward struggle to get rid of sin; “heavy laden” is the load of guilt which one knows his sin to have incurred. All have sinned and are guilty; but not all so know and feel this as to be aware of the need of a saviour. I will give you rest. From both the labor and the load, cleansing and pardon, new life and new relations. What a rest is that!

Verse 29.—Take my yoke upon you. The yoke is the token of submission. Christ had just declared his supreme lordship, and that men have only so much of God as he gives them. We do not go to Christ as his equals. We go as beggars, empty-handed, and give ourselves up to him, to be his, his only, for he bought us. And learn of me. Disciple means learner, and this learning is that revelation mentioned in verse 25. Meek and lowly in heart. Not like the world's kings and conquerors—proud, distant, unapproachable. Though in nature God, and made King of the universe, yet I am full of sympathy for the weakest, lowest, vilest even, if he but feels his need of me, and comes to me. It is just in this condescension of Christ to meet our utmost want and need, that he brings, and can bring, rest to our souls. We must have, as we do have, One that comes clear down to us, and down to all that is down deepest and lowest in us, and so unites himself to us, that he gently take us up, folds us to his breast, puts us into himself, and himself into us.

Verse 30.—For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Very exacting is Christ—demanding the whole heart and the whole life, the work of hand, and foot, and tongue: oftentimes the surrender, not of comforts, property, friends, but of liberty and life; demanding imprisonment, torture, execution. Yet the yoke is easy and the burden light, because love fills the heart and binds it to Christ, and Christ is always present to give grace and strength, to give patience, courage, triumph.

QUESTIONS.—Vs. 25. At what time did Jesus speak these words? Luke x. 17-24. For what did he give thanks to his Father? What does he mean by “these things”? Who are meant by “the wise and prudent”? Rom. ii. 18-24. How does God hide from them the things of his kingdom? 2 Cor. iv. 4. Who are meant by “babes”? Matt. xviii. 3. How is the revelation made to them? 1 Cor. ii. 9-12.

Vs. 26. What reason does he give for his joy? Is it a reason why we should be thankful?

Vs. 27. What was delivered to Christ? By whom? What was this act of delivering? In what respect does no one know the Son but the Father? How does Christ's knowledge of the Father differ from the Christian's? What is a right knowledge of God? 1 Cor. xv. 34.

Vs. 28. What is it to “come to Christ”? Who are invited? What is the “rest” promised? Can it be found elsewhere? John xiv. 27.

Vs. 29. What is Christ's yoke? The meaning of the word disciple? How has Christ shown himself to be “meek and lowly in heart”? Heb. v. 8-10.

Vs. 30. What makes Christ's yoke easy? 2 Cor. xii. 9-12. Have Christians found these words true?

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. Scripture Catechism, 142.

SUNDAY, September 28th.—Concert.

Youths' Department.

BABY AND CHICKENS.

How many babies has the old hen? As soon as they are born they run round, and scratch in the dirt, and pick up their dinners, and talk the funniest little talk you ever heard. She has not a thing to do for them. Oh, yes; she covers them under her wings at night, and they sleep sweetly under her warm feathers. She keeps close to them, and takes them to walk, and gives them a great deal of good advice. Hear her talk. I wonder what she is saying.

Our baby is a helpless little thing. Her mamma has everything to do for her. She washes and dresses and feeds her, and teaches her to walk and to talk, and ever so many other things. Is she not a darling? And the more we do for her the better we love her. God sent us a great blessing when he sent her to us, and we shall try to bring her up so that when God comes for her, he will not be sorry that he trusted her to our love and care.—Child's Paper.

WHAT MY LITTLE BOY TAUGHT ME.

“Tommy, come to mamma.”

A sullen little face, with scowling brows and pouting lips, appeared at the door.

“What have you got to do?”

“I've got to stay in bed all day.” And with the words Tommy jerked off his jacket, and kicked one boot across the chamber floor.

“What naughty thing have you been doing?”

“Spoiling the calla lily.”

The words, tone and manner of the little boy of six were so hard and defiant that a vague alarm seized me, and I said gently, “Come here, my poor little laddie, and get in mamma's bed. You look very cold.”

The downcast eyes were lifted in a strange, glad surprise, and the remaining garments were laid aside softly. Slowly, shyly and questioningly the little fellow crept in by my side, and lay quite still.

“Now, Tommy, tell mamma all about it.”

“I only just pinched the litlest leaf. I wanted to see what it was rolled up so tight for. There's ever so many more.”

“Yes, Tommy, but no more like this one. All the year you have seen these little rolls unfold into broad, glossy, green leaves; but this one, Tommy, was a bud. If you

had watched without touching it, you would have seen it grow larger and lighter in color, until some bright morning you would have run down stairs to shout and clap your little hands over the most beautiful flower you ever beheld. It would have looked up lovingly into your face from its heart of gold, and its pure velvet lips would have smiled upon you for letting it live and bloom. I am so sorry you hurt the dear little bud, that now can never be a flower.”

“Can't it be mended, mamma?”

“No, dear.”

“You mended the cup I broke.”

“Yes, darling, a broken china cup may be made whole again; but a sweet little bud waiting to become a rich, golden flower pinched and torn by cruel fingers, can never be restored.”

“And God cannot restore it mamma?”

The penitence, pathos and despair of the child's face was indescribable. I drew the little form to my breast in silent awe.

“I'm most as bad as Cain, mamma,” sobbing heavily.

“How is that, dear?”

“I've killed something. But, mamma, I did not mean to, truly. I didn't know I was hurting the little bud. I'll never touch a plant again—only look at it, mamma, and love it, and wait for the morning, when it'll be a great, beautiful flower.”

Precious little teacher! What a lesson for us mothers! In the hurry and worry of this toiling, moiling world, are we not in momentary danger, as we walk in the garden of our homes, of pinching, it not killing, something? Think of the tragedy it would be if, through our haste and heedlessness, we should crush and destroy the bud of tenderness—so full and bursting in the heart of a child—and give to society a callous, unfeeling man or woman! There are such in every community. Did the good God, whose name is Love, make them so? Who, then, is the wretched culprit?

And where shall he or she be found in that great and awful morning when the Lord of the Garden shall demand the full and glorious flower which was to have been developed and perfected from the sweet little bud given into the bosom of father and mother? —Home Guardian.

A TEST OF FRIENDSHIP.

It is one of the severest tests of friendship to tell a man of his faults. If you are angry with a man, it is not hard to go to him and stab him with words, and look, stinging him to madness, or disgracing him in the presence of his foes. But so to love a man that you cannot bear to see the stain of sin upon him, and to go to him alone, and speak painful truths in touching, tender words, that is friendship, as rare as it is precious. Few, indeed, have such friends. Our friends are apt to pet us, and praise us, and flatter us, and justify us in all we do, and tell us we are right when we are wrong, and they know it, and might correct us, but do not for fear they shall hurt our feelings. They allow our enemies to rip the coverings from our faults and show us what we are. If friends would reprove us more, enemies would wound us less.

Do you wish to be my friend? Then tell me my faults to my face. Will you do so before you are angry? Will you still tell them to me, though I am annoyed at your faithfulness? Will you refuse to be an enemy, and not allow yourself to be counted as a stranger, but keep on in faithful dealing till you have won me to the right? If so, I greet you and welcome you, for “Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.”

HOW STATUES ARE MADE.

The sculptor having designed a figure, first makes a sketch of it in clay only a few inches in height. When he has satisfied himself with the general altitude, a cast is taken of his sketch, and from it a model in clay is prepared of the full size he designs for his statue, whether half the height, or life-size, or colossal.

The process of building the clay, as it is called, upon the strong iron armatura or skeleton on which it stands on its pedestal, and the bending and fixing this armatura into the form of the limbs, constitute a work of vast labor of a purely manual sort, for whose performance all artists able to afford it employ the skilled workmen to be obtained in Rome.

The rough clay, rudely assuming the shape of the intended statue, then passes into the sculptor's hands and undergoes his most elaborate manipulation, by which it

is reduced (generally after the labor of several months) to the precise and perfectly-finished form he desires should hereafter appear in marble. This done the *formatore* takes a cast of the whole, and the clay is destroyed. From the last plaster cast again in due time the marble is hewn by three successive workmen. The first gives it a rough outline, the second brings it by rule and compass to close resemblance to the cast, and the third brings it to perfection.

AN UNEXPECTED AWARD.

The following story is found in recent English papers:

“The Bishop of Litchfield hath a taste for walking, and on one occasion, some time ago, he walked from a church in the Black Country to the railway station where he was to take the train for home. On the way he happened to observe a group of men sitting together on the ground, and immediately resolved to “say a good word in season” to them, after the fashion of Caliph Haroun or the average district tract distributor. “Well, my good men,” said his lordship *incognito*, “what are you doing?” The response of one of the men was not calculated to please and encourage the amiable prelate. “We bin a loyin’,” he said. “Lying!” said the horrified Bishop; “What do you mean?” “Why, yer see,” was the explanation, “one on us fun a kettle, and we bin a tryin’ who can tell the biggest lie to have it.” “Shocking!” said the Bishop, and straightway improving the occasion he proceeded to impress upon the sinners the enormity of lying. He informed them that he had been taught that one of the greatest sins was to tell a lie, and, in fact, so strongly had this been urged upon him that never in the whole course of his life had he told a lie. Would that we might relate how those wicked men were moved and charmed by the recital of such saintliness! Alas! no sooner had the excellent Bishop made this announcement than there was a gleeful shout, “Gie th’ governor th’ kettle; gie th’ governor th’ kettle!”

A HOSPITAL FOR BIRDS.

The world moves, surely, and charity to the helpless is gradually coming uppermost; but of all the provisions for the needy the newest is an institution for sick pets, in New York, at No. 3 Greene St. It is devoted exclusively to the treatment of sick and maimed dogs and birds and other pets. Although limited as to space it gives accommodation to large numbers of little sufferers. Cages, which line the sides of the room, contain canaries with the “pip,” canaries afflicted with the asthma and behaving under the infliction very much like human invalids similarly situated, canaries with broken legs, and, in fine, canaries with all the diseases known to their race. Some of the little sufferers have broken wings or legs, which are bandaged or splinted scientifically, and they chirp mournfully when a sudden spasm of pain overcomes them.

“It is our dull season,” said Mrs. — “We haven't many birds under treatment now, but sometimes we have the place full. Some time ago a canary was brought to us that had one leg eaten off by a rat: Nobody thought it would live, but after a time we brought it round, and it sings now as well as ever. The great difficulty was to teach it to balance itself on one leg, instead of two; but after a while it learnt even that, and now hops around as well as ever. The only thing in which it differs from other birds, is that it is put to bed every night on a napkin laid in the bottom of the cage, instead of roosting.”

TOO TRUE.

The Working Church says: “The Summer styles of piety are just coming in. For morning dress a loose gown of neglected devotion and careless gossip. Outdoor costume is to consist of a cold indifference to religious professions while away from home, trimmed with plaits of grumbling at the hot weather; an upper garment of dissimulation, (very fashionable at croquet parties; indeed, this material will be found serviceable for all purposes and on all occasions,) and bonnets of prodigal display and disordered vanity. Dinner and evening suits will be made of illusion, cut very low, deeply flushed with excitement, underskirt of heartless flirtation, and long train of extravagance and discontent. Garments of praise have been entirely discarded, as most ladies do not care to attend church in Summer; those who do will probably wear looks of curiosity or drowsiness.

“For gentlemen's wear, the off-in-the-country swagger retains its popularity. A jaunty habit of semi-profanity or vulgarity is thought to be very becoming to city gentlemen while visiting country cousins. For holiday wear on excursions, picnics, etc., nothing is surer to give satisfaction than downright selfishness. Showy ignorance makes the best summer necktie.”