

The Christian Messenger

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BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1874.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES. SUNDAY, March 15th, 1874. Bread from Heaven.—Exodus xvi. 1-5, 31-35.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger." John vi. 35.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verse 33-35.

SUMMARY.—"They tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust," and he "rained down manna upon them to eat."

ANALYSIS.—I. Hunger and Complaint. vs. 1-3. II. Promised Relief. vs. 4, 5. III. The Memorial Manna. vs. 31-33. IV. Manna for Food. vs. 34, 35.

EXPOSITION.—Review.—The chief points of the last lesson were the waterless march of three days from the place of crossing the Red Sea, the encampment at Marah, the murmuring because of the bitterness of its waters, the cry of Moses to God for help, the answer, the waters cleansed, the covenant, and the march to Elim.

Verse 1.—Took their journey. Literally "pulled up," that is, their tent stakes. In order to take down the tents for a starting, so that the word "to pull up" came to mean simply to start or set out on a journey or march. Elim. Chap. xv. 27. The Wadi Gharendel is thus probably, the point of departure to-day. The wilderness of Sin. This name Sin must not be taken as our English word sin. It is a Hebrew word which, according to Gesenius, probably means mire. Robinson and others think it to be the waste plain which extends along the Sea or Gulf of Suez, almost to the southern extremity of the peninsula. On the fifteenth day of the second month. Compare chap. xii. 2, 6. "The second month" corresponds to our May. It had now been a full month since the host started from Rameses, a most eventful month for that people, and, indeed, for the world, full of lessons for us—lessons which may well fix themselves firmly in our memories and hearts. It was now the hot season in a hot land and growing every day hotter.

Verse 2.—The whole congregation. In chap. xv. 24, it was "the people." The expression here is stronger and indicates a more universal, united and emphatic action. Murmured against Moses and Aaron. Before, (chap. xv. 24) it was against Moses, now it is against both him and his brother. The intensity of their feeling is shown in the next verse.

Verse 3.—Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord. By the miraculous plagues, or by natural death. We sat by the flesh pots, we did eat bread to the full. But in the wilderness the whole assembly was likely to be killed by hunger. We must remember that they were an immense host, with herds and flocks; the supply in the desert was scant, and whatever provisions they may have brought from Egypt were before this entirely consumed. One cannot but wonder that so soon the same sin of murmuring was repeated. Hunger is such a mighty power, and the prospect of starvation so full of horrors. Let one imagine himself a Hebrew among those Hebrews, and judge whether he too would not have lost heart and faith and hope. Thus it was not strange that they forget the past, and its lessons of unfailing trust? How, especially, could they forget Marah and the healing of its waters? We wonder at them and at ourselves not less that faith in God fails so suddenly when all things seem to be adverse. But nothing shows better than this how unfit this people were without years of training and discipline in the desert to take the place and act the part of a great nation, to enter Canaan and act for God. Just so we need the discipline of life to strengthen and mature character, and to fit us for the home beyond.

Verse 4, 31.—Then said the Lord unto Moses, I will rain bread from heaven. Compare on this with Psalm cvi. 13-15. God had wise reasons for bearing with the people, though thus insulted by them. He had a great purpose of good for the world. But this psalm shows, as does the history, that these men by their wicked spirit were unfit to receive the blessing. So their desire, born of mere earthliness, their choice of food rather than of God's favor, was granted. Their prayer was answered. But the result to their own souls was "leanness." Most instructive. God gives us our choice. The result is "leanness." Oh, for a faith clear-eyed and strong to

save us from this. The word translated "bread" often means food. It is here used not of the quails but of the manna. The latter is called manna (vs. 31) because when the Israelites saw it they said, What is it? which in Hebrew is manhu. There is obtained in the region of Sinai and elsewhere in the East, from tamarisks and other shrubs or trees, a product called manna, strikingly like that which is here described as sent from heaven. It begins to exude about the middle of May and continues to do so for six weeks or longer. It falls in little globules upon the leaves, lower limbs, and ground, is gathered at sunrise, or, if left, melts in the sun's heat. It is yellowish, translucent, resembles gum, and is sweet like honey to the taste. It is used by the Edouins with their other food as we use butter, or honey, and is also an article of commerce. It is more abundant in comparatively wet years. That this, however, was not the manna on which the Israelites fed appears because their manna fell uninterruptedly for forty years, came in such quantities as the natural manna never began to approach, was of a nature to be used as is flour or meal for bread, fell on the sixth day in double quantities and not at all on the seventh, bred worms whenever kept over from a preceding day excepting the sixth, and is manifestly described as the product of God's miraculous agency. That the miracle connects itself with the existence of such a natural product only agrees with what we have found true of the preceding miracles, and may find true of nearly all the miracles of Scripture. It was sent until the Israelites crossed Jordan into Canaan. Joshua v. 11, 12. It is not to be understood however that they ate only this manna during all this time, or that when other food was to be had in abundance they neglected it for the manna. Nothing requires such a view, and there is reason to think otherwise. See Deut. ii. 6, 7; Lev. viii. 2, 26, 31, 32, etc. In Psalm lxxviii. 25, the common version calls manna "angels' food." The literal translation is, "food of the mighty," which may well mean such food for excellence as the mighty or noble of earth live upon, that is, the choicest, most delicious, best of food. It certainly is not intended to teach that angels live on manna. The manna was intended as a type of Christ, and is so referred to by our Lord himself in that memorable conversation recorded in John vi. Jesus Christ was the bread of life, food for the soul, we have to feed upon him, and that not simply once, when we take our start through the wilderness, when we set out on our journey, but day by day, continuously. Thus we symbolize by the Lord's Supper, "as oft as" we eat it. Thus does the Supper preserve with us as a symbol and memorial what both pass-over and manna typified to the Israelites. There and here it is Christ—Christ the life of the soul—the Saviour of men.

Verse 5.—Compare verse 22-29. From these verses some have argued that hitherto the Sabbath had been unknown to Israel, and to mankind. But the command in Exodus xx. 8-11 presents, as a reason for the observance of the seventh day, God's rest from his creative work, and thus by showing that the reason for its observance is as old as the race. It is plain that in the centuries of Egyptian "idolatry" the Israelites had forgotten this as well as most other divine ordinances. Moses took them when in a low moral state, and had to teach them the very alphabet of both religious and civil life.

Verse 32.—The gift of the manna and quails was preceded by a signal manifestation of God's presence and glory in order to impress upon the unbelieving murmurers that he and no other one sent the food; that he and not his servants Moses and Aaron, was their leader, that he had power over the desert not less than over fertile Egypt, and that hence as he could kill, so too he could make and keep alive. Vs. 6-10; Hebrews ix. 4. The Ark of the Testament or Covenant was not built until after the time of the manna's first fall. Exodus xxv. 10-28. The insertion of this direction in this place does not prove it to have been given at this time. It may have been given to Joshua and people just before his death, and inserted here because here the subject of the manna was presented. Of course the manna thus laid up was to remain sound, preserved from decay. Just one day's allowance for one person was kept. Authorities are divided as to the value of the omer, some estimating it at three or four quarts, others at one quart and a half.

Verse 35.—See Joshua v. 12.

QUESTIONS.—Describe Elim. Chap. xv. 27.

Vs. 1. At what place did the Israelites enter the wilderness of Sin? Num. xxxiii. 10. What do you know of the wilderness of Sin? What was the season of the year when they entered it? How long had it been since they started from Rameses? Chap. xii. 2, 6.

Vs. 2. Who here murmured? Against whom? Vs. 7, 8. Why? What was the folly and sin of this? Are men now guilty of a like sin? Explain.

Vs. 3. What did the people say? Why? Vs. 4, 31. What did the Lord promise? What is said in Psalm cvi. 13-15? What lesson for us? What is here meant by "bread from heaven"? Why called "manna"? Vs. 15. How often were they to gather it? Why so often? How long did it continue to come? Vs. 35; Joshua v. 12. Of what was this manna a type? John vi. 31-33. Name the points of agreement between the type and the thing typified.

Vs. 5. What amount was gathered on the sixth day? Why? Was the Sabbath probably known before this? Ex. xx. 8-11. How ought we to keep our Sabbath? Vs. 32-34. What command was given to Moses? What is here meant by "Testimony"? Chap. xxv. 10-28. How much was an omer?

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. Scripture Catechism, 174, 175.

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

Youths' Department.

DEEDS OF KINDNESS.

Suppose the little cowslip Should hang its golden cup, And say, "I'm such a tiny flower I'd better not grow up; How many a weary traveler Would miss its fragrant smell! How many a little child would grieve To lose it from the dell!

Suppose the glistening dewdrop Upon the grass should say, "What can a little dewdrop do? I'd better roll away." The blade on which it rested. Before the day was done, Without a drop to moisten it, Would wither in the sun.

Suppose the little breezes, Upon a Summer's day, Should think themselves too small to cool The traveler on his way; Who would not miss the smallest And softest ones that blow, And think they made a great mistake That heard them talking so?

How many deeds of kindness A little child may do; Although it has so little strength And little wisdom too. It wants a loving spirit, Much more than strength, to prove How many things a child may do For others, by its love.

BUFFALO HUNT IN INDIA.

We had killed the tiger, and being in the mood for sport we concluded to make a day of it, and try if we could not secure at least one wild buffalo, which would furnish us with a dish of "ox-tail soup" for dinner.

But first let me tell you about the tiger. He had been making depredations among our live stock for some nights, when one day a syce—one of the men who had charge of the horses—was missing. We made search for him, and at last found bloody tatters of his clothes in the jungle.

He had evidently fallen a prey to the "man-eater." The monster must therefore have judgment meted out to him. I determined to hunt him to the death.

The next day, accordingly, I assembled my neighbors, and mounted on the backs of three elephants, the party set out. My shikaree, or native hunter, had already found the whereabouts of the tiger, and we soon reached his lair.

There were no fresh tracks near it, so we knew he must still be at home. We arranged our elephants in a triangle, one on each side and one in front. The one on which my companions, Sims and Bards, were mounted, was the tallest, and the tiger caught sight of them first.

He immediately erected himself, and made ready to spring. Sims took quick aim and fired, but the ball went over the animal's head, and we heard it crashing through the thick jungle beyond.

The next instant the tiger was on the head of the elephant, who gave a tremendous yell, and turning suddenly aside, managed to throw Sims off.

Then I fired, and Tipton also, on the

other side, but we were too much excited to take good aim, and our balls did not execute.

The tiger now made another spring on the elephant's flank, and this time its claws not only tore the thick skin of the animal, but were planted in poor Bard's shoulder.

Sims, who was seated just in front of him, at once took up a fresh gun and placing its muzzle in the tiger's mouth, fired both barrels.

The beast fell back dead. Bard's clothes and skin were hanging in bloody tatters from his back. Still if Sims had not shown such presence of mind it might have been much worse. As it was, we sent Bard back to the station on one of the elephants, where the doctor soon made him comfortable, but we were in no mood to give up our hunt, and as there were no more tigers about, we went in search of wild buffaloes.

The shikarees knew a swampy piece of ground where these animals were almost always to be found, so we followed their lead through the jungle and chupra.

On arriving at the spot, we saw five buffaloes standing in the mud, and vainly trying to defend themselves from the attacks of the mosquitoes. Our elephants treading on the thick grass made no noise, and we hoped to approach quite near to our game.

Before we were close enough to fire, however, three of the buffaloes caught sight of us and filed off into the jungle, whither it would be useless to follow them. The remaining two were a heifer and its mother.

We managed to get within a short distance of these, when the old one took notice of us, and began to move off also in a side direction towards the jungle.

We supposed we had lost our sport. But Tipton, who was on the first elephant, too excited to be cautious, slipped down to the ground and went in pursuit. Bent on securing at least one animal, he foolishly fired at the calf and killed it.

The consequences were as might have been expected. The mother buffalo at once turned in the greatest fury, and lowering her horns, made a rush towards the murderer of her young.

We felt as if there were no hope for poor Tipton. We did, indeed, fire on the approaching animal, but the distance was too great, and the slight wounds inflicted only infuriated her still more.

On she came, leaping, and the next moment her horns would pierce our comrade's body. He had, however, one barrel of his gun undischarged.

We were somewhat surprised to see him coolly bend one knee on the ground, and resting his elbow on the other, wait till he was, as it were, face to face with death.

Then he fired, and the same instant sprang on one side.

The buffalo rushed past him, and then rolled over dead. The ball had penetrated her brain.

We all now dismounted, and went to our brave companion with hearty congratulations. He was completely unnerved. The hand that had just before been as firm as iron now trembled like a leaf.

"Bravo, old boy!" exclaimed Sims. "That last shot was the best you ever made, and the one before it was the stupidest. What possessed you to kill the calf? You might know the cow would be down on you next minute."

"Yes," replied Tipton; "I felt for a moment or two as if my tea-planting days were at an end. But then I did not count on the rest of you playing the part of the public at such a respectful distance. If you had only followed me on foot, we could have killed the cow long before there was any danger."

At any rate we had "bagged" two buffaloes; and giving orders to the men to carry the game to the cook with instructions for chops, a roast, and ox-tail soup for dinner, we turned our elephants' heads homewards, well satisfied with our day's sport, and with a good appetite for the treat in store for us.

NOT TO BE TRUSTED.

A young man desired a certain situation in the city, which he seemed in a fair way to obtain. He was agreeable in his manners and the firm were pleased with him. He was highly recommended by friends of the different partners, and it was thought he would soon rise to the position of partner himself.

Meanwhile, the firm desired a friend who lived in the same town with the young man

to privately take a note of the manner in which he conducted his business, and to them.

The answer came in due time. The young man spent several evenings in the week in a billiard saloon, and on Sundays drove out with a span of hired horses, in company with two or three other "fast young men." He did not hear again from the firm. They did not need his services. That was not the sort of young man wanted in any honest business. Even men who have no religious principles themselves know how to value it in others. They feel safer in trusting a clerk who is punctual at his church in his Sabbath school, who is interested in the doings of the "Young Men's Christian Associations," rather than in the lust new star at the theatre.

"When I see a clerk of mine driving out for pleasure on Sunday," said a man engaged in a large business, "I dismiss him on Monday." He had learned by experience that he did not belong to the trusty class.

Straws tell the direction of the wind, and things you little dream of do more than letters of recommendation to influence the opinion others form of you. They are taking notes of your words and ways even when you think yourself most unobserved.

If you would have the name of being honest and upright, there is but one way to win it. Be what you wish to seem. A man may wear a mask successfully for a time, but a slight thing may loosen it and expose to view his true face. Besides, men of business have remarkably sharp eyes, which pierce right through masks. It is not worth a boy's while to try and wear one to deceive them.

USE OF FICTION IN THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN.

No parent has brought up a child who has not been obliged to betake himself or herself from the real to the imaginary. The moment a child is old enough to have glimpses of things that rise above the mere physical realm, he asks questions which are puzzling: and the parent in answering them almost always finds it necessary to tell the child some little story some little fable, some little fiction, and generally winds up by saying: "That is as near as I can tell you now my child; but when you grow up and are as big as mamma, you will understand it as well as she does."

Often times fiction is nearer the truth than truth itself is. For instance, if you undertake to explain to a child the distinction between the judicial, the executive and the legislative powers of the nation, I think you will find yourself, even if you understand the idea perfectly, unable to bring it in its complete unmodified form, into the mind of the child. In other words how are you going to put a truth that is large enough to fill your mind into a child's mind? Can you get a full quart measure into the space of a gill? No. What do you do? You go down to the child's plane of life, and imagine about what he can understand, and reduce that to the form of some little fairy story, or fable, or fiction, in which, perhaps the ant, the bird or the beast, plays a part. You take things which are familiar to the child, and with them represent as well as you can, the truth which you wish to impart; and the child smiles, and thinks he has an idea—and so he has; but it is not the whole of that which you have in your mind. What you have told him is not true. If you were to tell him the truth it would be nothing at all to him. That is to say, if you were to state to him the actual facts he would interpret them according to the undeveloped state of his mind, and would not understand them.—H. W. Beecher.

AFTER THE EVENT—A FABLE.

A swallow's nest fell from the eaves of a farmhouse, and the barnyard poultry and the hedge birds gathered about the ruins, and went into committee on them.

"I knew it was going to fall—I felt sure it must the last time I went on the roof," chirped a sparrow.

"Stupid thing—building its nest up there," hissed a goose.

"I could have taught her how to lay eggs without getting them smashed, if she had only come to me," quacked a duck.

"And I could have taught her how to hatch them—I have had to hatch yours, Neighbor Duck," clucked a hen.

"Gobble, gobble, gobble—if people choose to be fools they must take the consequence," said a strutting turkeycock, puffing out his feathers.

"My friends, you are very kind to take so much interest in my affairs," twittered the poor swallow; but if you were so sure that my house was going to fall, isn't it a pity that you didn't tell me so a little sooner?"—Good Things.

Car THE RE The Ann tained quite the wicked and then an numbers of will ever be deny the fact resurrect mentioned ence to th who main raised a the employ the however, it It may b repentance dispensa xiii. Jno both are n Acts xx. 2 is specified Jno. iii. 3 faith may than rece error to de final judg plying the dead—is ence to th 22, 24. other inst Very s for the m surrectio They wer believers, final doo ing addre nica, wh pious frie without sooner th blissful r but it wo notice, or that awa Christian denied d gether The Ap minds, a such a establish tion, as slept," a would as (1 Cor. viously p to the in It is u one or tw symbolic books in posed to sacred gathere age be martyrs thousand will not consiste tors as regard predict Elijah we wor Jews, t sonally ocived of a su spirit a the me of mar the un of the sion of cution. his no "succu runs in "the f ing co Messis The being used future ity as 35.) to life resurre accept tain a not v arden found "atth (Phil