

AFTER EASTER.

The Easter praises may falter
And die with the Easter Day,
The blossoms that brightened the altar
In sweetness may fade away;
But after the silence and fading
There lingers, untold and unpriced,
Above all changing and shading,
The love of the living Christ.

For the living Christ is loving,
And the loving Christ is alive!
His life hidden in us is moving
Us ever to pray and to strive.
Alas! that e'en in our striving
We labor like spirits in prison,
Forgetting that Jesus is living,
Forgetting the Saviour has risen

We join in the Easter rejoicing,
And echo each gladdening strain,
While a piteous minor is voicing
Our own secret doubting or pain.
We weave Him a shroud of our sadness,
We cover His smile with our gloom,
And drive back the angel of gladness
That waits at the door of the tomb.

We forget that our own hearts have hidden
Our Christ in a grave of our own;
We forget that our own hands are bidden
To roll from the threshold the stone.
Yet our tearful eyes, drooping and weary,
With watching in sorrow and fear,
Might see, like the heart-broken Mary,
That the Lord is alive—and is near.

—From Songs of the Easter.

[For the Messenger.

AN HONEST CONFESSION.

I was a tobacco smoker from my early days. I saw nothing wrong in it. Not early in life, I became a Christian, and still smoked, and commiserated, as cranks, those who thought Christians should not smoke. After a while I weakened on tobacco. I ceased smoking on the streets, and even at home tried to smoke stealthily. I took a class in the Sunday-school. I little knew the trouble that awaited me. The liquor and tobacco pledge of the school and the remarks of the superintendent made me uncomfortable. He urged the teachers to induce their scholars to sign the pledge. During those addresses I was always busy scanning my Bible, for I could not look into the face of my pupils. Some of the members of my class ceased sitting near me, and would turn their heads away, when I bent near them, pressing them to have a personal interest in Christ. This worried me. I attended our weekly prayer-meeting. One evening, before the service had begun, I was speaking to a lady, sickly and delicate—she held back her head, and said—'Do keep away, for I cannot bear the smell of that horrid tobacco.' Oh, it was cruel, more than a dozen heard it. I felt, I cannot tell how I felt. I staggered to my seat. I sat during that hour dumfounded. I slunk out while the benediction was being pronounced. It was a cold night, but I was excessively hot. I took a long walk, I was angry, ashamed and grieved. I went home. I looked at that poor innocent pipe that had often solaced me, but now disgraced me. I had one bitter cry, 'Oh, God help me.' Away went pipe, away went tobacco. And now I serve him with clean hands, clean lips, and praise him with sweet breath.

One word, fellow-Christians who smoke—'Present your bodies a living sacrifice to God.' 'Know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ.' 'Ye are not your own.' Wherefore, if meat maketh my brother to stumble, 'I will eat no flesh for evermore.'

OPEN THINGS.

Lydia, an open heart.—Ac. xvi. 14.
Martha, an open house.—Lu. x. 38.
The ministering women, open hands.—Lu. viii. 3.
The poor widow, an open purse.—Mk. xii. 42.
Bereans, an open Bible.—Ac. xvii. 11.
Zacharias, an open mouth.—Lu. i. 61.
The blind man, opened eyes.—Jno. ix. 30.
Peter, an open door.—Ac. xii. 10.
Stephen, an open heaven.—Ac. vii. 56.
Jesus, an open tomb.—Lu. xxiv. 2.
—The Christian.

A TALK ABOUT BIBLE-READING.

It is to be regretted that, while among certain classes of thoughtful people there is undoubtedly much Bible in these days, there is less consecutive reading than formerly. The Bible lies everywhere, it is the cheapest of books, it may be had in every variety of style and binding, it is published in every language, and freely given to those who cannot buy it, yet there is less knowledge of its contents than one would imagine among well-educated people. Otherwise well-educated, to speak strictly, for a liberal education pre-supposes acquaintance with the Bible, simply from the literary standpoint.

One has only to take in charge a class of young men or women in the Sunday-school to prove to one's satisfaction that the Bible is an unknown book to most of their number. Ask for a text in Deuteronomy, and you will observe the puzzled frowns, fumbling about Isaiah. Inquire for Amos, and one and another will grope for this prophet among Judges, Ruth and First and Second Samuel. The epistles are a hopeless labyrinth to these students. They never can locate Ephesians, Colossians and Philippians, and Hebrews belongs also to the region of the vast unexplored.

A part of child-training in the days ante-dating ours by thirty years or so, was the requirement of reading the Scriptures daily, with the frequent memorizing of chapters and psalms. Sometimes, and always from a mistaken sense of duty, children were compelled to study portions of Scripture by heart as a punishment, just as unfaithful schoolboys were set to the copying of long passages in Milton, or the translating of extra lines in Virgil and Horace. It was an error of judgment which ever associated the idea of penance with Proverbs or Psalms, but the habit of reading the Bible as regularly as one went to bed or arose, was not penitential; on the contrary, it was enjoyed, and when once formed as a necessity of the every-day routine, it was seldom laid aside in later life.

A few winters ago, in an American city famous for culture and priding itself on its thoroughness in whatever it undertakes in the line of study, a distinguished woman was conducting a class of ladies through certain fields of literature and art. One morning the teacher paused, and looking earnestly into the faces of the assembled circle, said impressively:

'I regret to observe in this class an entire lack of acquaintance with a little book known as the New Testament. Indeed, I am so much embarrassed by this, that I am compelled to suspend further proceedings in this part of our work until every member of the class shall have bought and read a Testament. We cannot go on intelligently in your present condition of imperfect preparation.'

In Christian households where family prayer is regularly maintained, children acquire unconsciously a measure of familiarity with the Bible from hearing it read, or from reading it verse about. When children are in the habit of going to church every Sunday with their elders they hear in the course of a year a good many passages of Scripture. If the pastor occasionally comments on what he reads, giving a brief incisive word of explanation or suggestion, their attention is apt to be clinched, as a hammer drives home a nail. It would be well for all of us, whether children or grown people, to fix our minds on what we hear in church, remembering not only the text, and as much as possible of the sermon, but also the chapter read, the responsive readings, and the hymns.

Whether we have ever read our Bibles methodically or not, is not, however, so much the practical question as whether we may not do so for the rest of our lives. Perhaps the consecutive method, straight through from end to end, as John Ruskin says was his custom when a child beside his mother's knee, is not the best for us. There are many excellent ways of studying the Word. One is to take it up by characters, as Moses, David, Samuel, reading the complete biography of each of these men, finding all references to them in other parts of the Bible, and, as a side-light, reading what one can discover in history of the current manners and customs of their period, and of contemporary civilization.

Another way is to select a topic, as Faith, Love, Prayer, Praise, Submission,

Patience, Loyalty, Obedience, and read with the topic as a central thought, as the motif in a strain of music.

Again, one may take a single book and read it through, looking out the marginal notes. This will take time and care, but is prolific of good results.

Among helps to Bible-reading, a standard Bible dictionary, a good commentary, Dr. Thomson's 'The Land and the Book,' and similar works, are of much value. A book published by Harper & Brothers, entitled 'Christ in the Old Testament,' furnishes very delightful reading. But better than all books about the Bible is the Bible itself, and to one who has learned to love it, it is as honey and the honey-comb.

To such a soul the strife of discussion, the shifting winds of argument, the criticism of scholars, may have a passing interest, and regret may be awakened that good men lose their tempers, and that great ecclesiastical bodies are rocked as by a tempest over affairs which never touch the great Book nor in the least menace its integrity. Here it stands, the refuge and the sanctuary into which storm-beaten spirits have run for safety and shelter; the unspeakable consolation of martyrs and confessors in every age; the manna for God's saints in their desert pilgrimage; the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire; the ark in which our best things are laid up; over and above all, the Book which reveals Christ to fallen man, Christ the human, Christ the divine, our mediator, our Saviour. A book alike for the learned and for the illiterate, for the happy and for the wretched, for life's tumults, and for death's darkening twilight.

'Holy Bible, Book Divine,
Precious treasure, thou art mine,'

may be the expression of each Christian's heart.

But do not let us sentimentalize over our Bibles only. Let us read them. When we do this, with prayer and pains, we shall the more evidently grow in grace.—*Aunt Marjorie, in Christian Intelligence.*

IF HE WOULD only lean hard enough on his Father's arm, the weakest of God's children would move the earth.

SCHOLAR'S NOTES.

(From Westminster Question Book.)

LESSON II.—APRIL 8, 1894.

DISCORD IN JACOB'S FAMILY.—Gen. 37:1-11.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 3, 4.

GOLDEN TEXT.

'See that ye fall not out by the way.'—Gen. 45:24.

HOME READINGS.

M. Gen. 33:1-20.—Jacob's Meeting with Esau.
T. Gen. 35:1-15.—Jacob Revisits Bethel.
W. Gen. 37:1-11.—Discord in Jacob's Family.
Th. John 15:17-27.—Jesus Hated.
F. Rom. 12:1-21.—Love without Dissimulation.
S. 1 John 3:11-24.—Hatred—Murder.
S. Psalm 133:1-3.—Brethren in Unity.

LESSON PLAN.

I. Joseph Loved by his Father. vs. 1-3.
II. Joseph Hated by his Brothers. vs. 4.
III. Joseph Envied for his Dreams. vs. 5-11.

TIME.—B.C. 1720, ten years after the last lesson.
PLACE.—Hebron, twenty miles south of Jerusalem.

OPENING WORDS.

Jacob, after he had met his brother Esau, went to Shechem, and thence to Bethel. He then went southward as far as Bethlehem, where Rachel died. Finally he settled in Hebron. Here Joseph grew up until he was seventeen, a well-trained, godly boy. One lesson to-day tells us how he incurred the hatred of his brothers.

HELPS IN STUDYING.

1. *Stranger*—sojourner. 2. *Generations*—family history. *The sons of Bilhah*—Dan and Naphtali. *The sons of Zilpah*—Gad and Asher. *Their evil report*—the report of their evil doings. 3. *Israel loved Joseph*—because he was the son of his best-loved wife and of his old age. Benjamin was yet very young—only about one year old. *A coat of many colors*—either a long garment with sleeves and fringes, or one composed of pieces of various colors. 4. *Could not speak peaceably*—would not say, 'Peace be to thee.' the form of saying 'Good morning' in those days. 5. *Joseph dreamed a dream*—his dream was prophetic, foretelling his future honor over his brothers. 10. *His father rebuked him*—Joseph's dream seemed lacking in due honor to his parents. *Observed the saying*—it made an impression on the father's mind.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—What was the subject of the last lesson? Give the history between the last and this lesson. What were the names of Rachel's two sons? Title? Golden Text? Lesson Plan? Time? Place? Memory verses?

I. JOSEPH LOVED BY HIS FATHER. vs. 1-3.—Where did Jacob live? How many sons had he?

Why did Jacob love Joseph more than his other sons? Who was Joseph's mother? What other son had Rachel? What gift of love did Jacob give Joseph? How old was Joseph at this time?

II. JOSEPH HATED BY HIS BROTHERS. v. 4.—How did Joseph's brothers feel toward him? Why did they hate him? How did they show their hatred?

III. JOSEPH ENVIED FOR HIS DREAMS. vs. 5-11.—What was Joseph's first dream? What was the second? What events did these dreams foretell? Gen. 42:6, 9. How did they affect his brothers?

PRACTICAL LESSONS LEARNED.

1. The evil hate those who interfere with their evil ways.
2. The good should never countenance the evil by concealing it.
3. Family discord should be avoided; there can be no true home without love.
4. God's hand rules over the acts of men.

REVIEW QUESTIONS.

I. Where was Jacob now living? Ans. In the land of Canaan, wherein his father was a stranger.

2. Which of his sons did Jacob love most? Ans. Joseph, because he was the son of his old age.

3. What mark of affection did Jacob give Joseph? Ans. He gave him a coat of many colors.

4. How did Joseph's brothers feel toward him? Ans. They hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.

5. What increased their hatred? Ans. Two dreams of Joseph which foretold his future authority over them.

LESSON III.—APRIL 15, 1894.

JOSEPH SOLD INTO EGYPT.—Gen. 37:23-36.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 25-28.

GOLDEN TEXT.

'Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good.'—Gen. 50:20.

HOME READINGS.

M. Gen. 37:12-22.—Joseph Visits his Brethren.
T. Gen. 37:23-36.—Joseph Sold into Egypt.
W. Luke 22:1-6, 47-51.—Jesus Sold.
Th. Acts 7:1-16.—God's Purpose.
F. Psalm 37:1-18.—'Commit thy Way unto the Lord.'
S. Psalm 69:1-17.—The Prayer of the Troubled.
S. Rom. 12:9-21.—Overcome Evil with Good.

LESSON PLAN.

I. Joseph Seized. vs. 23, 24.
II. Joseph Sold. vs. 25-28.
III. Joseph Mourned. vs. 29-36.

TIME.—B.C. 1720, soon after last lesson.

PLACES.—Hebron, twenty miles south of Jerusalem; Dothan, about seventy miles north-east of Hebron.

OPENING WORDS.

Jacob's partiality for Joseph, as shown by giving him the coat of many colors, and doubtless in other ways, first excited the envy and hatred of his brothers. Joseph's dreams added fuel to the flame. They hated him yet the more, and plotted to sell him into Egypt.

HELPS IN STUDYING.

23. *Was come unto his brethren*—at Dothan, where they were feeding their flocks. 24. *Pit*—an empty cistern for catching rain-water, dug in the ground. 25. *Ishmaelites*—descendants of Ishmael, Abraham's son by Hagar, called Midianites in v. 28. *Gilead*—the region east of the Jordan. *Spice and balm and myrrh*—still the products of that region. 27. *Were content*—satisfied to do as he advised. 28. *Twenty pieces of silver*—shekels, about fifteen dollars, the price of a slave under twenty years old. Lev. 27:5. 31. *Dipped the coat*—to give the appearance that Joseph had been killed. 31. *Rent his clothes*—showing his grief. 33. *Pharaoh*—the king of Egypt.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—What mark of love did Jacob give Joseph? How did his brothers feel toward Joseph? What increased their hatred of him? Why was Joseph sent to them? Title? Golden Text? Lesson Plan? Time? Place? Memory verses?

I. JOSEPH SEIZED. vs. 23, 24.—How did Joseph's brothers feel when they saw him? What did they first do to him? What did they then do? What was the condition of the pit?

II. JOSEPH SOLD. vs. 25-28.—What happened as they were eating? What did Judah propose? What was done? Which is the sixth commandment? What did our Saviour say of this commandment? Matt. 5:21, 22.

III. JOSEPH MOURNED. vs. 29-36.—What is said of Reuben? Why did he return to the pit? How did he express his grief? What did Joseph's brothers do with the coat? How was Jacob affected? How did he express his grief? What did his family do? What did Jacob say to them? What became of Joseph?

PRACTICAL LESSONS LEARNED.

1. Envy leads to hatred, hatred to malice, and so to a readiness to injure others.
2. The one who hates his brother is a murderer in spirit, if not in deed.
3. God overrules for good the evil plans and deeds of men.
4. God will be with his children and will care for them in their trials.

REVIEW QUESTIONS.

1. What did Joseph's brothers first do to him when he came to them? Ans. They strip him out of his coat of many colors, and cast him into a pit to die there.

2. What did they finally do with him? Ans. They sold him to a company of Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver.

3. What did the Ishmaelites do with Joseph? Ans. They took him into Egypt, and sold him to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt.

4. How did Joseph's brother's deceive their father? Ans. They dipped Joseph's coat in blood and sent it to him.

5. What did Jacob do when he received the coat? Ans. He rent his clothes and put on sack-cloth and wept for Joseph, thinking that a wild beast had torn him to pieces.