

The Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, N. S., JUNE 10, 1874.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1874.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES. SUNDAY, June 14th, 1874.

The True Prophet.—Deut. xviii. 9-16.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write.” John i. 45.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 15-18.

SUMMARY.—God’s people listen to the voice not of deceiving spirits but of the Son of God.

ANALYSIS.—I. False prophets. Vs. 8-14. II. The true prophet. Vs. 15, 16.

EXPOSITION.—Deuteronomy.—Our lesson to-day is in “the fifth book of Moses,” called also Deuteronomy from the Greek words deuterios [second], and nomos [law], because it is a repetition of the law. “The book consists chiefly of three discourses, delivered by Moses shortly before his death. They were spoken to all Israel in the plains of Moab, on the eastern side of Jordan (i. 1) in the eleventh month of the last year of their wanderings, the fortieth year after their exodus from Egypt (i. 3)” The first discourse extends through i-iv; the second through v-xvi; the third through xvii-xxx. Then follows a solemn charge by Moses to Israel to hear, obey, and preserve the law (xxxi), the song of Moses and his blessing of the twelve tribes (xxxii, xxxiii), and a brief account of the death, perhaps appended by Joshua (xxxiv). The discourses were admirably adapted to prepare Israel for life in Canaan, which they were now about to enter. We find breathing through the whole the lofty, heroic, believing, loving, wise spirit of the noble old leader, a sublime close to a sublime life!

The interval.—Last Sabbath we found and left Israel in the desert valley, at a point not far from the Red Sea, encamped on their march to “compass the land of Edom.” They had to make a weary journey of about one hundred and fifty miles to get from Mount Hor to a point only thirty or forty miles to the east of it, because the Edomites would not let them go through their country peaceably. They afterwards encountered and vanquished the Amorites. Num. xxi. 21-24, Deut. ii. 24-37. These people lived to the north of the Dead Sea, on the east of Jordan. While encamped near the Jordan, Balak, king of Moab, with the aid of Balaam, of Midian, sought to bring God’s curse on Israel, and with partial success. Num. xxii-xxv. At length the eventful hour has nearly arrived for the passage of the Jordan. Now they are listening to the last instructions of their great leader.

The connection.—The Scripture of to-day’s lesson is in the chapter treating of the law of the ministers of religion. The preceding part refers to the priests and Levites. But besides these, and aside from these, they had thus far had Moses, who was not less a religious teacher than a national ruler and leader. Joshua was to take his place as to leadership, but not as a religious teacher. Some provision beyond that furnished by the priests and Levites in their regular official labors would be required. This was to be furnished. So Moses first warns them against the false prophets, and then instructs and admonishes them with reference to the true.

Verse 9.—“When thou art come into the land, etc. Which now lay just across the Jordan from their encampment, and was very soon to be entered. It is kept before them that it was to be to them a gift, not a payment. Their hardships past, and their prowess yet to be shown, had not given them a right to it. The abominations of those nations. That is, of the nations then occupying the land. See Ex. iii. 8. The abominations here specially intended, are those mentioned in verses 10-14. But with these went the most gross and revolting forms of immorality, the most shameless debauchery. They were pre-eminently corrupt in a pre-eminently corrupt age. This caution, this solemn warning and charge, was made not without good reason. The danger was great, and was not wholly avoided.

Verses 10, 11.—“There shall not be found among you one, etc. We note how God’s law speaks to the individual. “One sinner” in a community can “destroy much good,” and sometimes bring down sore judgment on multitudes. Maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire. Reference is here made to the worship of Moloch the fire god and tutelar deity of the

Ammonites, 2 Kings xxiii. 10-13; 1 Kings xi. 7. The name, of which Milcom is probably another form (1 Kings xi. 5), signifies king. So the name Baal signifies master or lord. The latter was “the sun-god of Tyre,” and the worship of the two seems to have been equally akin. 2 Kings xvii. 16, 17; xxi. 5, 6. A part of it consisted in burning alive children as a sacrifice, as appears from 2 Chron. xxviii. 3; Deut. xii. 31; Jer. vii. 31; xix. 5; Ps. cvi. 37, 38. “To pass through the fire” probably means to go through it to Moloch, in the way of sacrifice, and not to pass between “two burning pyres, as a purificatory rite.” The Rabbinus say that the children were burned in the arms of a heated brazen image of Moloch. Licentiousness and sorcery seem also to have entered into the worship as important and recognized elements of it. Divination, etc. The number of words here used shows how extensive was the system of divination at that time. That these practices were all mere jugglery we cannot safely affirm. Wicked spirits have to do with men, and in Christ’s time were allowed to show their power in frequent “possessions,” in results as unlike their usual operations as the miracles of Christ were unlike the ordinary operations of his grace.

Verse 12.—“All that do these things. All, whether among the heathen or the Hebrews. An abomination unto the Lord [Jehovah]. That which causes loathing, abhorrence. We must not think of God as pleased with us, when displeased with our character and conduct. Because of these abominations the Lord [Jehovah] thy God doth drive them out from [disposes them] before thee. To many it has seemed a wicked and barbarous thing that the Israelites invaded Canaan, took away from its inhabitants their possessions, and waged wars of extermination. God required them to do this, he had a supreme right over them to take from them lands and life, when and as he chose, quite irrespective of their character, and that in fact his judgments upon them were for their gross immorality. Their cup of iniquity was full.

Verses 13, 14.—“Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord [Jehovah] thy God. This refers to the thorough loyalty to God which causes men to hold fast to him and his word. God hath not suffered thee so to do. Literally, “hath not so given to thee.” One of the most marked distinctions of the people of God as compared with other men is their love of God’s word, and loyalty to it.

Verse 15.—“The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet. “Unto thee,” not unto them. The one Prophet there intended was Christ, as appears from Acts iii. 22, 23; vii. 37; John i. 21, 45; i. 25, and other passages. The prophetic order seems also to have been intended. Vs. 20-22. From the midst of thee. Not from heathen nations. From the day when the cloudy and fiery pillar appeared God had dwelt visibly with Israel, and given law and instruction to the people through the leaders. Of thy brethren. Reminding us of Heb. ii. 14 18. Like unto me. That is, to Moses. Other prophets were not like Moses in the respects named in xxxiv. 10-12. Christ, however, as anti-type “fulfilled” all that was typified in those respects. John x. 35, 36; xvii. 8; Heb. i. 1, 2. Some respects in which Moses may be contrasted with Christ, are mentioned in Heb. iii. 1-6. Unto him ye shall hearken. Shall heed and obey his instructions. The authority of all the prophets, and of all their teaching was like that of Christ, divine, and hence perfect.

Verse 16.—“According to all that thou desirest, etc. Ex. xx. 19. Lest I die. “From verses 17 and 18 we learn that it was in answer to this request that the promise of Christ was given. Verse 17 shows that the natural fears felt by a guilty conscience are not without reason. Verse 18.—“My words. The words of God which we have in the Bible. All that I shall command. Thanks for the fidelity of revelation even where it condemns.

QUESTIONS.—Why is the name Deuteronomy given to the fifth book of Moses? Where was Israel when Moses spoke the words of to-day’s Scripture? i. 5. What had occurred between that lesson and this? Numbers xxi. 21; xxv. Va. 9. What general charge is here given to Israel? What nations were in the promised land? Ex. xxxiii. 2. Ve. 10, 11. What was it to “pass through the fire”? Chron. xxviii. 3. In whose worship were these children sacrificed? Lev. xviii. 21. Was this worship connected with magical arts? 2 Kings

xvii. 17. What do you think of such worship? Why are so many kinds of magical arts mentioned?

Vs. 12. Why were those practicing these arts an offence to God? What right had Israel to enter Canaan and take the country by force? What promise did God give? Have Christians any similar promise? Luke xii. 32.

Vs. 13. What command is here given? Explain it.

Vs. 15, 16. What promise here? What was a prophet? Ex. vii. 1. Who was the promised Prophet. Acts iii. 22 24; vii. 37. Were other prophets also meant? Vs. 20-22. Wherein was Christ like Moses? Deut. xxxiv. 10-12; Heb. i. 1, 2. Wherein unlike? Heb. iii. 1-6.

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. Scripture Catechism, 193.

SUNDAY, June 21st, 1874.—The Death of Moses.—Deut. xxxiv. 1-12.

Youths’ Department.

THE FOOLISH FROG.

There was once a young frog Who lived in a bog Not far from a fallen tree; He had nothing to do, Or his tasks were but few, And a merry young fellow was he,

But this same little frog Who lived in the bog Had a very bad fault, as you’ll see; He thought there was none Neath the broad shining sun Quite so wise and so cunning as he.

The frogs of the bog Were to meet on the log One evening, and this was the reason; They intended to hold— So at least I was told— A concert, the first of the season.

Through the marshes all round There was none to be found That could sing like our foolish young frog. So they asked him to go. But the mother said, “No; He’ll be safer with me in the bog.”

But he answered, “Dear me!” (He had, you will see, No wisdom to lay on the shelf.) “I am now nearly grown; ’Twould be strange, you will own, If I could not take care of myself.”

So his head he put out And looked slyly about, And said, as he met with no harm (More witty than wise,) “I must say, with these eyes I cannot see cause for alarm.”

And then he sprang out With a gay little shout And mounted the log with a spring; And finding the band Not yet on the land, He concluded a solo to sing.

He first cleared his throat, Then uttered a note That rang through the silence profound, And he thought all the while, As he sang with a smile, “I was brave to be first on the ground.”

Although I was there, I can’t give the air, Though I doubt not ’twas all very nice; For a duck came along, In the midst of his song, And gobbled him up in a trice.

Now, I think ’twould be wise For all little eyes To remember ’tis often the case— There is danger at hand, Both by water and land, Though they may behold not a trace.

And it happens sometimes— You may learn from these rhymes— That, though we may think we are able To keep out of harm, There is “cause for alarm,” As there was with the frog in the fable.

—Little Saver.

JOE BLACK.

The first time I ever saw Joe Black he was out on the sidewalk, in front of the house where he lived. It was a sharp winter morning. He had a coat on, but no hat. A boy who goes out of a winter morning without any hat on will be almost sure to catch cold, get a sore throat and perhaps have the roup, and be very sick indeed.

There were a number of boys out on the sidewalk too, and Joe was looking on to see them play, rather than playing with them. Some of them were sliding along on the ice in the gutter, others were snow-balling, and all seemed to be having a fine time.

Pretty soon a man came along. Joe was busy watching the boys, and did not see or hear the man until he was close upon him. The man had a heavy bundle upon his shoulder, and called out rather angrily to Joe, “Get out of the way.”

Joe was not a little frightened at the

harsh tone in which the man spoke to him, and got out of the way as quickly as he could.

Some boys would have answered this rude man rudely back, and perhaps told him to get out of the way himself; but Joe took the roughness very meekly.

The next morning Joe was out again—only this time he had not got as far as the sidewalk, but was standing on the door-steps, looking up and down the street, and wondering what he should do. While he was so standing and wondering, the same man came along who had spoken to him so unkindly the day before. He had what looked like the same bundle on his shoulder. The man did not see Joe, but Joe saw him and recognized him. But he kept perfectly still, and watched him go by.

Presently the man, as he walked along, put his hand in his side-pocket and pulled out his handkerchief. In so doing, he pulled out one of his mittens too. It fell unseen by his owner upon the sidewalk. When he put his handkerchief back in his pocket he did not miss the mitten. There it lay just where it fell, the man walking faster and faster away.

Some boys in Joe’s place would have been glad that such a cross man had lost his mitten, and would hope that he might never find it.

Not so Joe Black. He saw what had happened—the handkerchief taken out, the mitten fallen and left lying on the walk, the man unconscious even that he had dropped it. It took him but a moment to decide—that he ought to go and restore the mitten to its owner. I don’t know that he so much as thought of the cross way the man had spoken to him the day before. If he did, he did not cherish any resentment. So off he started down the steps and along the walk until he came to the mitten. Picking it up, he ran on after the man as fast as his legs could carry him. Instead of calling out to him, he waited until he got close behind him, and then gently touched his hand.

The man turned around to see who touched him.

There stood Joe, holding up the mitten. “Well done!” said the man, recognizing the mitten and feeling in his pocket at the same moment. “Well done! Where did you find that?” And he took the mitten and put it back in his pocket.

Joe only wagged his tail; for he was nothing but a great Newfoundland dog, Joe Black, and he couldn’t speak a word. But I have sometimes thought that he was more of a gentleman than the man who dropped his mitten. At any rate, he knew how to return good for evil. Do you?—Independent.

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

No comparison can be drawn between Mr. Beecher and Mr. Spurgeon, or the work they are respectively doing. Mr. B’s cleverness is rather in the art of mimicry. We should hardly think the exercise of such powers calculated to make any very serious impressions on an audience. One of our exchanges gives us the following series of pictures of one of his pulpit exercises:—

The time is Sunday evening, and Mr. Beecher is discoursing in the crowded edifice on the difficulty of acquiring correct religious habits. He says some severe things, holding those professors up to scorn who “look upon religion as an insurance-policy against final loss by fire.” Such a remark was just enough; but when Mr. Beecher proceeded to describe the faith of such professors, and to mimic the demeanour of the hateful creatures in the church and in the prayer-meeting, the merriment of the congregation became unrestrained. The pastor proved himself to be possessed of gifts such as would command a high price in a London music-hall; and had “the great Vance” been present, he would probably have frowned in envious chagrin. The preacher buttoned his coat tightly, drew a very long face, turned up the whites of his eyes, dropped his jaw, and, with closed hands, stood in a supplicatory attitude. “They go to church every Sunday,” he said; “the hymns are doled out to them, a good sound dry sermon is preached to them, and the most eloquent passage of all is their going out. They attend prayer-meetings, too—most dismal prayer-meetings. . . . They go through the exercises solemnly, and the brethren try to say something—they do say the same things they have been saying twenty years. Then the services are mercilessly cut short, and they go gloomily home.”

Such were the hypocritical religious “ne’er-doweels.” They seek after nothing and get nothing. Growing in grace and in good habits was something very different to this. How should this be illustrated but by a fiddler? A man or woman who have only just entered on the Christian course, very closely resemble bad fiddlers it seems. “Have you ever seen a boy trying to learn the fiddle?” asked the preacher. “I don’t wonder that they call the strings catgut. I should say that the spirits of all the dead old cats were in them, but when the boy masters it”—acted examples of a clumsy learner, and of an accomplished player on the violin accompanied these words. After finishing with the fiddle, the rev. gentleman excited still more merriment by personifying the awkward movements of a freshman in the compositor’s room, and the graceful rapid working of the trained type-setter. The gestures of the elocution master were also contrasted with the easy motions of the natural speaker. “When we try to be graceful we can’t be.” Hereupon he walked the length of the platform on an imaginary board laid in the mud and six inches broad. Then the same board was supposed to be raised fifteen feet above the ground, and in trying to walk along it, the preacher, or actor, assumed a frightened look, put out his arms, stumbled and fell amid peals of laughter.

This was at least a novel method of illustrating the need of our cultivating Christian habits, and perhaps without much straining the lessons he was inculcating might have been made to tell against the preacher himself. Of such an issue, however, the merry congregation had not time to think, for what the papers call “the greatest hit” of the evening, was yet to be played;—

“The greatest hit, however, was the droll mimicry of a miser, who resolved upon reform, and began by releasing a mortgage on a poor man’s farm. The counterfeit severity of the miser in demanding payment, the fright of the debtor, the blandness of the miser in presenting the cancelled document, and the joyous antics of the debtor’s wife and children, were all produced with the skill of a trained comedian. Finally, when Mr. Beecher, as the reformed miser, with a benevolent smile on his face, mounted his horse and rode off—bending his parted knees and swaying his body in exact imitation of a rider, and cutting behind with an imaginary whip—everybody laughed until the tears came.”

Let the reader now realize, if he be able, that the above refers to a usual Sabbath evening service in Mr. Beecher’s chapel, and also to what the Sun calls “an elaborately perfect pantomime.”

ICELAND’S MILLENNIAL.

Perhaps no country more uninteresting than Iceland exists in the world. Situated in a high northern latitude, at about 160 miles from the Greenland coast, it is little more than a mass of volcanic rock which natural convulsions have upheaved into mountain ranges. The inhabitants, however, are a cultivated and refined race, and strongly devoted to educational pursuits. Libraries exist in considerable numbers, and are connected with every church.

Just ten centuries have now elapsed since the island was settled by Europeans; and Iceland proposes, during the coming summer, to celebrate her millennial birthday by a grand meeting on the plain of Thingvalla, near Reykjavik, the capital city. The object is not only to commemorate the lapse of a thousand years of national existence, but also the granting of a new constitution by Denmark, in which the independence of the island is guaranteed; and it is intended to devote such proceeds as the affair may yield to the enrichment of the national library.

ASK AND RECEIVE.

I was told lately by a young man who had been in Scotland, that he came one day to a gate, when the gate-keeper’s little girl ran down and shut it, saying, “You have not to pay anything to pass; you have only to say, ‘Please allow me to go through.’” The young man did as he was directed, and simply repeated. “Please allow me to go through,” and the gate was immediately opened. The owner just wished to preserve the right of entrance; that was all. So simply “ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”

Work harder at drilling rocks for instance, if your employer never visits you, than if he frequently does. He will know of your faithfulness when he pays for the drills.

THE ULT... (From a Birmingham London, Feb... The direct... the ultimate... shall illustra... ciple underli... fication by... speaking of... trine; by ac... determined... or fall. The... very betwe... and all whot... Rome, and... them, lie... name “Prot... Yes; clergy... of this coun... Protestant... fication by... immoral. V... of Protestar... between a... heart is rest... membrane... the Divine... is spoken of... of God—an... with love;... intense, wh... guilty of it... only of the... the heart... sciousness... temptation... fectly. Di... be possible... elect saint... watching... yet it is no... (future) the... which may... only we h... travel along... suffering, a... for ourselv... God dwell... to Luther... Paul, that... the measu... clared that... weakest ar... ceive absol... and, by Cl... wherein all... is high at... was the Ca... and it cam... light of m... night, and... with an ur... discipline... the worse... less life of... by the gl... God—the... fore God... justify yo... come to G... and at on... fall from... the touch... out of the... imprison... freedom... That was... that wate... Reformer... They pro... for saint... sinners r... need it to... given, an... ein no m... gians har... matic for... out of it... to explain... possible... it thrills... bursts in... God, and... come the... throw H... that ther... mansions... His own... lost. Th... you have... faith. T... testantis... home to... life pass... but pow... is the m... men who... needs is... as he is... there is