

## The Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, N. S., APRIL 8, 1874.

## BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1874.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, April 12th, 1874.

The Golden calf.—Exodus xxxiii. 1-6, 19, 20.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Little children, keep yourselves from idols." 1 John v. 21.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 1-4.

SUMMARY.—While Moses on the mount was receiving the law from Jehovah, Israel at the foot of the mount was making and worshipping a molten image.

ANALYSIS.—I. The demand for the idol. vs. 1. Its formation. vs. 2, 4. III. Its worship. vs. 5, 6. IV. Its destruction. vs. 19, 20.

EXPOSITION.—Transition.—Our last lesson set before us the holy will of God. This exhibits the shameless sin of man. Then we saw the covenant made. Now we see the covenant broken. That showed us what we ought to be. This shows us what we are. Then we learned that we must have holiness of heart. Now we learn that only God can give it. The two together may well convict us of sin, and send us in deepest humility, in most earnest longing, to the cross of Christ, who by virtue of his atoning death is to us "the end of the law for righteousness," our life, our hope, our all. God help us to see the sin and ruin of our own hearts, while we look into the hearts of those who at the very foot of Sinai, lighted as it was with the glory of God's presence, and enveloped in his cloudy majesty, broke his covenant, dishonored his name, and bowed to an idol of their own making! By nature they and we are alike. Grace through Christ will alone make us to differ.

Verse 1.—When the people, who were on the plain at the mountain's base, forced off from the mountain, that they might not, at the peril of instant death, draw nigh through irreverent curiosity to see the glory on the summit. Chap. xix. 23; Hebrews xii. 20. Saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount. From chapter xviii. it seems that the ten commandments were first given to Moses in an audible voice, on his fourth ascent into the mountain. vs. 3, 8, 20, 24. These ascents were in quick succession. After receiving the decalogue he went down again (chap. xx. 19), and again returned to receive the precepts recorded in chaps. xx. 22-xxiii. 33. Then, with Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy elders, he went part way up the mountain (chap. xxiv. 1-11), and after a season, by divine direction, with Joshua as his attendant, left the rest of the company, and went on nearly to the summit where he remained seven days (chap. xxiv. 12-17); and after that he was called into the very midst of the glory, doubtless upon the mountain's top, where he remained forty days and forty nights. Chap. xxiv. 18. This was to receive the stone tablets of the law, which had not as yet been given, and to learn fully how to make the tabernacle and its furniture, and how to appoint, arrange, and administer all its service. Chaps. xxv-xxxi. The delay was therefore at least nearly seven weeks, or a little less than two months. His other visits had been comparatively brief; and probably no previous information had been given to the people, perhaps not even to Moses himself, of the time to be occupied by the visit. They were naturally anxious to push on to the land of their hopes, and to escape from this horrible wilderness. Hence these weeks dragged by very slowly, and their patience failed utterly. Gathered themselves together unto Aaron, who, as we saw, had been left on the mountain slope, with Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy, and commanded to remain until the return of Moses. Chap. xxiv. 9, 14. The word translated unto often signifies against, and is not the usual preposition of mere direction. This naturally suggests that Aaron at first resisted the people's impatient complaints at the delay of Moses, and their demand for an image to take the place of the cloudy and fiery pillar. Psalm cvi. 20. We cannot well account for his compliance with their abominable demand, except on the supposition that he was thus driven, and lacked the needful faith and heroism to withstand. Up, make us gods which shall go before us. Mark here the tone of urgency and impetuosity. Instead of "gods," we may read "god," as the form of the Hebrew word does not determine which and the connection rather favors the view that they wished for a representation of Jehovah, that their plan was rather to

exchange symbols than deities. Acts vii. 40. It seems incredible. Is it incredible? He who knows most of his own sinful nature will say, No, it is just like men. This Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. The Hebrew has "they know not," instead of "we know not," and should be so translated. The complaint was doubtless made for the people by their delegates, and therefore put in the third person instead of the first. The fact that Moses was only God's agent in leading them is ignored.

Verse 2.—Aaron said, etc. Probably, however, not until he had remonstrated, and tried to dissuade them. (vs. 7-10); (22-24) His sin was bad enough, but not so gross as though he had led the people into the shame. Break off the golden carings, etc. It had been conjectured, not unnaturally, that Aaron made this demand in hope that it would defeat the project, that woman's love of jewelry would be stronger than the desire for a god, that their vanity would overmatch their piety, and they would refuse to surrender their ornaments. If so, it was a shrewd device. We almost wonder whether it would be more successful in our day than it was in his. But he had no right to yield so far, even if he hoped thus to stop the crime.

Verse 3.—All the people. Not every one of them, but the people generally, or "as a whole." vs. 26-28. Brake off, etc. Popular sentiment, like a wave, swept along then, as it does now, many that would not of themselves have yielded. Not uncommonly in false religions there is more readiness to spend money and to sacrifice than there is in the true.

Verse 4.—Received them at their hands. We see him thus the pitiable and guilty partner of their crime. Fashioned it with a graving tool after he had made it a molten calf. A literal translation of the Hebrew is not as here, "after he had made," but instead "and made." The translators of our version supposed that the calf was first cast of solid gold, and then, by "a graving tool," finished off, "with sculptured wings, feathers, and other marks." The fact that the calf was burned (vs. 19, 20), suggest that a calf of wood was first made and carved "with the graving tool," and that this was then covered with the molten or melted gold. Isaiah xl. 19; xxx. 22. The calf, young bullock, or steer was in imitation of the Egyptian worship, in which there were "various sacred cows," and three kinds of sacred bulls. Especially prevalent was the worship of Apis, under the form of a bull. They said. That is, the ones who had made it, perhaps skilled artificers, who had learned their trade in Egypt, and who had made similar images there. These be thy gods. Or, rather, "this is thy god." What blasphemy against Jehovah!

Verse 5.—When Aaron saw it he built an altar before it. Caused one to be built, thus going into deeper and deeper infamy. To-morrow is a feast to the Lord (to Jehovah). He thinks to worship God in the idol.

Verse 6.—Burnt offerings and peace offerings. See on Lesson V. The people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play. See vs. 17-19. The word here translated "play," from comparison with its use in some other passages, suggests, but does not prove, that there was lewdness, wantonness of conduct. See Gen. xxvi. 8; xxxix. 14, 17, there translated "mock." The feast and the dance were also subsequently observed in the worship of Jehovah. Judges xxi. 19-25; 1 Samuel xviii. 6, 7; 2 Samuel vi. 5.

Verse 19.—Moses was first informed of the criminal conduct of Israel by the Lord, on the mountain, and was ordered to hasten down with the tablets. And Moses' anger waxed hot. Grief at their sin, and reverent zeal for the honor of God seem to have been uppermost at first, and to have led him to reject the proposal that he should be made, like Abraham, the head of a new nation, while all the rest save him and his should be consumed. vs. 9-14. He cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mountain. The size of these tables was less than three feet nine inches by two feet three inches, which was the full size of the ark in which they were to be placed. They were doubtless of fine and valuable stone, and thin, so that a man could easily carry them. They were broken, no doubt, at God's command. It showed them as being now exposed to the just wrath of an angry God, with nothing interposed for their cover.

Verse 20.—This burning of the wooden part, and reducing the gold to a fine powder, perhaps by the use of natron, which

would give to the water a nauseating taste. The drinking of its ashes showed their own just liability to share the very fate which their god had met.

QUESTIONS.—Subject of the last lesson? Of this? Points of contrast?

Vs. 1. Where was Moses? How many accents previous to this are mentioned? Chaps. xviii. 3, 8, 20, 24; xx. 19; xxiv. 15. How long had he been gone? Chap. xxiv. 16, 18. Where had Aaron been left? Chap. xxiv. 13. What did the people demand of him? Why did they do this? What was the wrong of this demand? Was Aaron probably willing to comply?

Vs. 2. What was Aaron's answer? Do you suppose he thought his request would be granted? How did the Hebrews get this jewelry? Chap. xii. 35.

Vs. 3. What did they do? Do men still show as much zeal in the wrong as in the right?

Vs. 4. What did Aaron do? Who made for the ten tribes golden calves? 1 Kings x. 28. Which of the commandments were thus broken? Why should they have made a calf rather than any other animal?

Vs. 5, 6. What did Aaron appoint for the morrow? What offerings were made? How was the feast celebrated? Vs. 17-19; compare Judges xxi. 21; 1 Samuel xviii. 6, 7; 2 Samuel vi. 5.

Vs. 19, 20. What did Moses do with the stone tablets? Why? What with the golden calf? Why that? Hebrews x. 26, 27.

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. Scripture Catechism, 181, 182.

SUNDAY, April 19th, 1874.—The People Forgiven.—Exodus xxxiii. 12-20.

## Youths' Department.

## FRANK'S TEMPTATION AND VICTORY.

A TRUE STORY.

Industrious, unselfish and obedient, Frank Baldwin was a son of whom any parent's heart might well be proud. Frank's home was a humble one, and when a mere boy he felt it a delight to be able to do anything to make lighter the burden which he saw rested heavily on his parents.

He had early listened to the voice which says, "My son, give me thy heart;" and when he expressed a desire to go from home to try his fortune, his parents consented; for they felt assured that in all times of trouble and perplexity he would seek comfort and guidance from his Father in heaven.

Frank left home with a brave heart, and found his way to one of our large western cities. He immediately began his search for employment. He met rebuffs, but he was not discouraged. He had no friends to aid him, but he asked God to guide him.

The only position that opened to him was one but little above that of a porter in an express office. The compensation offered was small, but Frank did not on that account hesitate. "Who knows," thought he, "but if the duties of this humble office are faithfully performed, the way may thus be paved to something better?" and he cheerfully entered upon his duties. His companions were not congenial, but Frank's pleasant face and friendly way soon won their hearts.

Longing as he sometimes did, almost to homesickness, for a sight of the dear faces far away, it was hard always to keep up a brave heart; and he might have been tempted into wrong paths, but for his precious Bible with its sweet promises and kindly warnings.

Soon after Frank entered upon his new duties, he was told by his employer that he expected him to be at his post on Sabbath morning as usual.

Frank felt a choking in his throat as he answered, "I have always been accustomed to spend the Sabbath morning in church, and I supposed when I entered your service that I could still enjoy that privilege."

"You have the evening for that purpose was answered. "I am sorry to take from you a part of the day that you consider your own, but the work must be done, and as it properly belongs to you, I expect you to do it."

He had spoken firmly, and in a moment was gone. Frank was greatly troubled. His employer had said the work must be done, and that he would be expected to do it. What could he do.

When the Sabbath morning came, with a heavy heart he went to the office and performed his accustomed tasks. In the evening he occupied his place in the sanctuary, but he could not enter heartily into the services. He felt that he had robbed God of a part of the day, and was offering to him but the remnant. Through the week that followed, the matter was much on his

mind. He felt that he could not retain his position if he insisted that on the Lord's day no work should be required of him; and out of employment, and without friends in that great city—what could he do? When he turned to his bible, this plain command confronted him: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."

But other thoughts came at length, bringing gleams of light into the darkness. Had not God promised blessings to those who call the Sabbath day a delight, honorable—not doing their own ways, nor finding their own pleasure, or speaking their own words? He would no longer dishonour God. He would keep holy God's Sabbath-day, and then throw himself on the promises. When he had thus decided his mind was at rest.

Before Saturday night came again, he sought an interview with his employer.

"I cannot work on the Sabbath-day," he said, "for I am sure that I am not doing right, and I have been very unhappy about it."

It cost him an effort to make this honest statement, but he could not waver, for God, he felt, had made his duty plain.

His employer looked at him steadily for a moment, and then said, "Come to me on Monday morning and I will then decide your case."

The Sabbath was an anxious day for him; and many a prayer was offered up that God would help him to bear with the right spirit whatever might lie before him.

At the appointed time on Monday morning he presented himself at the office. His employer received him kindly: and after a moment of silence, he said:

"I have watched you carefully since the first day that you entered this office, and I can truly say that you have been faithful, discharging with cheerful alacrity every duty that has devolved upon you. In nothing have you manifested a spirit of ineordination, except in the matter of spending a portion of the Sabbath in your customary employments. But in this I believe that you have acted conscientiously and your scruples shall be respected. You shall no longer be required to work on the Sabbath: but I cannot longer permit you to occupy your present position."

Frank's heart sunk like lead. So he was after all to lose his situation!

"I cannot longer allow you to retain your present position," continued his employer, "but you have proved yourself so capable and so trustworthy, that I cannot part with you. One week from this day the post of cashier in this office will be vacant. That position I offer to you. The post is an important one, but you will, I am sure, so discharge your duties as to give me no occasion to feel that my confidence in you has been misplaced. Take your place at the desk this morning. Mr. Clarkson, as I have said, will remain one week longer, and you will, I trust, at the expiration of that time have become somewhat familiar with your new duties."

Frank was bewildered. Had he heard aright? Yes, it was all true, and there sat his employer, looking kindly at him, and smiling at his evident embarrassment. "You may go to the office now," he said, presently, "You will find Clarkson there to receive you."

Frank's heart was too full then to trust himself to thank his employer, but he asked, "May I go to my room for a short time, now?"

"Certainly you may go," was the kind answer.

Going hastily out, Frank almost flew to his room, and closing the door behind him, threw himself on his knees and poured out his thanksgiving to the God who had ordered all this. He had hoped only that he might retain his place. He felt that he could never again doubt a God who had so greatly blessed him.

After offering up a fervent prayer that God would enable him to discharge well and worthily the duties of his new office, and to honor Him in all things, he went, as he had been directed to do, to the cashier's desk.

Mr. Clarkson was much interested in the young man thus unexpectedly called to fill an important position in the office, and he resolved to do all in his power to aid him.

The week that followed was a very happy, and a very busy one, and at its close, Frank was left alone with his new duties.

In his new position Frank was called to encounter new trials. There were several men in the office who felt that they had claims upon the post soon to be made vacant, and each one had secretly hoped that he would be the favored one.

What then was the surprise and chagrin of all, to see a "mere boy," as they regarded him, and one, too, who had occupied so humble a place, promoted to the coveted position. They did not attempt to conceal the nature of their feelings from Frank, and in many ways tried to annoy him.

All this Frank bore patiently, never resenting by word or act any unkindness received. As he gradually became familiar with his duties so that he found it necessary to spend less time at the desk, he employed his leisure hours in assisting those whose duties occupied more time than his own; and by his continued and unobtrusive kindness, he won his way to the hearts of those who had regarded him with envious feelings.

Frank still lives, an honored man in every circle where he is known. In all his ways he has acknowledged and honored God, and God has greatly blessed him.—Christian Weekly.

## OUR SINGING AND SINGERS.

Few persons would deny that praise is a proper part of the worship of God, or refuse to endorse the words of David: "It is a good thing to sing praises unto our God, for it is pleasant, and praise is comely." Yet there is often great forgetfulness of the importance of praise, or neglect to give it its appropriate place in our services. Many Christian people regard it in a very different light from that in which it is set by the Psalmist's words, and as for considering it the principal part of worship, that is the last thing they would do. In other places it is apparently never realized that to secure appropriate and beautiful music in God's house is a great and solemn duty. Thus we may enter chapels and churches where the singing is painful alike to a musical ear and a devout mind, and many a minister who has lengthened out his sermon will economize time by shortening the final hymn to almost nothing, apparently considering his own uttered words of more importance than the united voices of the congregation. In other quarters the music is the only thing considered, and it even usurps the place of the Gospel, as with the Ritualists, who, by the splendour of their services, attract crowds of church goers. Pope has described the reason:—

"Some to church repair,  
Not for the doctrine, but the music there."

In all these cases it seems as if the nature of true praise were utterly misunderstood. Praise is the only part of public worship in which the whole congregation actively joins. The part which the worshippers take in the prayer and reading is limited to the responses (where any are in use), and during the preaching they are passive listeners. Is it, then, an exaggeration to call praise the principal part of public worship? Do we not find that praise occupies the prominent place in all the Bible records of religious services? It is mentioned on every occasion of national deliverance or blessing celebrated by the Jews, and it was the hereditary office of the priesthood to be musicians of the temple. Indeed, only once in their entire history did they relinquish this favourite service, when, during the Babylonian captivity, "they hanged their harps on the willows," and said, "How can we sing the songs of Zion in a strange land?" (Psalm cxxxvii.) Are not praise and prayer indissolubly united? Even with Christ, Himself worthy of all praise, was not the hymn on the road to Olivet linked to the agony of Gethsemane?

The Psalms, the models of all praise, were composed to be sung, and an old divine declares that "a psalm only read is like a prayer only looked over." Let the heart and lips unite to present an acceptable offering. Such is Paul's advice to the converts at Ephesus and Colosse (Eph. v. 19; Col. iii. 16); and such was the practice of the Pentecost converts, who "continued daily in the Temple, praising God, and having favour with the people."

The first historical mention of musical instruments is Genesis vi. 21, which Jubal is described as having first introduced their use. That they continued to be employed, and even became generally used, we gather from the fact that even after the disadvantages of captivity in Egypt. Miriam was able to produce a chorus of music and singing, as described in Exodus xv. During the wanderings in the wilderness, the Levites became the official musicians of the nation, and we meet with them compassing the walls of Jericho with martial music, until they fell. When once quietly settled in Canaan, the Jews seem to have advanced in the art with rapid strides, inventing

new instrumental arrangements brought back after David's was accomplished players and was the approval of David's chorus of 400 gious services were picked up the Temple was dedicated were employed says 200,000 as described In the cu have consist These were Pope Gregor gorian " in was introduc and greatly regards the musical serv only the cha also the man same tune u dirge, or he the former c chapels, the churches. are absent, choice of tun or too heavy Let good rhythm and the hymn. let the accom and expres hands the rule, Englis able to Ge may be conf a whole com sic, a body procure good mixed cho next to im keep up th mented by The idea th tion is fall itself as so ness, it ou roughest u delegated properly co congregatio

INA  
The follo mittee appo institutions States:

HON. PROV Sir,—

We, the the authori Legislature formation igrate ins and Canad That im commission here on the in the disc several of United Sta inebriates, those hums

First.— eated at M 1000 inhab the Philad and fourte institution celebrated with it ab admired fo roundings the rooms connection fine librari music and social inter the inmates with spee

Persons im, who self-suppo tions fro such term themselves admission and furnis an "individu courage of an act has legislature provision

"Any ate use of the discre institution either up a declared tentation ted com upon pre dian or n ficate of t