

The Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, N. S., MAY 20, 1874.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1874.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, May 24th, 1874.

Israel's unbelief.—Num. xiv. 1-10.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." Hebrews iii. 19.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 1-5.

SUMMARY.—Because Israel could not trust God for the future, they murmured against him for the past, and were punished in consequence.

ANALYSIS.—I. The murmurs of the people. vs. 1-4. III. The protests of God's servants. vs. 5-9. III. Man's wrath and God's wrath. vs. 10.

EXPOSITION.—After the consecration of the Levites to their office, chap. iii. on the twentieth day of the second month of the second year, the pillar of cloud rose from the tabernacle as a sign of preparation for a "forward march" to the land of hope. x. 11. It had been "twelve months lacking ten days" that they had been encamped at the base of Sinai. Ex. xix. 1. Now all organized on the new plan, in perfect order they set forward. x. 13-28. Their course lay at first to the north northeast, until they reached the north end of the Elanitic Gulf, called also Akabah, an arm of the Red Sea, as will be remembered, forming the east boundary of the Peninsula of Sinai. They were then exactly south of Canaan. They marched thence through the desert northward to Kadesh called also Kadesh-barnea, xxxii. 8, and Meribah-Kadesh, Deut. xxxii. 51, in Paran, where we find them to-day. In Deut. i. 2, the distance is said to be eleven days' journey, which would be one hundred and sixty-five miles, at fifteen miles for a days' journey. A glance at a map of the route will show that this was about the distance. As to Kadesh, see Gen. xiv. 7; Num. xlii. 26; xx. 16; xxvii. 14; xxxiii. 36; xxxii. 8; Deut. i. 46; Psalm xxix. 8.

Events of the journey.—As they were starting the brother-in-law of Moses, Hobab, the son of Raguel [Reuel], visited Moses, and was induced to go with Israel, because of his perfect familiarity with the region through which the route was to lie. x. 29-32. The hardships of the desert marching soon stirred up a spirit of rebellious wicked complaint, and the old lust for Egypt's goodly fare, even while the manna from heaven was falling, broke out as it had done before. xi. 1-6. God sent them quails and plague. xi. 31-34. It was here that Moses associated with him seventy of the elders of Israel to help him "bear the burden of the people." 14-20. Soon after a rebellion, headed by Miriam and Aaron, sister and brother of Moses, prophet and high-priest of God, was raised against Moses through envy, but was quickly quelled by such a judgment from God as silenced, confounded, and subdued the opposers. Chap. xii.

Paran and Kadesh.—At this place our lesson finds the nation. There was a town Paran, Deut. i. 1, and a mount Paran, Deut. xxxiii. 2, but now Israel is in the "wilderness of Paran," and at the town Kadesh. xlii. 26. In Deut. xxxii. 10 it is called "a waste, howling wilderness."

The spies.—From Kadesh twelve "heads of the children of Israel" (xlii. 3), one from each tribe except that of Levi, whose loss was made up by making two tribes of Joseph, were sent up through the whole length of Palestine to ascertain the nature and condition of the country. It was "the time of the first ripe grapes." "The vintage commenced in September." They returned after forty days, and must have travelled some four or five hundred miles. On their report see xlii. 24-33. Only Caleb and Joshua had enough faith in God and consequent courage to advise an onward march. The rest acknowledged the great fertility of the country, but thought it utterly unconquerable with its walled cities, its mighty warriors, and its powerful peoples.

Verses 1-5.—"All the congregation," not of course every person, but the congregation as a whole, seized with a common terror, as if it were a panic. Lifted up their voices and cried. A loud rebellious outcry was raised. Cowards taking counsel of cowards. The people who made up "the congregation" wept that night. They had been two years wandering and homeless, longing for a fixed abode, hoping for the promised land, yet often fearing they might never see it. Now at last they were on its borders, and had only to cross

the line. Forty days they had waited for the return of the spies, that they might move on and be done with the desert, and wandering, and homelessness. But alas! war, slavery, ruin, now stare them in the face. The disappointment was terrible, the grief sincere, distrust of God was at the bottom of all their trouble.

Verses 2-5.—All the children of Israel, universal disaffection. Murmured against Moses and against Aaron. And thus against God, in whose name and for whom these men had acted as the people's leaders. Ex. xvi. 8. Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt. Expressing the wish that they had never left Egypt. Would God that we had died in this wilderness. As so many who had been smitten with the plague for their sins. xi. 33, 34. It seems strange at first that such shocking sentiments could be expressed by this chosen nation after all that God had done for them. It betrays the most inexcusable impiety.

Verses 3-5.—Wherefore hath the Lord [Jehovah] brought us. They now blame Jehovah himself. Their blasphemy reaches its utmost height. This land, of Canaan, thus far so bright in anticipation, now so dark and terrible. To fall by the sword. The cowardice of unbelief! That our wives and our children should be a prey. An evil which no doubt they felt sure would come, and which to their natural affection was horrible. Were it not better for us to return to Egypt. What a suggestion! It was folly run mad to go back and give themselves up as slaves.

Verses 4-5.—Let us make a captain, in place of Moses. Return into Egypt. By that way of the desert which Jacob and his sons took in going to goodly Goshen.

Verses 5-6.—Moses and Aaron fell on their faces. This was in prayer to God. "The more ordinary posture of prayer among the nation of Israel seems to have been standing, but in cases of special emergency when they were deeply distressed and exceedingly anxious for a favorable response, they resorted to kneeling, and in the utmost ardor and impetuosity of prayer they fell upon their faces, as we learn by the example of our Lord himself. Matt. xxvi. 39; Luke xlii. 41. Aaron, too, now has the same heart with Moses, and does not, as so recently with Miriam, turn against him. Before all the assembly. A fit place, as it was for all the assembly that they interceded.

Verses 6-7.—Joshua the son of Nun. Called Oseba in xlii. 8. He was the general of the Hebrew army in the fight with the Amalekites near Sinai. Ex. xvii. 13. With Caleb the son of Jephunneh. We now meet him for the first time. See xlii. 6, 30. They alone of the men who were above twenty years old on leaving Egypt were spared to enter Canaan. vs. 24, 25; xxli. 11. Rent their clothes. The usual token of great grief or great wrath—here of both—"done by grasping the robe by the back of the neck with both hands, and rending it downward."

Verses 7-9.—It is only a man of truly heroic soul that can stand up and face and speak against an infuriated mass of men like those Hebrews. To the extreme fertility of the land they bear witness, and indeed the coward spies had admitted that. xlii. 27. In xlii. 32 the words, "a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof," cannot be understood of the sterility of the land, but probably of the exposure to mighty armies from without, or to the night of the inhabitants. They would "eat up" all incomers.

Verses 8, 9.—They here concede that were not God their leader they themselves would despair with all the others. He will not, cannot, lead a nation of rebels, and while rebelling. Bread for us. We shall devour them with our swords, eat them, not they us, shall enter into and possess all their wealth. Their defence is departed from them. The Hebrew word translated defence means "shadow," as "the great rock," or grateful tree near the fountain by its shadow was a defence from the terrible heat of the sun.

Verses 10.—Rage increased and God interposed. Moses interceded, destruction was averted, but the peoples' impious prayer for death in the wilderness was answered by thirty-eight years more of wandering and of death.

QUESTIONS.—Where did our last lesson leave Israel? ix. 1. Where does this one end them? xlii. 26. What do you know of "the wilderness of Paran"? Gen. xli. 12; Num. x. 12; xlii. 3, 26; 1 Sam. xxv. 1. Of Kadesh? Gen. xiv. 7; Num. xlii. 26; xx. 16; xxvii. 14; xxxiii. 36; Deut. i. 46. How long was Israel at Sinai? Ex. xix. 1; Num. x. 11.

How many days' journeys from Sinai to

Kadesh? Deut. i. 2. Name some of the principal events of the journey. x. 29 30; xi, xii.

Why were spies sent from Kadesh through Canaan? xlii. 2. How many? xlii. 4-15. How long gone? xlii. 25. Their report? xlii. 26 33.

Vs. 1. The effect of the report? Was this grief genuine? Its cause?

Vs. 2. Why should they murmur against Moses and Aaron? Had they murmured before? vs. 22. What two wishes did they express? What do you think of them? Have you ever had or seen such a spirit?

Vs. 3, 4. Their complaint against God? Did they really think God had been acting as their enemy? Did they really mean to go back to Egypt? Neh. ix. 16, 17.

Vs. 5. What did Moses and Aaron do? Why this?

Vs. 6. Why did Joshua and Caleb rend their clothes? Gen. xxxviii. 26, 34; xlii. 13; Judges xi. 35; Matt. xxvi. 55; Acts xiv. 14. Have we met Joshua before? Ex. xvii. 9.

Vs. 7-9. What did they say of the land? Of its inhabitants? Of the conquest? vs. 10. Its effect? What did God do? How did the matter end? vs. 20-24.

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. Scripture Catechism, 189, 190.

SUNDAY, May 31st, 1874.—The Smitten Rock.—Num. xx. 7-13.

Youths' Department.

THE SONG OF THE WIND.

I've a great deal to do, a great deal to do, Don't speak to me, children, I pray; These little boys' hats must be blown off their heads, And the little girls' bonnets away.

There's a great deal of dust to be blown in the air, To trouble the traveler's eyes; Those fruit-stalls and stands to be thrown to the ground, And this tart woman's puddings and pies.

There are bushels of apples to gather to-day, And oh! there's no end to the nuts; Over many long roads I must traverse away, And many by-lanes and short cuts.

There are thousands of leaves lying lazily here, That needs must be whirled round and round; A rickety house wants to see me, I know, In the most distant part of the town.

That rich nabob's cloak must have a good shake, Though he does hold his head pretty high; And I must not slight Betty, who washes so nice, And has just hung her clothes out to dry.

Then there are signs to be creaked and doors to be slammed, Loose window-blinds, too, to be shaken; When you know all the business I must do to-day, You'll see how much trouble I've taken.

I saw some ships leaving the harbor to-day, So I'll 'e'en go and help them along, And flap the white sails, and howl through the shrouds, And join in the sailor boys' song.

Then I'll mount to the clouds, and away they will sail, On their gorgeous wings through the bright sky; I bow to no mandate, save only to Him Who reigneth in glory on high. —Sarah Roberts.

THE MINISTRY OF POLITENESS.

"Kitty going to join the ministry! Well, if that isn't a good joke. She must think she is a woman's-righter"—and Harry Franklin threw his hat up in the air, and gave a laugh.

"That isn't the kind of ministry I mean," answered Kitty shyly, while tears began to come in her gray eyes. "I mean the ministry of politeness."

"And pray what is that, Miss Woman's Rights?" demanded Harry, with another laugh, louder and more disagreeable than the first, while he threw a handful of grass he had pulled to give the pony, standing at the door, over Kitty's hat and curls.

"No wonder you ask, Harry," said his mother, who had come out on the porch in time to hear the last few remarks; "for it is very evident that you don't know. Even Rob, waiting patiently for us to get into the phaeton, knows more of it than you do. He never would have thrown the grass over Kitty's hair when she was just going to ride. If you really wish to know what it is, I'll tell you. Part of it is Kit's patiently taking the grass out of her hat, and shaking it from her hair, without calling you 'a horrid old thing,' and asking me to make you behave. That's right, Kit," she said, turning to her daughter; "silence is the next best thing to the 'soft answer.' If we learn not to say disagreeable things, it is easier to say agreeable

ones. And now, who is going with me down to the cars to meet papa?"

"I am," Harry answered, immediately. Kitty was only human, and for a moment the new profession was forgotten, as she said, hastily:

"You went yesterday, and mamma said I might go to-day. I think it is real"—then she remembered, and suddenly stopped.

Her mother noticed it, and always quick to help her children in any triumph over self, said at once:

"I'll take you too, Kit, this evening, for I promised. Harry can go, because he was so patient in not speaking first."

Harry drew his brows together, for he often confided to Kitty "he would much rather take a whipping than have mamma chaff him." The "chaffing" did some good, however, for he helped his mother in the phaeton, then absolutely waited till Kitty got in before he took a seat in the rumble. He met his reward in a bright smile of approbation from his mother, a smile he valued in proportion to its scarcity; for harem-eccentric Harry was always in some mischief.

After they had been driven for a few moments down the pretty avenue of trees that led to the gate, Mrs. Franklin looked down at her little daughter, sitting on the seat by her, and said:—

"What makes you think of the ministry of politeness, Kitty dear?"

"I was reading something about it the other day in that little book you gave me, and I thought I would try to be polite."

"The Bible doesn't say anything about being polite," broke in Harry, in his usual abrupt style. "And if it isn't in the Bible we needn't do it."

"But it is in the Bible, Harry," his mother answered him. "What else does this mean? 'Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another.' What else does the Golden Rule mean? Why, I could go on for half an hour repeating verses that mean that we must be polite to each other."

"But people need not be polite to their family," Harry said.

"Ah, my boy, you never made a greater mistake than that. There is no place where politeness is more needed than in one's own family. We are much more apt to be courteous to strangers whom we do not feel intimate with than we are to our home people; and it is a mistake, for we are less thorough with them, and so less likely to be made uncomfortable."

"How does it make you uncomfortable, mamma?"

"Suppose you were to ask me, 'Can't I drive Rob now, mamma?' and I was to answer you, 'No, you shan't!' wouldn't that make you feel badly?"

"Yes'm, it would; I would think I was speaking to Kitty," Harry answered, with a sudden burst of thoughtfulness, that made Mrs. Franklin and Kitty both laugh.

"But if I said, 'I am afraid to have you drive now, Harry, for Bob is very tricky, and we are going down hill,' you would not feel bad, though you would not be allowed to drive any more than if I had answered you roughly. Do you see?"

"Why, yes. So it does make a difference," Harry said. "I never thought of that before."

"One reason that families don't get on smoothly and happily together is, that they are not particular enough about these little acts of courtesy and kindness that make life go so much more smoothly; you and Kitty would be much happier together if you spoke to each other as you speak to papa and me."

"How do you mean, mamma?" Kitty asked.

"Why, if you said, 'Please, Harry, don't touch that, it will break,' instead of 'You mustn't touch my things! Mamma, please make Harry behave!'"

Kitty looked conscious, for she remembered having used those very words early in the morning, and used them in a very cross tone, also.

"You wouldn't speak that way to me," her mother continued. "You would have spoken pleasantly and amiably, and I would have been a great deal readier to listen and do as you asked."

"And you, too, Harry," Mrs. Franklin said. "Who was it I heard yesterday saying, 'Go away, and leave me alone; I don't want to be bothered by a girl; what can a girl know about making a kite?' and five minutes after, when I passed, the same person said to me in a pleasant manner, 'Please, mamma, help me hold this paper till I paste it.' Kitty could have held it better than I could, for her fingers are smaller, and would go in places where

mine would not go, and she would have been interested, and stayed to help you, while I had to go away in a few moments."

"But it is different, somehow, mamma," "Not very different, Harry; the principle is the same. What would you think if I were to say this evening, when your papa asks me for another cup of coffee, 'I can't give you any more; I'm tired of pouring out coffee for you, you are such a bother?'"

The children both laughed at the idea of their gentle mamma saying such a thing, and said that they would think it very queer.

"It would not be a bit worse than for you and Kitty to speak so to each other. There is just as much necessity for the little people in our home to be courteous to each other as for the big people to be. If you only take care of the tone of your voice, it is so much easier to be polite, for you would not be like to make a very disagreeable remark in a bright, cheerful voice, would you?"

"No, indeed," the children answered. "That is so much the case," Mrs. Franklin continued, "that when you only hear the voice of people talking, you usually tell whether they are saying pleasant or disagreeable things. An angry voice is like a railroad whistle, warning you to get off the track, and if any one is wise he will heed the warning. If you get into a habit of speaking to each other in a cross voice, you will find that presently, even though you feel kindly, you cannot speak so, and then, children, you will feel so sorry for it, and it will be too late to alter the tone of your voice. I have gone into people's houses sometimes and heard them speaking to each other in cross or sulky tones, and then they would come into the room where I was, and speak to me as sweetly and pleasantly as a May morning; but I could not enjoy it, because I felt that it was their company voices that I heard, not the real honest tones of their heart. So, above all, be polite to your own family, for there is not much temptation to be rude to people you meet formally. But there is your papa coming to meet us, and we must hurry. We will talk some more about the ministry of politeness another time."—N. Y. Observer.

THE TEMPERANCE CRUSADE.

The following stanzas have been received from Akron, in the State of Ohio. With them we are informed: "All the liquor saloons in this city have been closed." The wish is expressed that the same glorious results may soon be seen in Nova Scotia:

ONWARD TO VICTORY.

BY MRS. G. W. LINTON. Onward, onward, band victorious, Bear the temperance banner high! For our future will be glorious, And our day of triumph's high. Vice and woe will flee before us, As the darkness flies the sun; Onward! victory hovers o'er us, Soon the triumph will be won!

To the drinker and the seller, Make our glorious mission known, Try to save the blind distiller, From his fearful pending doom, Widows, orphans, now beseech us, To destroy the heartless foe; Mercy, sympathy, and justice, Urge us still to onward go.

We'll gird on the temperance armor, Look for guidance from above; Trusting in our glorious leader, Shielded with a Father's love. Onward! onward! never falter! Cease not till our land is free! Vowing on the Temperance altar, On we'll go to victory! —Akron, March 20th, 1874.

The results of the Woman's Temperance Movement, thus far, give the following figures:—Thirty-seven cities and towns entirely freed from the liquor traffic; 1,751 liquor saloons in Ohio, Indiana and Illinois closed, and 800 liquor sellers not only reformed but hopefully converted to Christ.

Although thousands of liquor shops have been closed under the first upheaval of this new movement, it is not to be supposed that they will all remain closed. Still temperance has received a wound which will not be soon healed. As a true religious revival always brings the church of Christ up to a higher plane of holy living, so this temperance revival is raising public sentiment and society itself into a higher temperance atmosphere.

THE CAUSE IN IRELAND.—Some sixty ladies, the wives of clergymen and leading citizens, waited on the magistrates of Dundee recently and presented a petition, signed by upwards of eight thousand women, asking the magistrates not to grant new licences, to withdraw those whose holders had been convicted, to give no transfers, and not to permit the plurality of licences. Mrs. Inglis, Mrs. Parker, Mrs. Steel, and Miss Smith, who spoke at length, contended that it would be better to penalize the publicans than to allow them to continue their traffic. The magistrates promised to give the statements every consideration.

MONSIGN

The follow to the Rev. Wall, of Ron Sir,—On concluded y mission to I questions b great menu whose faith sought to mission, and Not being a may know Catholic p gated even discourses and you ne that it is n publicly as trisars rep Protestantie with w ally ends. speak, inst might have a real adv pliances at altar and t and wax, results, or you would at the M where the command made it su ly ignore, the stand- and in end no divine whatever no divine religious reason, at of Rome, and she g your Fath now be ign is not a s intellect, it is the means of heart, and that he w spirit, un divine ass has these cause, Ge being, he whom he sent on and blas God, and our reno as no Ca church, concern instinct evade eol mankind through projects, with the now tau which y bending poor sin retire an But you tion, res elanguis eternal to the withdra clet in and pra Rome w Index a as polic that yo appeari the flow all the trample If yo proved and of you ga admit heaven porch waters a light out w which the br to things earth. church ing of guardi of the