

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, N. S., JUNE 18, 1873.

THE TEACHER.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1873.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, June 22nd.

The Last Days of Joseph.—Gen. 1. 15-26.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Rom. xii. 21.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 24-26.

SUMMARY.—Joseph was like Christ in his spirit of forgiveness; he dwells with Christ in the home of the forgiven.

ANALYSIS.—I. Forgiveness sought. vs. 15-18 II. Forgiveness granted. vs. 19-21. III. Joseph's end. vs. 22-26.

EXPOSITION.—On the grave's brink Jacob's natural eye dimmed, his spiritual eye is clear, seeing the future in God's light as God's hand drew aside the veil, his sons all gathered around him, the old sire, now one hundred and forty-seven years of age, in brief, strong, accurate, pregnant sentences, sketched for each the future of his tribe. We last week stood with the eager yet awe-struck sons, and reverently listened to the words spoken to Joseph and Judah. Judah's blessing was studied, because it was a prophecy of our Lord's advent and triumph, and of the world's blessing in him. We have seen the parting of children from an aged and infirm parent, obliged to go away with the almost certainty of no more seeing that beloved face again in life. We have followed Jacob even from his infancy, have noted his natural temperament and tendencies, both bad and good, and the entrance and gradual operation of grace, have marked failings and virtues, sins and good deeds, sorrows and joys, the long, long discipline of a frowning providence, clouded till so late, when the sun at last shone out so clear, not one cloud in all the horizon. "Jacob gathered up his feet into the bed and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people." Then came the embalming, according to Egyptian custom, and was needful in order to remove him to Canaan; and then came next the noted funeral, and the bones of the old saint were laid in the land of promise, of covenant, of his hope and love, and that too in the part of this land already his own in right of inheritance. See verses 1-14. The mourners go back again to their Egyptian home.

Verse 15.—When they saw, etc., they said Joseph will peradventure hate, etc. Home again from the funeral! There's a change! The lost parent, the father, the common father, the bond of union, the centre of affection and reverence is gone! Relations are changed? What next? Often is this question asked by surviving children. What deathless energy in conscience! Save when cleansed and pacified it is a worm that never dies, a fire that is never quenched, a scourge forever scourging, a hell within. One wicked deed, how it lives in the conscience. Done in a moment of time, it is undone never. Wrought out in a twinkling, it stays in after time itself is dead. And it carries with it terror. It turns a man into a coward. It plants within "a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." Jacob is dead. Jacob loved Joseph, and Joseph Jacob, each the other. Well might they. That, thought the guilty ten, that, we can understand. And, too, we can see why for father's sake Joseph smothered, or rather held back, caged up, his just wrath at us. He has the power, and the right. We are at once powerless and guilty. How the poor souls stood there trembling with terror lest the blow should come swift and sure and deadly, the very patterns of a sinner against God when he knows himself to be a sinner, and knows himself to be without a surety, without the Surety and Refuge.

Verse 16.—Sent a messenger unto Joseph. They felt themselves to be in danger, were thoroughly aroused, and could not then, like so many dreaming souls, just lie still and merely wish that it were otherwise. Whom did they send? Some one they would seek, who was interested in them both, and who, by this community of interest, could act as "daysman" between both parties. The guilty ones were only the ten. Benjamin was innocent, was the one only darling, full brother of Joseph, and yet was identified fully with the guilty ten in feeling and life. Whom else could they, should they send? It is not said

that it was he, but it was so likely that he should have been chosen, we can hardly doubt that he was. Thy father did command before he died. "Before he died," opens back upon years of doubt, questionings, forebodings, communings, plannings, as to what should be when Jacob was taken away. The fear after the funeral was no sudden panic, coming from a new thought in the new relations. No, it was an old fear which, like the fire of a volcano, had been burning all the while deep down in the heart, and might not burst out before because its time had not come. They had talked their fears not only to each other, but to their father. He commanded, used the dissuasive of parental authority.

Verse 17.—So shall ye say unto Joseph. Say it after I am gone, after I am buried, and you are home again; say it as from father, father's intercession as speaking up from his grave, speaking out from his people to whom he shall be gathered, speaking down from heaven, pleading, interceding for you. The unity of his children in the bond of love and peace, as a people truly one, to become one nation he longed for mightily. Forgive, I pray thee. I, Jacob, Israel, who so loved you, whom you so loved, and so faithfully befriended, whom you have just laid away in the land of his hope, and of your hope, around whose lifeless body you just wept together, I your father, the father of the ten who tremble with fear before you. I cannot command it as a thing of right and justice, but I beg it as a favor—forgive. The trespass of thy brethren and their sin, for they did unto thee evil. They know it, you know it, I know it. It was "trespass," "sin," "evil." That only, wholly, horribly. They were guilty, they are guilty. It would be just if you were to blot them out, sweep them from the earth. But forgive! What a confession, what a plea to come up from the grave and down from heaven, and out from the inmost heart of a beloved parent just buried, and to be poured into the ears of such a son as Joseph. The ten have that plea urged in their favor. We pray thee forgive the trespasses of the servants of the God of thy father. No self-righteousness here. They cast themselves on his simple mercy, that only. Yet they have a plea. In their hands no price they bring, but in heart and mouth they bring and urge a plea, a reason, a ground for pardon. "Servants of the God of thy father." It is a great thing, it was to them a great thing to have such a plea. It is a great, glorious thing for a trembling guilty sinner to have the plea of Christ's love and life and death to urge before God. For Christ's sake, pardon. Then as the most wretched beggar unkempt, unwashed, unclothed, can go with confidence to the bank, having the check of a millionaire placed in his hands, and surely get what he asks, so may the wretched soul draw from God's bank of life eternal.

And Joseph wept when they [in the person of the messenger] spake unto him. Well might he, even if he had been less full of gentleness and goodness than he was. Was he grieved that he had been misunderstood and doubted? He was surely touched, moved, melted, by the deep penitence and contrition of the wrong doers. He, in his tears, is a type of God as moved in his tender mercies.

Verse 18.—Nothing shall be left untried, and so his brethren [themselves in person] went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants. They do not hold off, flee away, try to hide themselves. They just give themselves up, wholly, utterly, finally, put themselves in his hands, cast themselves on his mercy. "We deserve to die. We cannot mend it now. We are in thy hands. Do on us thy pleasure. But, oh, we long for pardon." What a picture, what a type of a soul going to Christ, to God, and just giving up! So simple! So exactly true to the necessities of our immortal being.

Verse 19.—Fear not. The prayer answered. The word of peace, blessed word, spoken to the soul, the conscience. The joy of assured reconciliation. Am I in the place of God. Explained in Romans xii. 19. Joseph forgives them as a brother. He yet reminds them that their sin as sin is against God, and for pardon, full and final pardon, they must look not to him, but to God. He also, as we have seen him do before, points them to God's purpose of good accomplished in their purpose of evil. Such is the mystery of grace, weaving such radiant fabrics from such dark and foul threads, making the most beautiful and pure white lilies grow from the blackness of the foulest mud. I will nourish, etc., still the type of God's voice speaking to his saints in the character of

their shepherd. Spake kindly. Literally, and most expressively, "to their hearts, comforting." Verse 22-26.—And now we part with Joseph whom we have learned to love as by nature more lovely than Jacob, and by grace not less transformed into God's image.

QUESTIONS.—What became of Jacob after the blessings were pronounced? Vs. 15. What was thought of Joseph's brethren? Why had they this fear now more than before Jacob's death? How long since they had committed this crime? Vs. 16. What do they now do? Who was probably the messenger? Does this verse show how they had felt before Jacob's death? Explain. Do you suppose that Jacob shared their fears?

Vs. 17. What were Jacob's words? Why would these be likely to persuade Joseph? Was it well that no effort was made to conceal or explain away the sin? Whose words are those beginning, "and now we pray?" Why was the father's plea first? Why do the petitioners call themselves "servants of the God of thy father's father?" Are they as full in their confession of sin as Jacob was for them? What was the effect upon Joseph? Vs. 18. What did the brothers do next? Vs. 19-21. Explain the phrase, "Am I in the place of God?" Why the reference to God's purpose? How did Joseph comfort his brothers? How does God comfort the penitent? Vs. 22-26. What lessons has Joseph's life taught us?

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. Scripture Catechism, 123. SUNDAY, June 29th.—Concert.

Youths' Department.

LOST AND FOUND.

The chill November day was done, The working world home laring; The wind came roaring thro' the streets And set the gaslights flaring; And ho helplessly and aimlessly The seared old leaves were flying; When mingled with the southing wind, I heard a small voice crying—

And shivering on the corner stool A child of four or over; No cloak nor hat her small, soft arms, And wind-blown curls to cover. Her dimpled face was stained with tears; Her round blue eyes ran over; She cherished in her wee, cold hand, A bunch of faded clover.

And one hand round her treasure, while She slipped in mine the other; Half scared, half confidential, said, "Oh! please, I want my mother." "Tell me your street and number, pet; Don't cry, I'll take you to it." Sobbing, she answering, "I forget; The organ made me do it."

"He came and played at Milly's steps; The monkey took the money, And so I followed down the street, The monkey was so funny. I've walked about a hundred hours, From one street to another; The monkey's gone, I've spoiled my flowers, O! please, I want my mother."

"But what's your mother's name, and what's her street? Now, think a minute." "My mother's name is mama dear—'The street—I can't begin it.'" "But what is strange about the house, Or new, not like the others?" "I guess you mean my trundle-bed, Mine and my little brother's."

"Oh, dear, I ought to be at home To help him say his prayers; He's such a baby, he forgets, And we are both such players— And there's a bar between to keep From pitching on each other, For Harry rolls when he's asleep; Oh, dear! I want my mother."

The sky grew stormy; people passed All muffled, homeward faring; "You'll have to spend the night with me," I said, at last, despairing. I tied a kerchief round her neck— "What ribbon's this my blossom?" "Why! don't you know?" she smiling asked, And drew it from her bosom.

A card, with number, street, and name, My eyes astonished met it; "For," said the little one, "you see I might some time forget it; And so I wear the little thing That tells you all about it; For mother says she's very sure I would get lost without it."

THE DANCING CHRISTIAN.

A young lady said, "Pastor, I don't see any harm in dancing, and if I could only see there is harm in it, I would abandon it forever."

Pastor.—"Well, Sallie, if you are honest in that, I think you have danced your last. Will you answer me a few questions? Do Christians have confidence in, and esteem for their fellow Christians who dance? or do they not express sorrow and sometimes indignation, at their conduct?"

Sallie.—"Yes, sir, they do make a great deal of fuss about it. But I don't think they ought to."

Pastor.—"Never mind now about whether they ought to or not; you admit the fact that Christians do lose confidence in their brethren who dance, and feel grieved at their course."

Now for the next question. Does not the world lose confidence in a professing Christian who dances? Have you not heard them laugh derisively at the dancing Christian?"

Sallie.—"Yes, sir, I know it is so, but how could it be otherwise, when Christians make it almost the unpardonable sin?"

Pastor.—"Never mind about the reason for it; the fact is what I am after. You say that the unconverted have no confidence in the Christian who dances. Now, once more, when your own heart is impressed with a sense of the Divine Presence, and you begin to question your heart as to its hope of heaven, does not the fact that you have indulged in this amusement give you pain, and cause you to doubt your being a Christian? Don't you say to yourself, Now if I was a Christian, I would not want to dance? And thus you lose confidence in your own piety. Is it not so?"

Sallie.—"Yes sir, I have had trouble on that account, and I know in our last protracted meeting the fact of my having danced prevented me from working as I wanted to, for I said that such Christians as I am ought to take the back seats. But I am not as some, for I am not covetous, as I know some of our prominent members to be; nor do I dodge my debts as some others, nor do I visit dram shops, nor am I guilty of falsehood, and I am no gossip or retailer of slander, or a backbiter."

Pastor.—"Stop, stop, my daughter; we are now estimating the relative heinousness of sins; the question is this: Is dancing a sinful amusement? And we have seen that it causes Christians to lose confidence in the one who indulges in it; that the world also laughs in derision at the dancing Christian; and finally it paralyses the dancer himself, so that he cannot work for the salvation of souls. Can it be that an amusement which destroys so much, can in itself be pure and good?"

Sallie.—"Pastor, I never looked at it in that light before. I have felt all that you said, and now, convinced that anything which destroys the confidence that my fellow Christians ought to have in me, which gives sinners an occasion to sneer at religion, and which, as I from experience can testify, destroys spirituality, and our own personal joy in religion, must be wrong, and so from this time forth I dance no more."

PRAYER.

BY F. B. GAGE.

Feed me and lead me, Saviour so mild; Feed me and lead me, Thine own little child.

Feed me and lead me, Wherever thou wilt; Feed me and lead me, And cleanse me from guilt.

Feed me and lead me, 'Tis all that I need; Feed me and lead me, My Shepherd indeed.

A WOMAN'S QUESTION.

An infidel was lecturing on his favorite topic, against the Bible and Christianity, in one of the largest towns of the north of England. He was particularly bitter against the Word of God. At the conclusion of the lecture, feeling much delighted with his effort, he said: "If any one wishes to reply, let him come forward and speak."

After a brief period a middle-aged woman came up to the stand, and said, "Sir, I wish to ask you a question."

"Well, my good woman, what is the question?"

"Ten years ago," said she, "I was left a widow with eight small children; my husband died poor; he left me not much except a Bible. That book has been read daily, and I've found sweet comfort and great support in its gracious truths. God has blessed me and my children, and has mercifully supplied my wants and theirs. I have a good hope in Jesus Christ, and expect when I die to dwell with Him forever. Now, sir, what has your belief done for you?"

Rather confused, the infidel replied, "My good woman, I've no desire to interfere with your enjoyment."

"That is not the question. What has your way of thinking done for you?"

Much confounded, the man beat a retreat amid the laughter of a large congregation, who felt the widow had surely and effectively silenced the infidel.

MEMORIAL DAY AT RICHMOND, VIRGINIA.

A correspondent of the N. Y. Examiner and Chronicle—Dr. Kendrick we believe—gives a graphic account of the recent Memorial day, at which time it was proposed to complete the Memorial Fund of \$300,000 as an Endowment of the Baptist College at Richmond. We copy the principal portion of the article:—

Thursday the 29th of May, 1873, was a great day in what I have ventured to style the Baptist capital of the world, and it will never cease to be memorable in Baptist annals. Then and there the heroic purposes, toils and anxieties that have so deeply stirred Virginia during the past year, culminated in a sort of grand orchestral burst and crash of enthusiasm such as marks the successful close of the overture.

IMPORT OF THE OCCASION.

In 1773 there were in the territory now known as Virginia and West Virginia, about 60 Baptist churches, 40 ministers, and 3,000 communicants. That was the time of trial in which the fathers were fighting, with the courage of patient suffering as well as bold defiance to unjust laws, the long battle of religious freedom. Half a century after this, in 1823, the Virginia Baptist General Association was organized in Richmond, there being then in the State about 300 churches, 200 ministers, and 40,000 communicants. Now after the lapse of another half century, there are in the same territory 1,333 churches, 747 ministers, and 150,000 communicants. At the last session of the General Association it was resolved to observe the semi-centennial meeting of 1873 as a Jubilee service in relation to 1823, and a Memorial service in relation to 1773. The thought was sublime, and the execution has been worthy of the thought.

THE GATHERING.

The brotherhood in Richmond confidently expected a vast attendance of the Baptist family on this occasion, and for once at least there was a blessing on those who expect much—they were not disappointed. The tribes mustered in their might. It was another Chicago deluge, only covering mountain peaks which that did not reach. Over sixteen hundred delegates had reported in advance their purpose to be present.—These came, and how many more not delegates, promiscuous visitors of both sexes and all ages, I dare not even guess. Representatives appeared from the far North and the far South, and from almost every quarter of our broad land. Of course Old Virginia herself supplied the vast majority of the thronging host. Extra trains of cars ran from Petersburg, Danville, Fredericksburg, and I know not what other places. Since the Dutch took Holland there has been no such bloodless, easy and overwhelming victory, as the capture of Richmond by the Baptists on this unique Memorial day. For these peaceful but hungry invaders the elastic hospitality of Richmond, incredible as it may appear, made ample provision of bed and board.

As it was manifest that no church, hall or theatre in the city could accommodate the anticipated throng, a Tabernacle had been erected on the Richmond College grounds, something over a mile from Capitol Square. This high tent is capable of seating some 6,000 persons. The result vindicated the wisdom which prompted this temporary structure.

INTRODUCTORY SERVICES.

On Wednesday night the General Association met for organization and preliminary services at the Second Baptist church, on Main street. This honor belonged of right to the Second church, by reasons of the fact that the Association took being and form in 1823 under the wing of her hospitality. The house was filled to repletion, hundreds going away unable to obtain entrance. Dr. J. L. M. Curry, moderator for last year, on calling the body to order, made remarks appropriate to the occasion. Dr. Broadus, of South Carolina, offered prayer. After the transaction of some routine business the most important item being the re-election of Dr. Curry as moderator, the pastor of the Second church, Dr. C. C. Bitting, delivered an earnest address of welcome. It contained appropriate allusions to departed worthies, to surviving fathers, especially to Dr. J. B. Jeter, just returned from Italy (the delegates rising at the mention of his name, in token of respect and joy,) and to the numerous representatives in attendance from the various States in the Union. Then followed responsive addresses from several of these representatives. Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, New-Jersey, Maryland, North Carolina, New-York, Illinois, South Carolina, and West Virginia were called in the order