

The Christian Messenger.

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BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1875.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.
Heroes and Judges.

SUNDAY, January 31st, 1875.—Jericho Taken.—Joshua vi. 12-20.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were compassed about seven days.” Heb. xi. 30.

ANALYSIS.—I. Second day's circuit. Vs. 12-14. II. Order of march. Vs. 13. III. Seventh day's circuit. Vs. 15, 16. IV. City "accursed." V. 17. V. Special restriction. Vs. 18, 19. VI. Fall of Jericho. Vs. 20.

HISTORICAL CONNECTION.—Jericho was now strictly shut up. Many possibly looked curiously over the walls, but none went in or out: its gates were closed. The city, to all human appearance, was impregnable. It was the capital of the Jordan valley, the key of Palestine to every invader from this quarter. But the Lord said to Joshua, "See, I have given into thine hand Jericho." Immediate and definite instruction was added how this wonder was to be brought about, with every particular of which Joshua complied.

EXPOSITION.—Verse 12.—Joshua rose early in the morning. For the second day's march. They had once encircled the city. vs. 11.

Verse 13.—Seven priests, bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns. The words "rams' horns," is that from which comes our word jubilee, and signifies "a cry of joy, a joyful shout," and should be trumpets of jubilee, or signal, of alarm. The year of jubilee took its name from the sounding of trumpets on the tenth day of the seventh month by which it was announced to the people. Lev. xxv. 9, 10. In verse 5, of our chapter, we have instead of "trumpet of signal," "horn of signal," translated rams' horn. It is supposed that "the trumpet" was made of a horn, either of the ram, the chamois, or the ox. Before the ark of the Lord. Immediately before it, and near to it. This indicates that the trumpet blasts were specially to represent the coming and power of the Lord, for, as we have more than once noted, the presence of the ark represented Jehovah's presence. Such was the design of the blowing of the trumpet at Sinai. Ex. xix. 6, 19; xx. 18. Similar was its use in connection with the jubilee year, and with the great day of atonement. Lev. xxiii. 24-27. The armed men went before them [the trumpeters], but the rearward came after the ark of the Lord. It seems from verse 3 that only the men of war were to march about the city, and the more natural if not the necessary meaning is that all the men of war, not by representatives, but in their own persons, were thus to march around it. The great number of these—600,000 (Num. i. 3, 46) taken in connection with the fact that on the seventh day there was time to march around the city seven times, has led some to believe that only a part of the military actually made the rounds.

Verse 14.—Compassed the city once. Only once, as they did on the first day on each of the next four days. Such was the command, vs. 3.

Verse 15.—On the seventh day. The last. They rose early about the dawning of the day. Literally, "the rising of the dawn." Compassed the city. Marched around it. After the same manner. Literally, "after the same judgment" or "law." Compassed the city seven times. The only change was in the number of circuits made. The seventh day or Sabbath, was the Lord's, and it was for them to do the Lord's bidding whatever it might be, work or rest.

Verse 16.—At the seventh time, when the priests blew, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city. There is here the same remarkable accumulation of sevens that we last year found in the distribution of the festivals through the year, and in the larger arrangements of the years into the week of years. Seven is the sacred number, the number of the covenant, and goes back in its reference to the account of the creation, or perhaps we should say to the work of creation, with its six work days and its rest day. It seems that the peculiar signal for the shout of the people, was given by the trumpets in the form of a "long blast." vs. 5. How manifestly appropriate the words, "The Lord hath given you the

city," when not a blow was struck by themselves.

Verse 17.—The city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the Lord. The word translated "accursed," is from a root meaning "to shut up, to shut in." Deut. ii. 34; iii. 6; vii. 2; xx. 17. The city was thus to be devoted to destruction, no more to belong to man, or to be used by man. Deut. vii. 23-26. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all, etc. The story of her treatment of the spies is given in chap. ii. For that act of faith in God, and of kindness to his people, she was saved from the common destruction, and had her near kindred also saved. She became one in the line of Christ's honored ancestry, and is more than once commended in sacred writ as an example for imitation. Matt. i. 5; Heb. xi. 31. She did indeed lie to those who came for the spies, but whatever condemnation may be pronounced upon this part of her conduct, the genuineness of her faith remains. She is not commended as exhibiting a *perverted morality*, but only as a *genuine believer*. Her salvation strikingly shows that God knows how to save from destruction his own, though they be few and weak. The command to exterminate all the inhabitants of the city, both men and women, adults and children, seems cruel, and hence to have certainly come not from God, but from human hate and wickedness. But consider that God has a sovereign right over all men to take them from the world when and as he will; that the Canaanites were desperately wicked as a people; that God's command makes Israel's army the executioner of his sentence, not lawless savage ravagers; that the external act even of taking human life has its character not in itself simply as an external act, but in the spirit, reason, motives of him who takes it; that great lessons of righteousness and grace are taught forcibly to men by the destruction of the doomed cities and peoples opposing God and his people; and that even where we cannot see how a thing may be right and best, we may yet, on God's testimony, assuredly believe that it is so.

Verse 18.—Ye, in any wise. More exactly, "only do ye," with something of emphasis on the word only, as showing the importance of this caution. *Keep yourselves from the accursed thing.* Take nothing for yourselves of all that has been set apart and devoted to Jehovah. The temptation to plunder under such circumstances as existed in the taking of that wealthy city by these poor people was tremendous. Could we all carry with us always such a vivid and just sense of God, we should walk more carefully, should live more righteously than we do. Sin masters us when we lose sight of the Lord. *Lest ye make yourselves accursed.* What a clear and solemn warning. If any man took of the spoil of the city, he would thus expose himself to its destined destruction. *And make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it.* We live not merely as individuals, each by and for and in himself, but there is also a fellowship in life. The family, social and national relation exist, and whether we will or no, our sin brings evil to those with whom we are linked.

Verse 19.—Shall come into the treasury of the Lord [Jehovah]. Devoted to his use in this way, not by destruction. It was, however, to be beyond all redemption, separate utterly and forever from private ownership and use.

Verse 20.—The wall fell down flat. Not a blow had been struck, nothing but marching, blowing, shouting. Yes, something more, there had been obedience, faith. By faith the walls of Jericho fell. Went up into the city, every man straight before him. Now had come the time for their action. They go every man—mark that—not here and there one, but every man. They went each in his own place, and in the way lying before him. So ought we to do in our work.

QUESTIONS.—Vs. 13. What is the number seven symbolical of in Scripture? What was the order of march? Ans. 1. Armed men. 2. Seven priests blowing with trumpets. 3. The ark. 4. The rearward of the tribe of Dan. Who marched in silence? vs. 10.

Vs. 15. How many days did they go about the city once? On what day seven times? What does this indicate respecting the size of Jericho? Did all Israel probably go about the city? What effect did all this walking have upon the inhabitants of Jericho? What was Israel commanded to do on the seventh day? Did the shouting tumble the walls down? Why was the shouting delayed? Who overthrew Jericho?

Vs. 17. What was the fate of the city? Who was spared? What honor was

bestowed upon her? What four female names do we find in the genealogy of Christ? Ans. Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsh-ba.

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, February 7th, 1875.—Achan's Sin.—vii. 19-26.

Youths' Department.

IN THE STREETS AT NIGHT.

"His father don't allow him to be in the streets at night," said Will Carson in a mocking tone; "better tie the baby to the bed-post with his mother's apron-strings."

John Mellen's face flashed at these taunts. No boy likes to be ridiculed, especially when a crowd of his playmates are standing by to join in the laugh against him.

"Be a man and come along with us," said Harry Jones. "You are old enough now to think and act for yourself."

"Come, John, come with us," said another. "We shall have a good time. It won't hurt you just for once to have a little fun."

"No," said John, "I shall mind my father. The Bible says 'Honor thy father and thy mother,' and I shall do it."

"Come on, boys," said Will, starting off; "don't stand listening to his preaching." On he went, and the boys quickly followed.

John went home, and in preparing his lessons for the next day and joining in the home pleasures, he had forgotten all about the boys.

The next morning, on his way to school, he heard that the boys had been arrested and sent to jail for being drunk and disorderly. Think how anxiously their parents must have been waiting all through the night for their boys to come home. And then to be told that they were in jail! how it must have surprised and pained them.

Don't be wandering in the streets at night, boys. It is a bad habit, and nothing but harm can come of it.

If these boys had minded their parents and stayed at home, they would have made different men. Not one of them turned out well.

Hundreds of boys have been ruined through being every night in the streets. John Mellen made a happy and prosperous man. And so will every boy who fears God, stands up for the right, and honors his father and mother.—Life-Boat.

THE MARVELS OF A SEED.

Have you ever considered how wonderful a thing the seed of a plant is? It is a miracle. God said: "Let there be plant yielding seed," and it is further added, "each one after his kind."

The great naturalist Cuvier, thought that the germs of all past, present and future generations of seeds were contained one within another, as if packed in a succession of boxes. Other learned men have explained this mystery in a different way. But what signify all their explanations? Let them explain as they will, the wonder remains the same, and we must look upon the reproduction of the seed as a continual miracle.

Is there upon earth a machine, is there a palace, is there even a city, which contains so much that is wonderful as is enclosed in a single little seed—one grain of corn, one little brown apple seed, one small seed of a tree, picked up, perhaps, by a sparrow for her little ones, the smallest one of a poppy or a blue-bell, or even one of the seeds that are so small that they float about the air invisible to our eyes? Ah! there is a world of marvel and brilliant beauties hidden in each of these tiny seeds. Consider their immense number, the perfect separation of the different kinds, and their wonderful fruitfulness.

Consider first their number. About one hundred and fifty years ago the celebrated Linnæus, who has been called "the father of botany," reckoned about eight thousand different kinds of plants; and he then thought that the whole number existing could not much exceed ten thousand. But a hundred years after him, M. de Candolle, of Geneva, described forty thousand kinds of plants, and supposed it possible that the number might even amount to one hundred thousand.

Well, let me ask you, have these one hundred thousand kinds of plants ever failed to bear the right seed? Have they ever deceived us? Has seed of wheat ever yielded barley, or a seed of poppy ever

grown up into a sun-flower? Has a yew-tree ever sprung from an acorn, or a beech tree from a chestnut? A little bird may carry away the small seed of a yew-tree in its beak to feed its nestlings, and on the way drop it on the ground. The tiny seed may spring up and grow where it fell, unnoticed, and sixty years after it may become a magnificent tree, under which the flocks of the valley and their shepherds may rest in the shade.

Consider, next, the wonderful power of life and resurrection bestowed on the seeds of plants, so that they may be preserved from year to year, and even from century to century.

Let a child put a few seeds in a drawer and shut them up; sixty years afterwards, when his hair is white and his step is tottering, let him take one of these seeds and sow it in the ground, and soon after he will see it spring up into new life and become a young, fresh and beautiful plant.

M. Joannet relates that, in the year 1835, several old Celtic tombs were discovered near Begorac. Under the head of each of the dead bodies there was found a small square stone or brick, with a hole in each, containing a few seeds, which had been placed there beside the dead by the heathen friends, who had buried them, perhaps, one thousand and five hundred or one thousand and seven hundred years before. These seeds were carefully sowed by those who found them. What was seen to spring from the dust of the dead? Beautiful sun-flowers, blue corn flowers, and clover-bearing blossoms, as bright and sweet as those which are woven into wreaths by the merry children now playing in our fields.

Some years ago a vase, hermetically sealed, was found in a mummy pit in Egypt by the English traveler, Wilkinson, who sent it to the British Museum. The librarian there, having unfortunately broken it, discovered in it a few grains of wheat and one or two peas, old, wrinkled, and as hard as a stone. The peas were planted carefully under glass on the 4th of June, 1844, and, at the end of thirty days these seeds were seen to spring up into new life. They had been buried probably about three thousand years ago, perhaps in the time of Moses, and had slept all that long time, apparently dead, yet still living in the dust of the tomb.—Gausson.

HOW TO BECOME HAPPY.

Many young persons are ever thinking over new ways of adding to their pleasures. They always look for chances for more "fun," more joy. Once there was a wealthy and powerful king, full of care, and very unhappy. He heard of a man famed for his wisdom and piety, and found him in a cave on the borders of the wilderness.

"Holy man," said the king, "I come to learn how I may be happy."

Without making a reply, the wise man led the king over a rough path, till he brought him in front of a high rock, on the top of which an eagle had built her nest.

"Why has the eagle built her nest yonder?"

"Doubtless," answered the king, "that it may be out of danger."

"Then imitate the bird," said the wise man; "build thy home in heaven, and thou shalt then have peace and happiness."

A DOG THAT COULD COUNT TEN.

That some dumb animals do get a certain idea of number, from habit and repeated association, and learn to distinguish special days, and even to draw inferences, by some similar means, seems beyond question. But instances are not wanting of such intelligence in brutes, where no previous association can be traced.

A gentleman on a visit to Scotland, during one of his walks, came across some men who were washing sheep. Close to the water where the operations were being carried on was a small pen, in which a detachment of ten sheep were placed handy to the men for washing. While watching the performance his attention was called to a sheep dog lying down close by. The animal, on the pen becoming nearly empty, without a word from any one, started off to the main body of the flock and brought back ten of their number, and drove them into the empty washing pen. The fact of the dog bringing exactly the same number of sheep as had vacated it he looked upon as a strange coincidence—a mere chance. But he continued looking on, and, much to his surprise, as soon as the men had re-

duced the number to three sheep, the dog started off again and brought back ten more and so he continued throughout the afternoon, never bringing one more nor one less and always going for a fresh lot when only three were left in the pen, evidently being aware that during the time the last three were washing he would be able to bring up a fresh detachment.—Land and Water.

A SERMON FOR LITTLE FOLKS.

"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."—John xiii. 17.

I. "These things;" that is, your duties. You have duties, wherever you are:

1. At home, obedience and respect to parents, and kindness to brothers, sisters, and servants.

2. At school, respect to teacher, faithfulness in study, and fairness in play.

3. At church, be quiet, listen, worship, and give your hearts to the Saviour.

4. On the street, good manners, modesty, kindness, minding your own business.

11. How should you do your duty?

1. Not for pay. That is a low motive. Some always ask, "What will you give me?"

2. But from love. So the Saviour did when a boy at Nazareth. So the angels do God's will—which is only another name for duty. This will make you do it cheerfully.

3. Better every day. By trying to do your duties, you will become more skillful. So you improve in reading, writing, and music. Peter says, "Grow in grace."

111. Doing duty makes you happy. Sin cannot make you happy. Sin did not make Eve happy, nor Cain, nor Judas. Disobedience at home does not make you happy; idleness, unkindness, bad manners, no kind of sin can make you happy.

But happiness comes from doing your duty. That is God's reward. This is the promise in the text. Think of this every day for just one week, and see how true it is.

Try, then, to know your duty. Be faithful in duty, in doing it for love to God and man; then you will be happy in heaven.—Myrtle.

WATCHING ONE'S SELF.

"When I was a boy," said an old man, "we had a schoolmaster who had an odd way of catching the idle boys. One day he called out to us, 'Boys, I must have closer attention to your books. The first one that sees another idle I want you to inform me and I will attend to the case.'"

"Ah!" thought I to myself, "there is Joe Simmons, that I don't like. I'll watch him, and if I see him look off his book, I'll tell." It was not long before I saw Joe look off his book, and immediately I informed the master.

"Indeed!" said he, "how did you know he was idle?"

"I saw him," said I.

"You did? And were your eyes on your book when you saw him?"

"I was caught, and I never watched for idle boys again."

If we are sufficiently watchful over our own conduct, we shall have no time to find fault with the conduct of others. Time is short, and if your cross be heavy, remember you have not far to carry it.

USE OF MARKS IN SIGNATURES.

Lord Chief Justice Cockburn alluded in his speech on the Tichborne case to the use of marks in signatures. The subject is a curious one. In Spain until very recently, if not at the present time, the "mark" is of more importance than the name. Thus a banker would cash a check if it bore the mark without the signature, but not if it bore the signature alone. Some of these marks, which are usually modifications of the figure of the cross, more or less floriated, are very interesting, partaking of the nature of a branch of heraldry. They occur in the majority of Peninsular documents and deeds of any importance.

A GENTLEMAN.

Perhaps a gentleman is a rarer personage than some of us think for. Which of us can point out many such in his circle; men whose aims are generous, whose truth is constant, whose want of meanness makes them simple, who can look the world honestly in the face with an equal manly sympathy for the great and the small? We all know a hundred whose coats are well made, and a score who have excellent manners, and one or two happy beings who are what they call in the inner circles, and have shot into the very center and bull's-eye of fashion; but of gentlemen, how many? Let us take a scrap of paper, and each make out his list.—Thackeray.