

The Christian Messenger.

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BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1875.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

Heroes and Judges.

SUNDAY, June 27th, 1875.—REVIEW.—Samuel's parting words.—1 Sam. xii. 20-25.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart; for consider how great things he hath done for you."—1 Sam. xii. 24.

ANALYSIS.—I. Fears removed. Vs. 20. II. Faithfulness enjoined. Vs. 20. 21. III. A promise made. Vs. 22. IV. A purpose to pray. Vs. 23. V. Exhortation. Vs. 24. VI. Threatening. Vs. 25.

HISTORICAL CONNECTION.—Subsequent to the choice of Saul as king at Mizpeh, the people met, at Samuel's call, at Gilgal, and there confirmed the election. See chap. xi. 14-15. Before the meeting adjourned, however, Samuel challenged a review of his public life and personal character, not only that blame might rest where it belonged for seeking a king, but also that it might appear for what good ends the chosen king should rule. He makes no mention of personal slight, but assures them that even with a king they should prosper if they followed the Lord, in proof of which he commands thunder and rain in "wheat harvest." May or June—a season in which rain is almost unknown in Palestine. Whereupon the people entreat to be remembered in his prayers, "for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king."

EXPOSITION.—Verse 20.—Samuel said unto the people. Now assembled at Gilgal, one of the cities where he judged Israel, vii. 16. The occasion of the assembly was the national victory over the Ammonites under Saul's leadership, xi. 1-13. The purpose of the assembly was to inaugurate the king as the actually ruling monarch, as at Mizpeh he was recognized as ordained of God for the kingship. This involved the formal retirement of Samuel from his office of judge which he had thus far filled. Yet he, after this, continued to be and to act as prophet, and a kind of chief counselor to the king. Fear not. The sudden storm, with crashing thunder and flashing lightning, suddenly bursting upon them a phenomenon unknown to that season of the year in Palestine, and, too, coming in answer to Samuel's call upon God for it, after his rebuke of their sin in rejecting God by choosing a king, was a terrible symbol of divine wrath, if not the very stroke of wrath. Conscience smitten, they were also panic stricken. They saw and feared only wrath—only ruin. Samuel bade them not fear thus in utter despair. The storm betokened wrath, but not unmixed wrath. It was to awe and impress them, but not to cut off hope. It was the voice of God urging the very rebuke which we heard spoken by him to Israel last week. Ye have done all this wickedness. The rejection of God as King. Yet turn not aside from following, etc. Fear carried to the point of despair would turn any and every man from following God. We seek nothing which we feel sure cannot be found. With all your heart. We have seen that in the very act of choosing the king, wicked as it was, the nation had recognized God and his prophet, and not utterly broken with either. Here was a kind of half-and-half worship. Very pertinent, then, is this call to serve Jehovah with the whole heart.

Verse 21.—Turn ye not aside. That is, from following God, as commanded in verse 20. Here life is regarded as a journey, like that from Egypt to Palestine, and God as the Leader and Guide, as he truly and literally had been there. For then should ye go after vain things. "Turn not aside, etc., for ye turn aside to desolation." This last is the same word, translated in Gen. i. 1: "without form." If the journey from Egypt was in mind, this was the exact term to indicate the desolation of the desert. Most fit symbol was and is that emptiness for anything and everything which man does or can take in place of God. Which cannot profit nor deliver. These last words refer to the argument used in their request for a king, one who could bind the nation together in unity, administer the government successfully, and especially lead the people to victory in war. For they are vain. "Desolation," emptiness. God only has power.

Verse 22.—For the Lord [Jehovah] will not forsake his people. This is the fact implied in the words, "fear not," and the

reason for these words. For his great name's sake. This states why he will not forsake them. It is not that they have proved themselves worthy, for they have not. It is for his own honor—in the way of grace, or unmerited favor. God's "great name" here is himself, as manifested especially to Israel. He had chosen Israel for a purpose. If he failed in that why should he not be expected to fail in everything? God's grace is the sole fountain of his continued goodness.—his grace, not man's claims. Because it hath pleased the Lord [Jehovah] to make you his people. Here is the election of God solely from his own good pleasure, a sovereign, gracious act. See Rom. ix. It is not an arbitrary, capricious, unreasoning act. The perfect Reason cannot act without reason. They did not make themselves his, and then get his recognition merely. He made them his people. So with his saints all and ever. There is no doctrine more clearly, fully taught, none probably more often and stoutly opposed. There never would be a saint unless God were thus to make him a saint; for man left to himself, always rejects God.

Verse 23.—As for me. He has explained Jehovah's purpose, now he explains his own purpose. The people had come to have a just and profound reverence for Samuel as a man, a judge, and a prophet. Would he cease to act with and for them, now that he was deposed from his office of judge, and indignant at the demand which occasioned the deposition? God forbid. Literally, "desecration," a word to express strong aversion. That I should sin against the Lord [Jehovah] in ceasing to pray for you. He is governed, first of all, by piety, then by patriotism, either of which would and should prevail over mere family and personal feelings. He had an extraordinary power of intercession, as is recognized in these places, and in Psalm xcix. 6; Jer. xv. 1. He could, therefore, give no more welcome promise than that he would not "cease to pray," for the people. I will teach you the good and the right way. This, also, was the function of a prophet, and could be carried on under the king. The instruction gives right direction and development to the life. We thus see how needful it is both to pray for men, and to teach men. Samuel did both, so should we: God only "gives the increase," but he gives it where there has been "planting" and "watering."

Verse 24.—A pretty good pledge is this verse that he would not fail in teaching. But how fit. He had told them (1) what God would do for them; (2) what he would do for them, and now (3) what they must do for themselves. He thus rounds out to its fullness his address. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, fitly named first. The service of God is the expression of piety, and fitly named last. In the truth, indicates the nature of acceptable service, and with all your heart, the measure. 1 John iv. 9.

Verse 25.—King and subject are under the same God, and the prophet gives them the same warning.

QUESTIONS.—Vs. 20. Why did Israel fear? Vs. 18. What possibility is hinted at in the word "yet"? Ans. An improvement upon the past. How improve?

Vs. 22. Has not God forsaken the Jews? Rom. xi. 25. What doctrine is taught in this verse? Ans. The doctrine of election. See Isaiah xli. 8, 9; John xv. 16.

Vs. 23. What would happen if God's people did not pray for this world? What is God's will concerning prayer? See 1 Tim. ii. 8.

Vs. 24. Do you think there is much consideration of God's goodness among the unconverted? What is this goodness designed to do? Rom. ii. 4.

Vs. 25. Can you think of any alternatives put to sinners in the Bible? See Mark xvi. 16; John iii. 18, 26. What will happen to the heedless? Prov. xix. 1.

What did Samuel's life accomplish? 1 Sam. vii. 13. What was its leading characteristic? Ans. Unselfish patriotism. 1 Sam. xii. 1-5. What is said of a good name? Prov. xxii. 1. What of the memory of the wicked? Prov. x. 7.

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, July 4th, 1875.—The Word made Flesh.—John i. 1-14.

It is almost always so. The Lord's portion is the first to get lost. A gentleman who had promised to give to some good cause, possibly the Sunday-school, excused himself on the ground that he had lately met with losses. You have heard of the Sunday-school boy who lost the penny he had intended to give to the heathen, and not the one he had intended to spend for sugar plums.—S. S. Times.

It is hard for an empty bag to stand upright.

Youths' Department.

THE DOG JACK.

We like for boys and girls to look kindly on their canine friends, and therefore give them an occasional picture of one of those animals. We seldom see a more pleasing one than this:—

"O, didn't we have a nice time, Alice?" said Will to his cousin, as he threw himself upon the grass, with face all flushed and heated, and panting for breath. "Wasn't it fun, though? Ah! Jack, you are a good old fellow, and you know how to play 'Hide and Seek' as well as we, don't you?" And Will patted Jack lovingly, while Jack answered yes, by wagging his tail and rubbing up to Will as close as possible.

Jack was very happy, no doubt, and thought he was having a good time, and he did not once say that it was not fair.

How do you suppose that Jack could find? He couldn't hold his paw over his eyes, nor pull his hat over them. No! but Will and Alice would tell him to go into his kennel, and he would lie down.—Then they would place a board before the door and say, "Now, Jack, you must stay there until we call you."

Then away they would run, Jack waiting patiently all the while until they were hid; but the instant the call was given what a leap he would give!

I know it would have made you laugh to see him as he bounded out, knocking down board and stone, and running here and there until he had found them. Then he would caper about and bark, showing great delight. If you have a dog, you will do well to teach him to play "Hide and Seek" with you; it is such rare fun.

"YOU WILL NOT SWEAR."

One day a gentleman observed a group of boys, bent on play, strongly urging another boy to join them. He was struck with the very decided "No" which the boy gave to all their entreaties. Anxious to see the result, he stepped into an entry, where he could hear and see, and not be much observed.

"That boy has a will to resist the whole band of them," he said to himself.

A last effort was made to induce him to come with them.

"Now, James, will you not come? you are such a good player."

"Yes," he replied; "but on one condition. Give me your hands that you will not swear, and I will go." They did so, and with joy they ran off to play. We are sure the game lost none of its interest for the want of swearing. Noble boy! not ashamed to show that he was on the Lord's side, even in the face of ungodly playfellows.

AGAINST THE GRAIN.

The other day I was planing a board, and by accident planed one shaving the wrong way of the grain. Of course the surface was left rough. Turning the board, I noticed that it took more than one driving of the plane to get the surface smooth again. It was necessary to go over and over it again. There, thought I, is life illustrated. One wrong stroke cuts deeply and roughly. An evil deed eats like a canker. Long, weary years hardly efface the errors of a day.

How rough, jagged and unsightly, then, our lives must be. Standing beside the bench, plane in hand, guided by that carnal mind; powerful in its enmity, the strokes, alas, how often, run against its grain. When do we ever smooth them out? Shall the surface never be smooth?

Let the Master workman advise a little. Seek his help. This Master workman—Jesus Christ—is able and willing to give the needed help. Working under his instruction, in obedience to his behests, with reliance upon his wisdom, with confidence in his help; the work, hard as it seemed while the trust was in self, shall be accomplished satisfactorily.—Congregationalist.

A WORD TO THE BOYS.

But, boys, what shall I say to you? I hear that you think yourselves too old to go to Sunday School, now that you are getting on to fifteen or more. Well, there's something in that! Of course you do not want to learn the same elementary things as when you were quite children; you almost feel your whiskers coming through; and therefore you are conscious of becoming

young men, and therefore do not want to be treated like babies! I say again, there is something in that! But I do not think there is very much. I think many boys make great donkeys of themselves by trying to be men before they are so. I have smiled at them myself, and wondered how they could be so absurd. Their little stick-up collars, and other silly mimics of older folks, make them look like manikins, and not at all like men; they might have made first-class boys, but as men they are very third-rate indeed. Caesar thought he would rather be first man in a village than second in Rome; and I think I would rather be first among boys than be the last joint in the tail of the hobbledohs, who are neither men nor boys. A word to the wise is sufficient.—Spurgeon.

HOW TO TREAT LADS.

It is a fine and sacred knack which knows just how to deal best with a class of lads and young men. The following words from the late Bishop Wilberforce have about them, it seems to us, a rare flavor of true wisdom: "We must make our minds up to the truth that the time when humanity is beginning to develop itself with all its shyness, when the individuality is beginning to clasp the being round, and to separate it from those who almost touch it on every side—there must be altogether a different treatment from that of quite little ones, a respect for him (not professed, but that which he feels in your dealing with him is respect for him)—the not treating him as a child any longer, when he knows he is not a child—the helping him to develop all that is good in himself, taking great care not to rail at that in him which is not evil, but is the growing up of the child into the young man—the making him feel the mystery of Christian friendship, wrapping him round in his teacher's regard, like an angel's presence round him, not shown, not talked about it, a feeling in that growing up heart, 'Here is some one I can trust—here is some one that cares about me—here is some one that respects me—here is some one that knows how to deal with me. I have come with my rugged temper; I do not know how it is, but it has bowed down to them; I came, not meaning to learn; I could not help learning,' and so that Christian love and feeling, wrapping the being round as the being is beginning to fashion itself into a separate and sustained individuality leads to their coming on, continuing to come even till they grow to manhood; and even when at last they must go, becoming perhaps teachers themselves in succession; or, looking to that person as their friend, going to worship and forming one of the congregation, one of the communicants, with a courage that they would hardly have ventured to do, but with that gentle presence, that shaking of the angel's wing round him, leading them on they hardly know how till they come to a full-grown individual manhood."

THE LESSON OF THE SHADOW.

This shadow on the dial's face,
That steals from day to day,
With slow, unseen, unceasing pace,
Moments and months and years away
This shadow which in every clime,
Since light and motion first began,
Hath held its course sublime—
What is it? Mortal man!
It is the scythe of time—
A shadow only to the eye;
Yet in its calm career
It levels all beneath the sky;
And still through each succeeding year
Right onward with relentless power,
Its stroke shall darken every hour,
Till nature's race be run,
And time's last shadow shall eclipse the sun.

An aspiring but untutored bard says:

I want to be a speler.
And with the spellers stan;
A Wooster in my pocket,
A Webster in my han.

There rite before the awgence
So gorgus and so brite,
He wrasels with the big words
From mornin until night.

A crusty old bachelor made a will leaving his entire fortune to be divided among the girls who refused him. "For to them," he added feelingly, "I owe all my earthly happiness."

A little American lad, who had just commenced reading the newspapers, asked his father if the word "Hon." prefixed to the name of a member of Congress, meant "honest."

Life is a great poem; and religion, love and music are the sweetest of its stanzas.

FATHER BOEHM.

A METHODIST CENTENARIAN.

It is a very rare thing for a man to reach his 100th year. A person may have known two or three such persons in the course of his lifetime, but more have not known one. The fact of a Methodist minister reaching that age speaks favorably of his work—that at least it has not taken him off prematurely. The centennial of this aged gentleman was held on the 8th inst., at Trinity Church, New Jersey.

The services commenced with singing an original hymn commencing, "God of our patriarch friend." After prayer the 23rd Psalm was read.

During the singing of the next hymn Father Boehm entered the church, assisted by his friends and attended by his physician, Dr. Walter Hadden, and entered the pulpit. The patriarch looked remarkably well, and appeared very young for his years. At the conclusion of the singing Father Boehm was introduced, the congregation rising with him. He spoke as follows: "I rejoice to meet you, my brethren in the Lord, and that I am permitted to see the wonderful progress of the gospel of Christ in the land. There was no town here in 1800, when 'I passed through.' There were no houses but the ferry-house, I think. Blessed be God for his wonderful work throughout the land. I cannot say much, but I commit the rest to my 'venerable' Brother Atkinson." This was received with great laughter by the audience, and Mr. Atkinson, in rising, appeared somewhat embarrassed, and stated that this was a festive occasion, and Father Boehm was disposed to be festive also. He then read an autobiographical sketch which had been prepared by Father Boehm. We make a few extracts from the N. Y. Methodist:

FATHER BOEHM'S LIFE HISTORY.

I was born in Lancaster county, Penn., on the 8th of June, 1775, one hundred years ago this day. I was one year a subject of King George, as it was not until I had attained that age that the American people renounced their allegiance to the British Government by proclaiming the Declaration of Independence. The noise of the battles of Concord and Lexington had scarcely died away when I first drew my breath, so that my history includes nearly the whole of the period of the Revolutionary war. I was a contemporary of the fathers and founders of the Republic, and have lived under the administration of all the Presidents of the United States. I clearly remember the days of Washington's presidency, and I cast my first vote for his successor, John Adams, in 1796. I lived through almost a quarter of the last century and have lived thus far through the present one and I have witnessed with my own eyes the rise, progress and present grand development of the United States of America.

The changes and progress of the country within my recollection have been so vast and overwhelming I scarcely know how to speak of them. When I became a man there were only thirteen States. Early in this century Ohio became a member of the Federal Union, and then the star of our Empire moved westward until it shone upon the waves of the Pacific ocean. I witnessed the system of slavery in the Southern States, and I have been permitted to see it swept from the land, and the banner of impartial freedom waving triumphantly over every State. Bless the Lord. I well remember the days when a steamboat was unknown, and the railroad unthought of. The winds of heaven waited our commerce, and horses furnished our swiftest means of travel by land. I myself have traveled over a hundred thousand miles on horseback.

I have witnessed the progress of the nation in population and wealth to a degree that seems incredible to have been attained in one man's lifetime. I have seen the increase of the oldest cities and the founding and wonderful growth of newer ones. I have observed the advancement of our people from a comparatively rude and pioneer condition to their present high status of intelligence, wealth and refinement. When, in 1800, I first stood upon the site of the city in which we are this day assembled I think there were no buildings upon it except the ferry-house and the farm houses which here and there dotted it. To-day its streets and buildings cover a territory many miles in circumference, and its population exceeds one hundred thousand souls. Then the city of New York only reached to Canal street and Brooklyn was a very small town. Cincinnati had then only commenced its history, and Chicago was yet to be.