

Sunday Reading.

What the Traveler said at Sunset.

BY JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

The shadows grow and deepen round me; I feel the dew-fall in the air; The muzzin of the darkening thicket I hear the night-thrush call to prayer.

Act on your impulses.

BY REV. FREDERICK G. CLARK, D. D.

A lady walking along a crowded street in New York passed a small boy carrying his box and brush for "shining up." He was pale, delicate, sad looking.

age. Where do you go to Sunday-school? He said he had not been anywhere since his father died, and that was about three years ago.

Out of this came a home cheered by the fear of humanity—Christian words, where for years they had not been heard; new hopes kindled in desolate hearts; new courage to struggle on in life; five new members of the Sunday-school, and in short, a grand result out of merely acting upon a good impulse.

These impulses are good angels around us, whispering invitations to Christlike acts. Life is full of them. They are the seed-corn of such things as the Judge will mention to those on his right hand.

Train the Converts.

It was Alfred Bennett, of fragrant memory, who said that some ministers are good at yarding the sheep, but not successful in feeding them.

It is to be feared that Baptists sometime fail to recognize the importance of good training, both before and after conversion. In our zeal for the truth that only the Spirit of God can begin or continue a work of grace in the human heart, do we not practically overlook the fact that the Spirit works through human instruments?

One of the devices that has been urged for the better training of the new converts is a revival of the Catechuminate. When the gospel was first preached among heathen peoples, it was found necessary to give those who received it some instruction in its principles, either before receiving them to membership at all or directly afterward.

of Christians, it became a class in which men were made Christians by instruction. Faith ceased to be regarded as the gift of God, and was looked upon as the result of imparting sound doctrine.

These corruptions have had the tendency to make Baptists look with disfavor on any attempt to restore the Catechuminate. Yet it cannot be denied that the essential principle of the Catechuminate must somehow be recognized in a church that is to maintain a healthy spiritual life.

Many pastors have revived the essential principle of the Catechuminate by forming all who are received into the church into classes, to be taught by the pastor or by some intelligent layman with regard to our doctrines and polity which we believe to be founded on the candid interpretation of the New Testament.

The Divine Comfort.

In the wide attention which the modern Church has given to the clarifying and settling of rational ideas and convictions, the mission of the Gospel to bring comfort to souls in need of it has been very much overlooked.

Revivals continue to be reported from various parts of France. Among the latest is that in the Cevennes, called the Sinai of France, from the fact that the ancient Huguenots fled to this region of basaltic mountains, there to have the privilege of worshipping God as they pleased.

The Wesleyans of Great Britain have sent a petition to Parliament for closing of public houses on Sunday, which was a roll of paper 2 1/2 miles long, and contained 500,332 signatures.

a new experience. The base of it is in fortis and fortitudo, with their indication of strength as the core of virtue, but modified by the prefixing of cor, as if there was some hindering that the troubled soul was not to attempt to stand alone, but was to go in his need to the Helper, and in association with Him receive the perfected strength which is the essence of consolation.

The secret core, then, of Christian comfort is strength, not the stoic strength of pluck, but the Divine strength which is born of faith in God and has all the resources of a Christian hope and a Christian character to fall back on.

God comforted Paul in this way. He did not relieve him of the "thorn in the flesh," but promised "My grace shall be sufficient for thee."

How often do we in our distress grasp the myrrh and lose the Divine comfort! We solace our hearts with ten thousand natural ameliorations of consolations, and perhaps we indulge ourselves without check in the poor luxury of grief.

The perfect comfort is in none of these, nor in anything that does not realize the experience of a soul strengthened by faith in the day of trouble.

It is not in the scope of a human pen to tell or trace all the paths by which such comfort may enter the hearts of God's afflicted ones. It is the blessed work of the Divine Strengtheners, who both know how and commands the means to bring it home to those who need it, and are ready for it.

"I worship Thee, sweet will of God, And all Thy ways adore, And every day I live, I learn To love Thee more and more."

More commonly it is the complex work of faith which directs the troubled heart not to turn in its need to the myrrh of human sympathy and human indulgence; but to rally its own powers and fix its whole confidence on the Divine proffer, which excels all others in this, that it gives what we most need and brings us out of our trouble not weakened, but strengthened, not poorer, but richer; having lost much, perhaps, but having gained more.—Independent.

The following figures presented by Dr. John Hall in a recent speech at the meeting of the Upper Canada Bible Society are significant:

When Luther began his Reformation, 80,000,000 out of 100,000,000 who owed allegiance to Christian rulers were under Papal rule; the remainder, chiefly under the Patriarch of the Greek Church. In A. D. 1700, the Roman Catholic peoples had increased to 90,000,000; the Eastern Christians to 33,000,000; while those of the Protestant faith numbered 32,000,000, or about one-fifth of nominal Christian people.

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The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1888.

THIRD QUARTER.

Lesson III.—JULY 15, 1888.

THE PLAINS OF JERICHO.

Joshua v. 10-15; and vi. 1-5.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Vs. 13-15.

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

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. Covenant Signs Renewed, Josh. v. 1-12.
T. The Lesson, Josh. v. 10; vi. 10.
W. The Taking of Jericho, Josh. vi. 6-27.
T. Jehovah in Human Form, Gen. xviii. 1-8; 22-33.
F. Jesus Revealed of the Father, John i. 1-18.
S. Jesus Lord of Angels, Heb. ch. 1.
S. The Final Triumph, Isa. xl. 1-10; Rev. xi. 15-19.

ISRAEL'S HEAVENLY LEADER.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Covenant Signs Renewed, Vs. 10-12. II. The Prince of Angels Appears, Vs. 13-15. III. Directions for the Assault, Ch. vi. 1-5.

Gilgal, near Jericho, where, on rising ground, about two miles from Jericho, Joshua had fortified a camp, where women, children, the property and cattle, and the tabernacle would be safe, and whence, with the fighting men, he could sally forth for war.

QUESTIONS.—Vs. 10-12.—What had been neglected in the wilderness?—Why? What now took place? (See also vs. 2-7). Meaning of this? What is necessary in order to work for Jesus? Rom. v. 1-5. Why was the manna needed no longer? How does God give us daily bread?

Vs. 13-15.—What did Joshua see? How show his bravery? What did the unknown warrior say? Who was he? Why had he come? How did Joshua regard and treat him? What only can make any place holy?

Ch. vi. 1-5.—What is said of Jericho? What proofs of Christ's divinity here? What did Joshua and his people do? What kind of means were to be used? Why did obedience require faith? Who leads his people now? Where can they find his directions? How should these be treated? What should be exercised? What was the result as to Jericho? Ch. vi. 6-27. Why must the first victory be gained in this way? What does this victory at Jericho foreshadow? When and by what kind of means?

Practical Questions.—Is Jesus your Leader? Are you following him? How can one become his follower? Do you wish to share his final triumph?

NOTES.—Vs. 10.—Encamped in Gilgal. In crossing the Jordan "the people passed over right against Jericho" which was seven miles from the river. Their encampment was five miles from the banks, and two from Jericho. The name Gilgal occurs in Deut. xi. 30, and hence was not now given to the locality for the first time; yet its meaning, a rolling away, was appropriate to the fact mentioned in v. 9, that there the "reproach of Egypt" (Ex. xiv. 3) was "rolled away" from Israel.

Vs. 11, 12.—Old corn.—Grain, or produce. The Israelites found food of the land in the storehouses of the inhabitants who had fled before them, and fed on the produce of that country. They also made unleavened cakes, and parched some of the new corn fresh from the harvest. Having no longer need of it, the manna ceased from that time. This was according to Ex. xvi. 35. The miraculous yielded to the natural supply.

Vs. 13, 14.—Like Jacob (Gen. xxxii. 24) on the eve of meeting the hostile Esau, Joshua retired alone to meditate and pray. Jericho was to be taken; but, as yet, he knew not how. To him, as to Jacob, appeared a heavenly messenger—a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand. The circumstances show that it was not an inward vision, but a real appearance. The soldierly spirit of Joshua is seen in his courageous challenge: Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? The drawn sword was to him a token of battle, and he would know to which side this warrior belonged; for, as yet, Joshua supposed him to be but a man. Nay, neither a Canaanite nor an Israelite. But as captain (prince) of the host of the Lord, am I now come. This was the Angel of the Covenant; "God manifest in the flesh"; and his words, as well as his warlike attitude, denoted his interest in the war of invasion. He had come to

lead in the attack, himself. Joshua did worship. Thinking him now to be an angel, he offered such obeisance as one created being may give to another. The title which he gives him, my Lord, does not necessarily imply that Joshua knew him then as the Divine Being; though he undoubtedly recognized him as such before the interview was over. His ready spirit of obedience is seen in his question: What saith my Lord to his servant?

Vs. 15.—Loose thy shoes, etc. A command which, reminding Joshua of Jehovah's appearance to Moses, would flash into his mind the knowledge that this was the same being. Vs. 1. is parenthetical, giving the picture of a city in close siege. The inhabitants of Jericho were shut in by high walls and strong gates, and might defy any human efforts to take their city. Vs. 2.—The Lord. Literally, Jehovah, the prince of the Jehovah's host in vs. 15. This verse leaves no doubt upon the question as to who the man with the drawn sword was. I have given. In God's mind the city was taken. The future and the present are one to him. The Prince of the host gives in a princely way—for he bestows upon Joshua the whole city, the king, and the mighty men of valor.

Vs. 3, 4.—The plan of Jericho's capture is now given. "Compass the city. The men of war, perhaps 600,000, were to march around the city once a day for six days. Yet they were to do no fighting, nor to make any assault on the walls; but simply to march to the music of ram's horns, (made of metal, in shape of ram's horns), blown by seven priests who preceded them, bearing the ark of the Lord. On the seventh day they were to compass the city seven times, the priests, as before, blowing with the trumpets (ram's horns). To any of the people of Jericho, looking from the walls, this must have seemed a very absurd thing. It was a test of Israel's faith.

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Vs. 5.—The crisis was for the seventh day (probably the Sabbath). At the end of the seventh circuit, the priests were to sound a long blast from these jubilee horns; all the people were to shout with a great shout, and the walls of the city should fall down flat, and the people enter the city for the work of slaughter.

SUGGESTED LESSONS. Jesus, as the Captain of our Salvation, comes to fight for us, and to bring us off "more than conquerors." The blast from the gospel trumpet is as powerful to break down error as were the ram's horns to reduce Jericho. It pleases God to save by the foolishness of preaching. Israel didn't march around the walls or shout by a committee. All joined in the service. And where a whole church is engaged, the cause goes forward with mighty power.

Help for Parents, or for the Teacher of the Primary Class.

Briefly review Lessons I. and II. We are now studying a peculiar phase in the history of God's people which, in all probability, will not again be studied for many years. The importance of careful and thorough work now, will be apparent. Let the review cover the essential historical facts, with their practical applications.

Notice what occurred at once. They kept the Passover. The feast and its significance must be explained. They had new food; "old corn of the land," and what was made of it. This must be explained. "The manna ceased." You will need to go back to the giving of manna, and the regulations concerning it, showing why it was not longer to be furnished.

Joshua went out from the camp to be alone, perhaps to commune with God, and God met him, and taught him there who was really "Captain of the Lord's host." The peculiarities of the interview should be given; Joshua's falling upon his face, in worship, and the removal of his shoes; compare the scene of Moses at the burning bush (Ex. iii. 2-5). Follow close with the directions given to Joshua concerning the overthrow of Jericho, which was "straitly shut up" (vs. 1); these being the first orders received by Joshua concerning his mode of operations against that city.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. The age of heroism is not yet gone. A missionary periodical says that a Chinaman, when converted under the labors of Dr. Graves, at Canton, sold himself as a slave in order that he might go to Demerara, and preach the gospel to his fellow-countrymen there. And he has done so successfully that he now has a Church of two hundred converted Chinamen, who are supporting missionaries among their own people.