

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1878.

SUNDAY, January 27th, 1878.—Jehoshaphat's Prosperity.—2 Chronicles xvii. 1-10

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Vss. 3-2.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And they taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the Lord with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people."—2 Chron. xvii. 9.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, 2 Chron. cles xvii. 1-19. Tuesday, vs. 1; 1 Kings xxii. 41-50. Wednesday, vs. 3; 2 Sam. vii. Thursday, vs. Prov. viii. Friday, Psalm xov. Saturday, vs. 5; 1 Samuel ii. 1-11. Sunday, vs. 9; 1 Tim. vi.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Jehoshaphat on the throne. Vs. 1. II. Patriotic service. Vs. 2. III. His personal piety. Vss. 3-6. IV. Instruction given to the people. Vss. 7-9.

QUESTIONS.—What defects in Asa's character does the Bible disclose? In what sense was it true that his heart was perfect all his days?

I. How long had Asa reigned? "Did grace run in his blood" to his good son?

II. When is a warlike spirit justifiable? When unjustifiable?

III. Why is the distinction drawn between Asa's first and last ways? How does the Bible verify itself? When is a human example worthy of imitation? What had been "the doings of Israel"? What is meant by "sought not unto Baalim"? When may a man safely have riches and honor in abundance?

IV. What blessing did Jehoshaphat send to his people? By whom?

Why are the first ways of men sometimes the best? Why is it well to imitate the deeds of illustrious believers? Comp. Heb. xii. 1.

A good son carries on the work of a good father. Vs. 3.—Riches are not necessarily inconsistent with piety. Vs. 5.—A pious life is the highest exaltation possible to man. Vs. 6.—A wise ruler has regard to the moral and intellectual needs of his people. Vss. 7-9.—A religious education is the highest education. Vs. 9.

HISTORICAL CONNECTION.—In the chapter following our last lesson, we find Asa using a worldly and wicked policy to divert Baasha, the king of Israel, from building Ramah, six miles north of Jerusalem. Worse still, we find him putting Hanani, the seer, who had rebuked him for these worldly measures, into prison. Such, alas! have often been the perturbations of goodness. "Nevertheless, the heart of Asa was perfect all his days." 2 Chron. xv. 17. Our lesson now introduces us to the reign of Jehoshaphat, the son of Asa—a good and prosperous reign, though not wholly unmingled with evil; for a sincere life may be something less than a perfect one.

EXPOSITION.—Verse 1.—Jehoshaphat. The name means Jehovah-judge. He was Asa's son, and thirty-five years old at his father's death. xx. 31. Israel.—Here used specially of the kingdom of the ten tribes.

Verse 2.—The cities of Ephraim, which Asa, his father, had taken.—Taken after the time of our last lesson. xvi. 5, 6. The reference thus differs from that in xv. 8.

Verse 3.—In the first ways of his father David—or fore-father, referring to David's adultery and numbering of the people. 2 Sam. xi, xii; 1 Chron. xxi. Baalim.—The plural of Baal, to designate Baal's many images.

Verse 4.—The doings of Israel.—Referring specially to the worship of the calves set up by Jeroboam.

Verse 5.—In his hand.—In his power and control. Presents. The free gifts of Jehoshaphat's own people over and above the regular taxes.

Verse 6.—Heart was lifted up.—Holy confidence and hope, as the clause, "in the ways of Jehovah," proves (7, 8). Three classes of officers are mentioned: princes, Levites, and priests. Levites were teachers by profession, more particularly in religious matters, while the duty of the priests was more prominently to have the care of sacrifices, etc. The princes or civil officers might also teach, especially in the more secular part of the law, while they would also have authority to require from the people, attendance to the king's command.

Verse 9.—The book of the law.—Doubtless the Pentateuch which had been for a long time completed.

Verse 10.—The kingdoms of the land.

—The Gentile nations in distinction from Israel.

Analysis.—The theme, as given, is "Jehoshaphat's Prosperity." More fully it is Judah's prosperity as promoted by Jehoshaphat. This prosperity is viewed with reference first to its nature and causes (vss. 1-9); second, to its consequences (vs. 10.) The nature and causes appear first as Material; second, as Moral. Thus are given three divisions, giving three aspects of the prosperity—as Material, Moral, and Monetary.

I. Material. Verses 1-6.—(1.) The end in view was security. Israel was hostile in consequence of the events chronicled in xvi. 1-6. Self-defence, not aggression, was the plan. In case of the nation, and of the individual, to exist is sometimes to resist. The right of the former carries that of the latter. Non-resistance is then non-existence. This preparation for war implies the right to make war. That right belongs always to the nation as such, as it belongs to every nation as such. This is "bearing the sword" in the execution and maintenance of right and righteousness, always supposing that for righteousness, and at its behest, the sword is drawn. (2.) He used inherited advantages. Of these one, and the best, was his father's good and successful example. He took his father's course. To walk in the steps of a father's just because he was father would not be wise, for then it would be wise to be bad, provided we happened to have a bad father. (3.) God's approval went with the king in this, partly because he acted in a right and pious spirit, and partly because the outwards deeds themselves were right. This latter was as true of the military preparation, as of the destruction of idols and idol worship. The man had the same spirit in both. His business was his religion, and his religion his business. (5.) God's blessing proved his approval, because it expressed it. In the present case, as was suitable to the times and dispensation, it took the form of outward material prosperity. The king had what he sought—national safety; and, besides, personal wealth and honor. (6.) The effect of the prosperity on the king's heart was not pride, but humble gratitude, with deeper trust and hope. "The goodness of God leadeth to repentance," or should.

II. Moral. Verses 7-9.—(1.) The fact of a moral good, a good other, if not higher, than the material was recognized. A large class find value in nothing which cannot be weighed in scales, and sold in the market for dollars. Blessed are they who measure man's worth not by money, but by character, who find it in him, not in his. Man is an end, not a tool, and a developed manhood is the end to which all wealth, institutions, the very creation itself is instrument. Jehoshaphat saw that, it may be, at any rate we should. (2.) Instruction and culture are the means by which to develop manhood. The worst of all errors is to dwarf the religious nature, to swell the secular, develop men earthward, and stunt them Godward. (3.) The dignity of true teaching appears. The kings of thought are kings of kings; nay, are creators of manhood, and so of supreme worth. (4.) Popular, universal education is signalized. Blessed are the people, where all are truly and wisely taught, especially in God's Word.

III. Monetary. Verse 10.—All this power of Judah became warning, bidding the nations to keep "hands off." How many who can and will respect only force. Especially desirable is that power of Christian character that keeps tempters, and hence temptation a far off.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, February 3rd, 1878.—Jehoshaphat Reproved.—2 Chron. xix. 1-9.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Wherefore now let the fear of the Lord be upon you; take heed and do it; for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts."—2 Chron. xix. 7.

The Story of the Lesson.

FOR THE PRIMARY CLASS.

Jehoshaphat, the son of Asa, was the fourth king of Judah. He was thirty-five years old when he began to reign. He kept the covenant which Asa, his father, had made, doing that which was right, not only in the sight of men but of God. The Lord blessed him because he did like David had done, and did not

worship idols, as Israel did. The kings who had come before him had so many wars with Israel, that Jehoshaphat set himself about making his towers and cities strong, and also those which his father Asa had taken from Israel in battle. He placed many soldiers in these, to be ready in case of need. This king wished his people to be good, and took a wise course to make them so. He began by setting them a good example himself; then he had them taught the word of God. He sent a company of princes, priests, and Levites, to read and explain the Scriptures: and they went to all the cities, and taught the people. All the countries around Judah were afraid to make war against Jehoshaphat; but both his own people and others brought his presents. Some brought silver, some rams and goats; and he grew so rich that he built cities to keep his treasures in.

Booths' Department.

They Don't Think.

Once a trap was baited With a piece of cheese; It tickled so a little mouse, It almost made him sneeze. An old rat said, "There's danger Be careful where you go." "Nonsense!" said the other, "I don't think you know." So he walked in boldly— Nobody in sight; First, he took a nibble; Then, he took a bite. Close the trap together Snapped, as quick as wink, Catching mouse fast there, 'Cause he didn't think.

Once there was a robin Lived outside the door, Who wanted to come inside, And hop upon the floor. "Oh! no," said the mother, "You must stay with me. Little birds are safest Sitting in a tree." "I don't care," said robin, And he gave his tail a fling— "I don't think the old folks Know quite everything." Down he flew, and Kitty seized him, Before he had time to blink; "Oh!" he cried, "I'm sorry; But, I didn't think!"

And now, my little readers, You who read this song, Don't you see what trouble Comes with thinking wrong? And when you're warned of ruin, Pause upon the brink, And don't go over headlong, 'Cause you didn't think.

A pleasant play for Little Folks.

Unwonted quiet reigned in the sun-bright playroom of the little Millfins. Kate, the eldest, sat with uplifted finger, the "Hush! hush!" which had silenced her companions still parting her cherry red lips. She sat thus for a moment only; the next she started to her feet crying joyously, "It is! it is!"

"Aunt Dee! Aunt Dee! Blessed Aunt Dee!" broke in a chorus of delighted voices.

And with one accord books were dropped, puzzles forsaken, dolls flung aside, and a rush made for the door. But before they could reach it, it was hastily opened by a lady who laughed brightly.

"Yes, 'Aunt Dee, blessed Aunt Dee' at last! and with a kiss and hug for the whole six. No! no! spare me!" she cried merrily the next minute, "not all at once! One at a time, you young Liliputians, you'll choke me!"

Vain protest! The hugging and kissing was done Milfin fashion, and no other; but like most things it came to an end, and little black-eyed, curly-headed Lute's voice rose vivaciously above the rest.

"Say, Auntie, say, what is the nice play you wrote to Katie about? Is it real nice? And did you play it when you were a little girl?"

"Three questions in a breath!" laughed Aunt Dee. "Well, in answer to the first, I'll state that the play is called 'Kitchen Furniture.' Do you know anything about it?"

"Not a thing!" eagerly cried the little group.

"Very good," said Aunt Dee, "and now as to its being real nice, I can only say I thought so when I was little."

"So you did play it when you were little?" cried Lute.

"Indeed I did! and a glorious time the first time was, I can tell you! The beginning of it was a splendid, sleigh-

ride, from the village to a farmhouse, with a lot of little folks as happy as myself, and then followed a long afternoon full of pleasure, the same closing with a royal supper, after which came uproarious fun with 'Kitchen Furniture,' the whole topped off with refreshments and the grand sleigh-ride home. Was not that pleasure enough for one day?"

"I guess we would think so," laughed Katie. "Why, Aunt Dee, it was as nice again as our fussy city parties."

"But we could play 'Kitchen Furniture' in the city, couldn't we, Auntie?" Lute interrogated anxiously.

"Certainly," smiled Aunt Dee.

"How? how, Auntie?" cried Lute.

"In the first place, you provide enough chairs for the whole company except one. Then all but that one seat themselves in two long close rows, face to face, but wide enough apart to leave plenty of room for the crier, who has no chair, to walk up and down between the lines.

"After you are all seated, each chooses a name—the name of any article of kitchen furniture or kitchen use. The long names, such as bake-iron, gridiron, pie-board, jug of molasses, and so on, occasion most fun, as they are not easily slipped off the tongue in a hurry.

"When the naming is done to your satisfaction the crier (who is also named) calls out, as she stands between the two rows:

"My lady wants a gridiron, gridiron, gridiron!"

"And now let the gridiron look out. Let her start to her feet and answer as quick as she can.

"Gridiron!"

"If she does not say it before the crier calls it the third time, she forfeits her seat and must take the crier's place. The crier must be quick of speech and keen-witted, too, or she will never get a chair by crying her lady's wants.

"It's a good plan for her to look out for inattentive ones, and also to deceive the pot, pan, or kettle she intends calling by walking towards the skillet or plate.

"The play can be varied as often as you like by the crier calling out once, 'My lady wants a whole set of kitchen furniture!'"

"When that call comes you must all jump up and change seats as quickly as possible, and the slow puss or the unfortunate puss who gets none has to be the crier."

"Oh, but," cried Lute, "nobody'd get my seat! I'd just change with the one next to me.

"No! no! you could not all do that," laughed Aunt Dee merrily. "That would spoil the fun. You don't want to be slipping from one chair to another like cowards. The right way is to start up with the rest of the company and make a fair and courageous dash for a seat. And now that's all I can tell you about 'Kitchen Furniture.'"

"And to-night we'll try it!" cried Lute in irreplaceable glee.

And they did; and if my young readers want to know if there was fun that night let them try it too.—Annie H. Jerome in the Christian Weekly.

God's Sunshine.

"Well, Aunt Polly, here you are again on the door steps. It seems to me you almost live on them."

Old Polly raised her faded eyes to the face of her friend, and laughing, said, "Yes, dear, dat's jus' so! Jim says 'We mought build a house all doo' steps and nothin' else, fo' granny, kase she lives dar and no whar else!'"

"I suppose you like to see the people, and to hear the children prattle as they go by to school," said the lady.

"Well, yes, I likes to see folks 'cause my Fader up dar, made 'em all; but its most for de sunshine dat I stays out here. O, God's sunshine's a powerful bleasin', dear. When I's cold I comes out and sits in it, and I grows warm; when I's a-hungry, and Jim's wife's got nothin' to eat, I comes out here and 'pears like I'd had my dinner. When I's in pain and 'scrutiated all over wid de rheumatiz, I comes out into the sunshine, and de pain skulks off; when Jim don't be good he 'pears like he was going to 'struction, and my heart is bustin'-like, I comes out and sits in God's sunshine; and peace comes through His beam into my soul. When old Death comes and star's in my face, and says, 'I coming arter you soon; to

take ye into de dark grave, den I comes out into God's sunshine, and darra him to frighten my soul! Says to him 'ye hasn't power in ye to throw one shadow into my last pillow, for my blessed Jesus, de Sun ob righteousness, He been down dar before me, and He left it full, heaped up, and runnin' over wid God's sunshine. I shall rest sweet in dat warm place while waitin' patient, and in hope of the 'ternal sunshine dat shall magnify, and multiply, and glorify all as loves de shinin' Jesus.'"

"Auntie," said her friend, who always felt that she could sit at the feet of this humble saint and learn of Jesus, "That is very lovely. But there come days when there is no sunshine—when the clouds gather, and the rains fall, and the snows come, and the winds blow. What do you do then?"

"O, la, honey, by de time de storms come I've got my soul so full ob sunshine dat it lasts a heap o' time. Dem times Jim scolds, and his poor wife's 'scouraged and the child'n cross, and de stove smokes, and de kittle won't bile; but I never knows it. God's sunshine is in my soul, and I tries to spread it round, and sometimes Jim's wife feels it, and she say, (O, she's a good daughter-law) 'Long as I keeps close to granny 'pears like my heart's held up.'"

"Well, well, dear, you can teach me somethin' and ye can fetch me nice things to make mo' sunshine; but I can teach you what ye never thought on—dat God's sunshine's 'nough for rich and poor, and dem that thank Him for it, and sit in it, or work in it, and let it into dar heart, will soon go whar it's all sunshine. Try to make folks live in God's sunshine, and get it into dar hearts, honey."

Population of the World.

According to recent careful computations, the population of the world is 1,423,917,000, or 23 persons for every square mile. The following table shows the populations of the great divisions of the earth:

Table with 2 columns: Division and Population. Europe: 309,173,300; Asia: 824,548,500; Africa: 199,921,600; Australia: 4,748,600; America: 86,519,800.

The combined populations of 1876 exceed those of 1875 about 27,000,000. The inhabitants of different States of Europe are divided as follows:

Table with 2 columns: State and Population. Germany: 42,723,000; Austro-Hungary: 37,700,000; Switzerland: 2,699,147; Holland: 3,809,527; Belgium: 5,336,634; Luxembourg: 205,153; Russia: 71,730,980; Sweden: 4,383,291; Norway: 1,802,582; Denmark: 1,903,000; France: 36,102,921; Great Britain: 35,450,000; Spain: 16,551,647; Portugal: 4,298,881; Italy: 27,482,174; Turkey in Europe: 8,500,000; Roumania: 5,073,000; Servia: 1,377,078; Montenegro: 190,000; Greece: 1,457,894.

The population of Turkey in Europe, Asia, and Africa reaches 47,600,000 souls, of whom 20,500,000 are divided between Egypt, Tripoli, and Tunis, Asia having 13,000. The population of the Russian Empire is estimated at 85,586,000, or 900,000 over the population of 1875. The population of the British Indies numbers 289,000,000, that of China 405,000,000, and that of Japan 33,299,015. London has 3,489,428 souls, Paris 1,851,792, New York and Brooklyn 1,535,622, and Berlin 1,045,000.

OVER-GOVERNED CHILDREN.—A girl that is never allowed to sew, all of whose clothes are made for her and put on her, till she is 10, 12, 15, or 18 years of age, is spoiled. The mother has spoiled her by doing everything for her. The true idea of self-restraint is to let the child venture. A child's mistakes are often better than its no mistakes; because when a child makes mistakes, and has to correct them, it is on the way toward knowing something. A child that is waked up every morning, and never wakes himself up; and is dressed and makes no mistakes in dressing himself; and is washed, and never makes mistakes about being clean; and is fed, and never has anything to do with its food; and is watched, and never watches himself; and is cared for, and kept all day from doing wrong—such a child might as well be a tallow candle, perfectly straight, and solid, and comely, and unvital, and good for nothing but to be burned up. Beecher.