

The Christian Messenger.

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BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1874.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, March 22nd, 1874. Defeat of Amalek.—Exodus xvii. 8-16.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“When I cry unto thee, then, shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God is for me.” Psalm lvi. 9.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verse 8-12.

SUMMARY.—Israel conquered Amalek not by prowess only, nor by prayer only, but by prowess and prayer.

ANALYSIS.—I. Preparation for battle. vs. 8-10. II. Progress of the battle. vs. 11, 12. III. Victory and gratitude. vs. 13-16.

EXPOSITION.—Review.—Our last lesson presented to us the march from Elim into the wilderness of Sin, the hunger and murmuring of the congregation, the Lord's promise and gift of food, the nature of the food and the regulation for its collection, and the provision for the perpetual preservation of a specimen of it.

Meanwhile.—Again on the move from the place of the manna—to Rephidim, not by one march, but by three, “after their journeys.” vs. 1. The intermediate stations were Dopkkah and Alush Num. xxxiii. 13, 14. There was no water. There, too, was a worse onslaught upon Moses than ever before. He was in danger of being stoned to death. vs. 4. Then again he cried to God in his distress, and the Lord gave water from the rock. This rock was the type of Christ, from whom flows living waters. 1 Cor. x. 4.

Verse 8.—Amalek. The Amalekites were descendants of Amalek, whose name here designates the people as a unit. Amalek was Esau's grandson, Gen. xxxv. 12, and thus this people, which had come to power during the Israelites' stay in Egypt, were the children of Jacob, but not children of the promise. They were nomads, moving freely from place to place between the Persian Gulf and Red Sea with their wealth of herds and flocks, but were nevertheless formidable enemies. Among these wild hills they found good pasturage. They are often mentioned in Scripture. See especially Deut. xxv. 18; Num. xiv. 45; Judges iii. 13; vi. 3; 1 Sam. xv. The reference in Genesis xiv. 7, though occurring in the history of the times preceding their origin, is yet in a history written after that origin, and hence the writer could speak of their country.

Fought with Israel. This, as had been truly remarked, is a kind of epoch in Israel's history. Hitherto they have not lifted a hand against their enemies. They have waited, and God has done all. They have been conquerors, have won the most splendid of victories, and yet it has been solely by the hand of Jehovah, and wholly without their hand. Now and henceforth they must fight or die. This was the beginning of a war between this heathen nation and the chosen nation which was not to end until the former were blotted out. vs. 14. Rephidim; that is, Refreshments. From this place to the place of encampment before Sinai was only a day's march. Chap. xviii. 2; Num. xxxiii. 15. The exact position of the place is matter of dispute among scholars. The Arabs point out a rock which they call the seat of Moses.

Verse 9.—Joshua. The son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim, Num. xiii. 8, 16. From these verses we learn that his name was changed from Oshua (meaning Help or Salvation) to Joshua. Joshua means Salvation Jehovah, the same as Jesus. See Hebrews iv. 8. He was at this time about forty-five years old. Joshua xv. 29. He and Caleb were the only two men of those above twenty years old at the time of the Exodus that lived to enter Canaan. Num. i. 3; xvi. 20-24. His appointment at this time was doubtless due to manifest evidence of unusual capacity and adaptation for leadership. He always proved himself worthy of the confidence reposed in him—a noble man and successful leader. Num. xiii. 16; Joshua xiv. 6. Choose us out men. Nothing is said of the number on either side. On this custom of selection see Deut. xx. 1-8. Go out, etc. The battle was to be the next day. It is said in verse 8 that Amalek fought, but we need not understand it to mean that they fought at their first appearance. They doubtless took position in this way to dispute the passage of Israel. On the top of the hill. See verse 16. The rod of God

in his [mine] hand. Called so because it was used by God's direction in connection with miracles of divine power. It had come to be for Moses the badge of a divine authority delegated to him.

Verse 10.—Joshua did as Moses had commanded him. Showing that readiness to obey which is a prime quality in one who is to command. Hur Mention again in Exodus xxiv. 4, and there, as here, he appears as a man of distinction. “The Jewish tradition is, that he was the husband of Miriam,” and hence brother-in-law of Moses. Joshua was commander.

Verse 11.—When Moses held up his hand, in which was “the rod of God,” pointing upward to heaven. Why thus upheld? From verse 15 it has been inferred that it was to serve as a banner, because nissi means, “my banner.” The rod pointing heavenward told whence came the help needed at that hour. It was the recognition of God, the silent appeal to God—“the fervent effectual prayer.” Though the singular (hand) is used, it yet seems from verse 12 that both hands were raised. The Hebrews often use the singular with a collective meaning. The consequence of holding up the hands with the staff, is here said to have been to the triumph of Israel, and the effect of its fall the defeat of Israel.

Verse 12.—Moses' hands were heavy. The experiment of dropping them taught Moses the need of keeping them constantly up. Aaron and Hur staid up his hands. One on the right, the other on the left, each supporting one arm of the great leader. Now who won the battle? Was it they who with sword, spear, or bow, fought in the plain? Was it Moses whose hands grasped the rod? Was it Aaron and Hur? Was it God? Yes, it was each of these, for only as each did the part of each was the result gained. So is it now and ever. What we want is every man in his place, and every man doing his whole duty. Until the going down of the sun. The Amalekites were desperately in earnest, and were out doubtless in large force. Hence the prolonged conflict.

Verse 13.—Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people. Vanquished or triumphed over them. On the use of the name Amalek here, see above on verse 8. The triumph is attributed to Joshua, because he was the recognized leader; though, as we saw just above, it could with equal justice be ascribed to others. With the edge of the sword. Literally, “in the mouth of the sword.” If “sword” is to be taken literally here, the Israelites certainly had enough swords to arm a considerable body of men. Whether they obtained any from the Egyptians cast dead upon the shore, or where they got them, we are not told. Spears and bows were also much in use in war.

Verse 14.—Write this for a memorial. That is, to preserve it in memory that future generations may know it. In a book. Or rather “in the book,” the well-known book, distinguished from all others as being the law of God. This book is doubtless our book of Genesis and the first part of Exodus, written by Moses, and a copy carefully preserved, placed afterward in the sanctuary beside the ark, and constantly enlarging by divine direction, as in this case. Deut. xxxi. 24-30; compare 2 Kings xxii. 8. And rehearse it in the ears of Joshua. To keep in his memory this triumph which he succeeds Moses as the leader of Israel, and has his hands full of wars. Then he will need and have this record to encourage him. So, too, it is for the encouragement of all God's people. Will utterly put out the remembrance, etc. That is, will destroy the nation so that it shall have no place among the nations. We hear of them for the last time in 1 Sam. xvii. 8, and xxx. 1 ff.

Verses 15, 16.—Built an altar. To offer thank offerings. The Lord hath sworn. In the margin the renderings given are, “the hand of Amalek against the throne of the Lord;” and also, “the hand upon the throne of the Lord.” Still another is, “the hand upon the banner of the Lord.” The last rendering is by changing a single letter of a Hebrew word, and is not to be favored. We may take it to be either God's hand on his throne, that is, to take oath, or Amalek's against it, or the hand of Moses on it, or toward it in prayer.

QUESTIONS.—Give the chief points of the last lesson. What is related of Moses and Israel in verses 1-7.

Vs. 8. What can you tell of Amalek and the Amalekites? Gen. xxxvi. 12, 16; 1 Chron. i. 36; Num. xiii. 29; 1 Sam. xv. 7; xxvii. 8. Why should they fight against Israel? Had Israel fought any battle before? Of what was the war be-

tween Israel and Amalek a type? Where was Rephidim? Num. xxxiii. 15.

No. 9, 10. What does the name of Joshua mean? Num. xiii. 8, 16; xiv. 20-24; Deut. xxxi. 3; Joshua xxiv. 29. What did Moses do? Why did he do that? Who went with him?

Vs. 11, 12. What was the consequence of holding up the rod? Of letting it fall? Why this? What is the lesson for us? How did Aaron and Hur help? Who are now said to “stay the hands” of Christ's ministers? How can this be done? How long did the battle continue?

Vs. 13. What was the result? To whom was this due? Why is it here referred to Joshua alone? Is war ever justifiable?

Vs. 14. What was Moses commanded to do? What book is here meant? Where kept after the tabernacle was built? Deut. xxxi. 25 ff. 2 Kings xxii. 8. For what purpose? What is that book as completed now called? What is said of sinners in Psalm i. 4, 5?

Vs. 15, 16. What did Moses do? Why? Explain verse 16.

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. Scripture Catechism, 176.

SUNDAY, March 29th, 1874.—The Song of Moses—Exodus xv. 1-11.

Youths' Department.

A NURSERY SONG.

Now take off his stockings, And take off his shoes; How happy he looks, How softly he snores. Undo all the fastenings, Pull off the long clothes; There he is, pink and white, Like a newly-blown rose.

Throw him into the tub While the pure water flashes; How he frolics and laughs, How he tumbles and splashes. All dimple and curve, All motion and beauty; It's a great pity, baby, That dress is a duty.

Take him out of the water; He musn't stay long. Put on his white gown, And sing him a song; Then open his crib, His own little nest, And give him a kiss, From the one he loves best.

What a pretty white bed— What a darling within it. His lashes are drooping, He's off in a minute. Be careful don't wake him, I'm going away; 'Tis the first time I've taken A long breath to-day.

THE TERRIBLE PLAYFELLOW.

One day there came into a country town in the south of Germany a man leading a big dancing bear. He was very tired and hungry, so he went to one of the inns in the town, and having tied up the bear, sat down in the tap-room to eat his dinner.

While he sat there, three little children were playing merrily in one of the upstairs rooms. They were quite alone, and very noisy, until one of them heard a curious noise on the stairs, to which they all began to listen. Thump, tramp, tramp! clank, clank, clank! What a heavy foot! Who can it be?

Suddenly the door flew open, and in came the bear—the great shaggy bear, with its clanking chain! In a terrible fright at this unexpected visit, each of the poor children ran into a corner to hide. But the bear found them all out, and put his cold nose quite close to them, for he was not muzzled now, sniffing at them, but did not harm them! Poor, harmless old beast! he was very much altered since the days when he hid in the forest, or climbed up the great trees to steal honey left there by wild bees.

“He must be a big dog,” thought the eldest boy, and so he began to pat and stroke him.

Then the bear stretched himself out at full length on the floor, and all the little ones came up to him and began to play with him like a big puppy. The youngest sat down, nestled his curly head in the black fur, and the eldest boy began to thump away with all his might upon a little drum he had. Suddenly the bear stood up upon his hind legs and began to dance. Then what a cry of delight came from the children! You should have heard it. What glorious fun!

Each of the little boys had a toy musket with which they had been playing soldiers, and they gave one of these to the bear, and to their intense delight he held it tight and firm, and shouldered it just like a soldier. So the drum was banged and they all began to march, the room shaking again

with the bear's heavy feet, thump, thump, thump! bang, bang! left, right, left!

In the midst of all this noise and tramping, the door suddenly opened, and there stood the poor mother. You should have seen her. Her face was white; she could not speak for fear. But the children set up a cry of joy: “Oh, look, look, mamma, we are all playing at soldiers with this fine playfellow!”

While this was going on the poor man went into the yard to get his bear, and finding he had broken loose, came upstairs to look for him; and so the children lost their shaggy playfellow, although I believe their mother was not at all sorry to see him taken away.—Children's Hour.

PROVERBS.

Amos Atkins was very fond of proverbs. He read proverbs, wrote proverbs and spoke proverbs; and, meet him where you would; he had always a proverb on his lips. When he once began to speak, there was hardly any stopping him.

“When I first met Amos, I was on my way to my uncle's. A long walk it was; but I told him I hoped to be there before night.”

“Ay, ay,” said he. “Hope is a good breakfast, but a bad supper. Put your best foot foremost, boy, or else you will not be there. It is a good thing to hope; but he who does nothing but hope is in a very hopeless way.”

“Have a care of your temper; for a passionate boy rides a pony that runs away with him. Passion has done more mischief in the world than all the poisonous plants that grow in it. Therefore, again I say, have a care of your temper.”

“Remember that the first spark burns down the house. Quench the first spark of passion, and all will be well. No good comes of wrath; it puts no money in the pocket and no joy in the heart. Anger begins with folly and ends with repentance.”

“Look to your feet and your fingers, boy, and let both be kept in activity; for he who does nothing is in a fair-way to do mischief. An idle lad makes a needy man and I may add, a miserable one too.”

“If you put a hot coal in your pocket it will burn its way out. Ay, and so will a bad deed that is hidden make itself known. A fault concealed is a fault doubled; and so you will find it all through life. Never hide your faults; but confess them, and seek, through God's help, to overcome them.”

“Waste not a moment of your time; for a moment of time is a monument of mercy.”

“Now step forward, boy; and as you walk, think of the half-dozen proverbs given you by Amos Atkins.”—Child's Paper.

“HOW MUCH WAS HE WORTH?”

There is a terrible significance in the questions we sometimes ask upon the death of a wealthy man, if we only understood the real significance of the questions. “How much was he worth?” we ask. And the angels might reply. “Worth? He wasn't worth anything. His money was worth something. His body is worth something, as a source of fertility to the soil. But he wasn't worth anything.” So we vary the question: “Yes, but how much did he leave?” “Oh, leave,” it might be answered: “Yes, I will tell you. He had houses, lots, bonds, stocks, gold, notes, merchandise, farms. And he left all—Great God! he left them all. He carried nothing with him. Naked and destitute came he into the world, and as naked and destitute did he go out the way whence he came. He carried nothing; neither land, nor money, nor yet did he carry with him the blessing of the poor, the grateful tears of an orphan, the benediction of the poor. He left all—he carried nothing away with him.” But his neighbor has died: a man who was not known on ‘Change nor in the tax-list. “And what has he left?” we may, perhaps, curiously ask. “Left? He has left nothing; but he has taken much with him. He has gone to heaven laden with the blessings and the gratitude of the poor, of the helpless, of the young, of the aged, of the widow, of the friendless; of those whom he, by his counsels, and his acts, and his prayers, has blessed; of those whose poverty he had relieved; whose ignorance he had enlightened, whose darkness he had dispelled, whose bodies and whose souls he had fed.” When Wilberforce died, Daniel O'Connell said: “He has gone up to heaven bearing a million

broken fetters in his hands.” Happy he, whatever he may leave, or not leave, on earth, who goes with his feet into the other world.—Good Words.

ABOUT COMMAS.

The comma, like the tongue, is a little thing, and like it, will make good sense or nonsense, just according as it is used. Take, for instance, the old nursery rhyme. With the commas misplaced, it is nonsensical that it needs a commentary to explain it.

Every lady in the land Has twenty nails on each hand, Five, and twenty on hands and feet; This is true without deceit.

Alter the position of the commas and the meaning is clear:

Every lady in the land Has twenty nails, on each hand, Five, and twenty on hands and feet; This is true without deceit.

The omission of a comma once gave a very awkward meaning to the inscription on a tombstone: ‘Erected to the memory of John Phillips, accidentally shot as a mark of affection by his brother.’ A printer by leaving out a comma, gave quite a different character to the verdict of a coroner's jury: ‘Deceased came to his death by excessive drinking, producing apoplexy in the opinion of the jury.’ There should have been as there generally is, a stop after apoplexy. An auctioneer once advertised a lot of chains, which he said, had been used by school-children without backs.

The first sentence should have read, ‘Erected by his brother, as a mark of affection, to the memory of John Phillips, who was accidentally shot.’ The second, ‘Deceased, in the opinion of the jury came to his death by excessive drinking, producing (or better, which caused,) apoplexy.’ The third should have introduced ‘without backs’ directly after ‘chains.’ Commas shouldn't be made to supply the place of careful writing.

A western paper, in describing an accident recently, says, with considerable candor: “Dr. Crawford was called; and under his prompt and skillful treatment the young man died on Wednesday.”

“May Heaven cherish and keep you from yours truly, John Smith,” was the somewhat ambiguous closing of a letter recently received by a young lady.

IDLENESS.

Many young people think that an idle life must be a pleasant one; but there are none who enjoy so little, and are such burdens to themselves, as those who have nothing to do. Those who are obliged to work hard all day enjoy their short periods of rest and recreation so much, that they are apt to think if their whole lives were spent in rest and recreation, it would be the most pleasant of all. But this is a sad mistake as they would soon find out if they make a trial of the life they think so agreeable. One who is never busy can never enjoy rest; for rest implies a relief from previous labor; and if our whole time were spent in amusing ourselves, we should find it more wearisome than the hardest day's work. Recreation is only valuable as it unbends us; the idle can know nothing of it. Many people leave off business and settle down to a life of enjoyment; but they generally find that they are not nearly so happy as they were before, and they are often glad to return to their old occupations to escape the miseries of indolence.—Herald of Health.

CANINE GRIEF.

L. H. Harrington, of East St. Johnsbury lost his horse, twenty years old, which he has owned and driven for the past twelve years. An incident of canine affection occurred in connection with this death worth mentioning. Harrington's dog, which has usually followed the horse, manifested a good deal of grief when the old horse was drawn out of the stable. He followed on as chief mourner, to a point on the mountain two miles from the village where the old horse was left. As they returned the dog was whining piteously, and gazed upon the dead body of his old companion. Not returning at night, they went for him, and found him lying between the horses legs. They took him away, placed him in the sleigh, and, when part way home, the dog got away, ran back, taking his old place between the legs. A second attempt to get him was successful, since which he stays at home.—Lyndon Union.