

Sabbath School Department.

[From the Christian Helper]

International Bible Lessons. THE PERFECT PATTERN.

Nov. 2.—1 Peter 2: 19-25.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."

THE EPISTLE.

For its address,—ch. 1: 1. These churches, for the most part, founded by Paul and his companions. Place of writing,—ch. 5: 13. No sufficient reason for supposing that Babylon is not to be taken literally here. Date,—about A. D. 60. Main object—to console those addressed in the midst of persecutions, and to encourage them to bear their trials in a true Christian spirit. What could be more beautiful and encouraging than ch. 1: 1-9. As Paul is called the apostle of faith, and John the apostle of love, so Peter is called the apostle of hope.

TOPICAL ANALYSIS.

The main object is to direct us to Christ as the great example of patient suffering under wrong. The exhortation to servants in v. 18 leads to a consideration of how Christians should endure when they are wronged. The first point is that there is no merit in suffering patiently when we deserve to suffer, but if we have done no wrong, and yet endure patiently for God's sake, wrongs done to us, this is meritorious, and we have God's approbation, v. v. 19-20. The next point is that to endure thus under wrong is one of the very things we are called upon to do by the fact of our professing to be Christians, v. 21. For does not this profession mean that we are going to follow Christ in all things. Then, in the next place, consider the patient suffering of Christ, v. v. 21-23. One of the very objects for which Christ suffered was that he might set us the example, v. 21. Christ never sinned, (v. 23), therefore he could never have suffered for his faults; all his suffering was, on his part, absolutely undeserved. And yet see how he bore it all,—v. 23,—and he is our example. The sufferings of Christ being thus before the apostle's mind, he is led on to speak of their vicarious character, as having been endured for us,—v. 24. And since they were endured for us, is not the power of his example thereby intensified? And lastly in v. 25, under a beautiful figure, our former lost state is set forth, and contrasted with our present state of hope and safety, having been found by the Good Shepherd and being under his care.

EXPLANATION OF THE TEXT.

19. THANKWORTHY. Literally, grace; the same word as in Luke 6: 32. What thank have ye? It means worthy of approbation. CONSCIENCE TOWARD GOD. A desire to please God. The man acts not so much with regard to his own rights, but acts as God would have him act in the case. GRIEF. That which causes grief, injustice incurred at the hands of others.

20. GLORY. Merit or credit. BUFFETED. Buffet first meant to beat with the fists. No doubt slaves were often abused in this way. Then it comes to mean any kind of ill-treatment. ACCEPTABLE. The same word rendered thankworthy in v. 19.

21. EXAMPLE. This word means a copy set for imitation in writing, just such as a school-master sets for his scholars. The writing of our lives day after day is to be in imitation of the copy set before us in Christ's life.

22. The absolute sinlessness of Jesus. For prophecy, Isaiah 53: 9; Paul's testimony, 2 Cor. 5: 21, Heb. 4: 15; John's 1 John 3: 5; Christ's challenge, John 8: 46; Pilate's testimony, John 18: 38. The keenest and most malignant scrutiny of eighteen centuries has decided "in him no spot, no darkness at all."—Little. Hence he always suffered innocently, never for his faults.

24. What did he not do,—never returned insult for insult, never uttered threats for wrong done to him. What did he do, committed his whole case into the Father's hands, assured that God would do him and his enemies justice, Rom. 12: 16.

25. WHO HIS OWN SELF, &c. What language could be employed to teach more plainly that Christ suffered as our substitute, that he suffered what we deserved to suffer and that we might not suffer. And what could at once give such assurance, and so attach us to the Saviour, as to have it thus, Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, THAT WE, &c. The aim of redemption, as it respects us. DEAD TO SIN. No longer under its guilt and dominion.

25. The silliness of sheep, their liability to wander away from the flock, their ignorance and helplessness when astray, these things render them fit illustrations of us in our sin.—Shepherd. Of all the figurative names applied to Christ, this is the one most used, and what a world of meaning it suggests, BISHOP. An overseer, one whose business it is to exercise special care. Our souls the special care of Christ. The words Shepherd (pastor) and bishop suggest nearly the same things in Christ's relation to his people.

The cast for the monument to the Princess Alice—commissioned by the Queen to Mr. Boehm for the mausoleum at Frogmore—promises well. The Princess lies as in sleep, her head thrown back on a high pillow supported on either side by little angels, the lower part of the figure being draped and swathed by the heavy folds of a mantle bordered with ermine. With her left arm the Princess embraces her child, who is placed at her side, resting her head on her mother's breast, and extending her left hand to meet the caress of her mother's right. This group, which is to be executed in marble, and will be supported on a base enriched by a band of delicate Renaissance arabesque crowned the pedestal, which is divided by fluted pilasters into three compartments. The general effect of this part of the work will be much varied by the employment of colored marbles.

WELL-BUILT CHRISTIANS.

A well-built Christian is harmonious in all his parts. No one trait shames another. He is not a jumble of inconsistencies—to-day devout, to-morrow frivolous, to-day liberal to one cause, to-morrow niggardly toward another; to-day fluent in prayer, and to-morrow fluent in polite falsehoods. He does not keep the fourth commandment on the Sunday, and break the eighth commandment on the Monday. He does not shirk an honest debt to make a huge donation. He is not in favor of temperance for other folks, and of a glass of toddy for himself. He does not exhort or pray at each of the few meetings he attends, to make up arrearsages for the more meetings which he neglects. He does not so consume his spiritual fuel during revival seasons, that he is cold as Nova Zembar during all the rest of the time; nor do his spiritual fevers ever outrun his well-ordered conversation.

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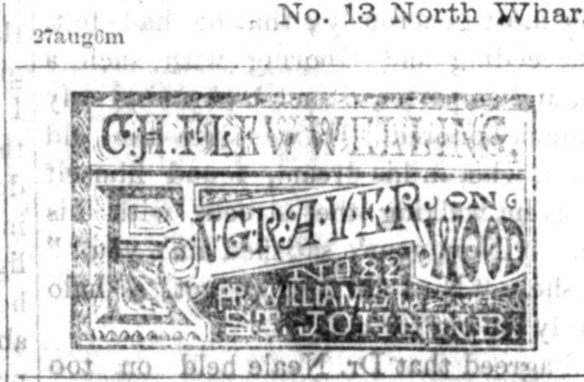
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