

GOLDEN TEXT.—So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.—Psalm 90:12.

Central Truth.—The severity and goodness of God.

The Israelites are still on the east side of Jordan, where the children of Reuben and Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh have now already been assigned their portion of the promised inheritance. The rest are soon to pass over to the good land beyond. And a good land it was. Toward it their eyes had often turned with longing and hope. It is easy to believe that now there was exulting in many breasts. And yet their joy had its admixture of sorrow. One of their number was to be left behind. Their actual entrance upon the promised land was to be preceded by the death of their leader. On one memorable occasion Moses had sinned a sin, the penalty of which was that, though he might be permitted to see the land, he could never enter it. To them he must now bid farewell.

The end of any wise and good man might be a profitable as well as interesting study. It will certainly do us good to trace some of the last things in the earthly life of such a man as Moses.

1. We here get a glimpse of his last work. It is not an uncommon thing to find one's ruling passion strong in death. Pride, avarice and ambition do not relax their grasp as worldly and selfish men grow old and approach the end. The life of Moses had been one of disinterested devotion to the welfare of God's people. For their sakes he surrendered the riches of Egypt, endured the hardships of the wilderness wanderings, and gave up every merely personal interest. It is said he "was very meek;" but the word so rendered rather signifies "much-enduring," or "disinterested." This was his spirit, and this was his work. And he was deep in this work to the very last. He is teaching and admonishing the people; not planning and doing for himself. Who would not prefer to be found by the Messenger of Death in the midst of such work? Our Saviour said: "Blessed is that servant whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing."

2. We have here the record of his last counsel. A man's last words are likely to be sober and sincere. He may be trusted in the face of death to speak his deepest thought. Moses had seen more than have most men of any age of every side of life. He had lived in a palace and in the desert. He had known what it was to enjoy luxury and wealth. He was learned in the best human wisdom. He knew every side of this world; he understood the human heart; he had studied the ways of providence; he had great acquaintance with God. Just now he has been rehearsing to them the laws of God; and has added to words of religious instruction and admonition a "great prophetic hymn," setting forth the perfections and faithfulness of God. And what is his very last counsel? It is that the people should "set their hearts" upon these things, that is, should give them serious and habitual attention. Moreover they are to "command their children to observe them," accounting this to be the very best legacy one can leave behind to those he loves. And they are to do all this as a matter of the most serious consequence—a matter of death and life, of earthly profit as well as divine favor: "It is not a vain thing; it is your life!" It is well worth noting that this is the final and soberest judgment of a wise and great and good man.

3. Further on we learn something of his last experience with sin. The testimony to the obedience and faithfulness of Moses, in both the Old Testament and the New, is very remarkable. He is "the man of God." "There arose not a prophet in Israel like unto Moses whom the Lord knew face to face." "Moses verily was faithful." But he was no exception to the saying that "All have sinned." Just what his sin was is not made entirely clear in the record of it. It was a sin of mingled pride, unbelief and unsubmission (Numbers 20:10-12). It was confessed, and no doubt forgiven. Many years had elapsed since it was committed. But now the noteworthy thing is that it meets him again on his dying day. He has not yet done with its effects. It keeps him out of the promised land. He has prayed that God will so far forget it as to suffer him to accompany the people he loves to the place of their final victories and rest: "I pray thee, let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain and Lebanon." But God does not hear the request. There is something touching in all this. Moses was great in prayer; his intercessions often prevailed for oth-

ers; but they did not save him from the loss of privilege and opportunity, which came of his one sin. On his dying day he is reminded that on account of it God was wroth with him. In all this there is stern severity. And our God is thus seen to be a stern God, even in his dealings with his own children. What if all our sins should be set before us in our dying hour? Could we endure the sight? What if we should not only see them, but have to think of them as unforgiven?

4. The lesson gives us an intimation of his last support and cheer. It was needful for others' sakes that God should deal sternly with his servant. Nevertheless he regards him as a true servant, and mingles great goodness with the severity. In the last verse of our lesson is the promise that, from the mountain's summit, he shall see the goodly heritage. And, two chapters further on, we find the promise fulfilled. God is with him in the Mount. And there he grants to him a vision of all the land, makes for him a grave, and, possibly by angel hands, buries him in a valley. In all this there are indications of great tenderness. Doubtless, Moses was made to see that not only was his sin forgiven, but God had provided some better things for him than had entered his thought. His land of promise was larger, fairer, more glorious, than that which lay basking at his feet. He had dreamt a dream of Canaan, and his God took him where alone such dreams could be fulfilled. We may be assured that his spirit rejoiced when the summons came, as the mature and holy are glad when they catch the tread of the angel of death." But this was not all. Was not Moses' prayer to be permitted to enter the promised land literally and gloriously answered when, ages after, he stood with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. It is worth noticing that, among the very last things Moses did, was to give to the people an inspiring song. Impressions thus conveyed are deep and lasting. The poetry we love and the songs we sing have much to do with the characters we form.

2. The work of good men must have its end, but happily their teachings and example often long remain.

3. The truths, precepts and promises of God are of benefit to those only who give them earnest, believing and loving attention.

4. Moses would have the parent "command" his child, if need be, in the way of God's commandments, kindly of course, and yet firmly. Was he wrong? The parent commands in secular things, why not in those of more importance?

5. To "observe to do," and not to observe merely to know, is the proper end of all moral instruction. The child's knowing and doing should go along together, otherwise he forms the often fatal habit of deliberate trifling with known truth and duty.

6. We have not done with sin when it is committed, nor yet when it is seemingly out of mind. It lurks in the memory. It will return upon us when the memory will be most painful.

7. Even forgiveness does not give us back lost opportunities, nor does it cancel the ill effects of sin.

8. In dealings with his penitent and believing children, God mingles goodness with severity; judgments are made to serve purposes of discipline; he humbles and refines by disappointment and pain; then, when the work of purifying is all done, he grants visions of beauty and delight. Best of all, he translates the perfected spirit to that fairer Canaan which is above.

A Telegraph Story.

Mr. W. S. Johnson, the author of "Telegraph Tales," is responsible for the following: "In the winter of 1870-71, one of the operators in the Western Union office at Boston had an epileptic fit. His medical attendant spoke to him, chafed him, and made every effort to arouse him but in vain. Subsequently one of his fellow operators drew a chair up to the bed and took the patient's hand in his. As he did so he noticed a feeble pressure by the fingers, which pressure presently resolved itself into doubts and dashes, faintly communicating to the tactile sense the words, 'W-h-a-t d-o-o-c-t-o-r s-a-y a-b-o-u-t-m-e?' Asked whether he could hear what was said to him, the patient signified assent by a slight motion with the tips of his fingers, and the result was that his fellow operator got from the patient enough dots and dashes to describe his feelings to the physician, who was thus enabled to apply the necessary remedies. It is certain that no other method of communicating was possible under the circumstances, since the sufferer from epilepsy, although he could hear, could neither speak nor move any of his muscles, except those situated in the digital extremities, and these only with the faintest requisite in electric communication."

The overshadowing size and strength of Prussia as compared with the other States that compose the confederacy of the German Empire, are shown by the recent budgets submitted to the Federal Council in relation to the imperial army. The total standing force is 427,274 soldiers and non-commissioned officers, and 18,134 commissioned officers. Of these the several States have as follows: Soldier and non-commissioned officers, Prussia, 330,629;

Bavaria, 50,224; Wurtemberg, 18,815 and Saxony, 27,606; commissioned officers, Prussia, 14,008; Bavaria, 2,216; Saqony, 1,187; Wurtemberg, 773.

A NEW SORT OF SOUTHERNER.

In Virginia politics it is refreshing to find such a speech as the following, made by Hon. Charles W. Williams, at a railroad meeting where all the magnates of the North were assembled. It shows a man of genius, up to the demands of the times:

Mr. President and Gentlemen: While I am flattered at being called upon to represent my native city on such an occasion as this, and while I feel all of the regard and affection for Richmond and her people which it is possible for any of her sons to feel, I trust I am capable of seeing and feeling as a cosmopolitan. My grandfather marched to Massachusetts with the first battalion of Virginia troops during the war of the Revolution. I married the daughter of a gentleman from Maine and a lady from Massachusetts. I have friends every where in this country. I feel impelled, therefore, by natural instinct, by family tradition and domestic association, to claim my citizenship not only within the confines of Richmond, but throughout this great country—my country, as it is yours. I confess that I have not always breathed so catholic a spirit. I have entertained all the prejudices of a Virginian, but I have had them one by one removed upon the reflection suggested by observation of other places and people. A line of thought was suggested to me some years ago by a visit to the Northwest, from which I deduced conclusions which should give encouragement not only to Virginians, but to you gentlemen from the North who have embarked your capital here. No doubt you wish your investment to pay, and while I am neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, I venture the prediction that it will. Reflect, gentlemen, that one hundred years ago the whole population of this country was less than 3,000,000. Now it is over 50,000,000. With any thing like a natural ratio of increase, what numbers will inhabit these hills and valleys in a few years? The increase in population in Virginia has not kept pace with other States of the North and the West heretofore, but in future it will. At the organization of the Government of Virginia was among the foremost in wealth and population, but unfortunately she failed to retain her position. Why? Because she has contributed largely of her population and brains and energy to the great West and North. Go where you will among the busy and industrious in this country, and among the foremost men you find Virginians or Virginians' sons who have gone elsewhere to seek their fortunes. There was a reason why they did so, but that reason no longer exists. In the days of slavery the planter who owned his 600 or 1,000 acres and his fifteen, or twenty slaves, and had a family of five or six boys, was at a loss what to do with them. After making a doctor of one, a preacher of another and a lawyer of a third, perhaps occasionally a merchant was developed from the fourth. The rest had to emigrate; there was no place in our economy for them. The planter owned his blacksmith, his carpenter, his wheelwright, his bricklayer; in short, all of the great field of labor was filled by the slave, which at the North gives employment and profit to your laboring classes. The overseer class, and the other men of Virginia who had not the wealth of the planter, but who had their families of sons to provide for, were at this further disadvantage, that they could not provide the necessary education to make lawyers, doctors, and preachers even of a part of them, so all had to leave the State. But, gentlemen, all is now changed. We have a State abounding in all of the resources which capital and labor united must develop into enormous wealth. You and many other citizens of the North and West bring your capital here, and invite our young men to stay at home, and they will stay, because they see employment before them, and have something to look forward to in the profits of their industry. In the name not only of Richmond, but in the name of Virginia, and especially on behalf of the laboring classes of this State, I extend you a cordial welcome. It is as sincere as our declaration made in 1861, when you came with arms in your hands, and we promised you hospitable graves. I appeal to the efforts made in the war to make good that declaration as a guarantee of the earnestness and honesty with which we now offer you our hands and a place in our hearts.

THACKERY'S house in Kensington Palace Gardens, London, has just been sold. This fine mansion possesses more than the interest which ordinarily attaches to the dwelling places of distinguished men, for it was not only lived in, but built, by Thackery. It is of red brick, and, as befitted the limner of Queen Anne manners, is built in the style which has been so generously named after that monarch. The house is leasehold under the crown, and the ground rent amounts to £125 per annum. Until recently it was occupied by Mr. Joseph Bravo, the father of the victim of the Balham tragedy.

THE key that winds up many a man's business is whiskey.

A SIGNIFICANT ADMISSION.

A FREE RELIGIONIST ABANDONS HIS PREACHING. MR. FROTHINGHAM ON CHRISTIANITY. N. Y. Independent.

The Rev. O. B. Frothingham was for a long while the leading representative in this country of free religious thought and for years the president of the Free Religious Association. Two years ago he resigned his pastorate in this city and went to Europe. Since his return he has been residing in Boston, engaged in literary work and does not intend to go back to the pulpit. The Evening Post publishes a remarkable interview with him, which shows that he recognizes the growing strength of Christian faith in the world, and is himself retreating from his radical ground.

We give briefly an abstract of Mr. Frothingham's views. After speaking of the personal kindness he met from several evangelical preachers, he says that his work here as a preacher was full of discouragements. He could see that he was doing good to a large congregation of intelligent men, in showing them how a man could do without some of the beliefs often held essential to right living; but he could not see that any successors were rising to take his place. Mr. Chadwick might be mentioned, but his appears to be a negative faith, with which he has no sympathy. Then he found that, as a radical lecturer, he was brought into relations with radicals whose nonsense he despised. The free-thought leaders were destroyers, not builders. They were running into a dead materialism which he abhorred, and there was no limit to their destructive mania. At the same time, "Evangelical religion was stronger, the churches were better filled, there was more of the religious spirit abroad," than when he began his work, twenty years before. Here we quote an important paragraph, which perfectly accords with our own observation:

"As to the fact that revealed religion, as we called it, is stronger to-day than it was twenty years ago I have no doubt. It is stronger here and in Europe, notwithstanding the much talked-of German materialism; and the religion of to-day is all the stronger than that of twenty years ago, in that it is throwing off the secretions of ignorance and presents fewer features incompatible with good sense and charity. Looking back over the last twenty years, no careful student of such matters can deny this healthful process, and I, who have stood aloof from all revealed religion during that time, cannot but acknowledge that its opponents have made no headway whatever." There has been this amelioration in Orthodoxy, let who will deny it; and with it we have been in the fullest sympathy, holding in constant view the end of making revealed religion the stronger by the operation.

But Mr. Frothingham goes on to speak of his own personal convictions. He says that he could not now conscientiously take up the work he laid down. He confesses that he is becoming more conservative in faith or, at least, less assured to his radicalism. He says: "I am unsettled in my own mind concerning matters about which I was not in doubt ten or even five years ago, but I doubt more. And yet I do not know that I regret my past work here, for there is much that needs to be reformed about all systems of revealed religion, even admitting the foundation to be sound. Poisonous vines and parasites need to be torn away from the trunk of truth. Neither would I say 'stop' to the scientist bent on probing religion to the core. Truth can do no harm. But looking back over the history of the last century, with the conviction that no headway whatever has been made, with the conviction that unbridled free thought only leads to a dreary negation, called materialism, there has been a growing suspicion in me that there might be something behind or below what we call revealed religion of which the scientific thinkers of our time are beginning vaguely to distinguish as an influence that cannot be accounted for at present, but which, nevertheless, exists. I said a moment ago let scientific investigation go on, by all means. Not only it can do no harm, but I am sure that the further it goes the more clearly will scientific men recognize a power not yet defined, but distinctly felt by some of the ablest of them. This question has presented itself to me many times in the last few years. What is the power behind these ignorant men who find dignity and comfort in religion? Last summer, when in Rome, I was much interested in observing the behavior of the Roman clergy. Not the men high in power and steeped in diplomacy and intrigue—the parish priests, who went about among the people as spiritual helpers and almoners. I talked with many of these men, and found them to be ignorant, unambitious, and superstitious; and yet there was a power behind them which must mystify philosophers. What is this power? I cannot undertake to say; but it is there, and it may be that those persons who deny the essential truths of revealed religion are all wrong. At any rate, I, for one, do not care to go on denying the existence of such a force.

"To my old friends and followers, who may feel grieved at such an admission on my part, I would say that I am no more a believer in revealed

religion to-day than I was ten years ago; but, as I said before, I have doubts which I had not then. The creeds of to-day do not seem in my eyes to be so wholly groundless as they were then, and while I believe that the next hundred years will see great changes in them, I do not think that they are destined to disappear. To sum up the whole matter, the work which I have been doing appears to lead to nothing and may have been grounded upon mistaken premises. Therefore, it is better to stop; but I do not want to give the impression that I recant anything. I simply stop denying and wait for more light."

This is a very weighty testimony. We do not feel any desire to exult over Mr. Frothingham's confession of failure and doubt. We would only call attention to the two things which have begun to convince this learned religious philosopher that his life-work may have been in great part a mistake. The one is the fact that the tendency of free religion is downward. Its drift is toward an abhorrent, dead materialism, which uplifts no life, its own leader being witness. The other evidence which has moved him is the power residing in humble Christian life, especially as he has seen it in unambitious Roman parish priests. This testimony delights us, and all the more as it goes to the credit of a Christian body with which we are not connected. If revealed Christianity has any power, it ought to show itself just here, in Christian life; and this ought to be the strongest proof that Christ is in the Church of a truth.

Lyman Beecher's Wife.

Lyman Beecher was impetuous, positive, and at times impatient of restraint. He governed his house by rigid rules, his wife by a judicious and wise love. Her husband says: "I scarcely ever saw her agitated to tears. Once, soon after we had moved into our new house (at East Hampton) the two pigs did something that vexed me; I got angry and thrashed them. She came to the door and interposed. The fire hadn't got out. I said quickly, 'Go along in!' She started, but hadn't more than time to turn before I was at her side and threw my arms around her neck and kissed her, and told her I was sorry. Then she wept." "I do not think I shall be with you long," she said one day to her husband. Six weeks later her saying proved true. Eight little children wept around her death bed, as their father gave her back to God. Then came a season of great emptiness and gloom, for the chief light of the parsonage had gone out. The husband felt the terror of "a child suddenly shut out alone in the dark." He had always regarded her intellectually and morally his superior. The smaller children realized their loss. Henry Ward, with his golden curls and little black frock, frolicked, like a kitten in the sun, in ignorant joy. Many were the curious questions the little ones asked about their departed mother. They were told that she was laid in the ground; that she had gone to heaven. One morning Henry was found digging with great zeal in the earth under his sister Catharine's window. What are you doing? he was asked. "Wy, I'm going to heaven to find ma," said he, thinking that the way mother went was through the earth in which she had been laid.

In due time a second mother was brought into the parsonage in the person of Miss Harriet Porter, a cousin of the first one. Mrs. Stowe says: "I was about six years old, and slept in the nursery with two younger brothers. We knew that father had gone somewhere on a journey, and therefore the sound of a bustle or disturbance in the house more easily awoke us. We heard father's voice in the entry and started up in our little beds, crying out as he entered our room, 'Why here's pa!' A cheerful voice called out from behind him, 'And here's ma!' A beautiful lady, very fair, with bright blue eyes, and soft auburn hair, bound round with a black velvet bandeau, came into the room, smiling, eager, and happy, looking, and coming to our beds, kissed us and told us that she loved little children, and that she would be our mother. Never did mother-in-law make a happier or sweeter impression. She seemed to us so fair, so delicate, so elegant that we were almost afraid to go near her. We must have been honest, red cheeked, country children, rough, obedient and bashful. I remember I used to feel breezy, rough, and rude in her presence."

The new mother entered her new home with mingled feelings of pleasure and solicitude. She had never seen so many rosy cheeks and laughing eyes. The little ones were in great glee, save the oldest, Catharine, who was moved to tears. They soon learned to love her tenderly. The Litchfield people were all on tiptoe to see the minister's new wife. When she came to church the following Sunday, she says: "I felt some agitation on entering the door to see every body seated, and had I known all, I don't know but I should have fallen down in the way, for William says the people all turned round, and the scholars and all in the galleries rose up."

You can't cut your corns with a bicycle.—Boston Bulletin. No; but you can bark your shins and bruise your corn, and that hurts as bad as cutting it.

THE BOUNCING BISON.

From Bismarck comes the story that the passengers on a recent train from Yellowstone had an experience exceedingly rare. When about two miles from Sentinel Butte, the dividing line between Montana and Dakota, a herd of sixteen buffalo were seen a short distance ahead, within easy rifle range. There were several soldiers on board with army rifles, and numerous small revolvers were also pointed at the excited bison. A perfect volley of lead was poured into the herd, but to no effect. They bounded away over the divide, and were soon out of sight. The passengers had no sooner begun a discussion of what they had seen in years gone by than a danger signal from the locomotive brought every one to the lookout. A herd of twenty or thirty buffaloes were making directly for the train, and fearing the engine would strike them and be thrown from the track, the air brakes were set and the train nearly brought to a standstill, while the buffalo crossed the track a few feet ahead. Every gun was again leveled. Such excitement cannot be described. Bullets flew in every direction, some striking the ground as near as ten feet from the train, others raising the dust a mile distant. The train moved on slowly, and the volley of lead continued to pour from the guns of the excited passengers. Finally the smoke cleared away, and the buffaloes could be seen about half a mile off, trotting along as unconcerned as though they had never seen a railroad train. The disgusted travelers drew in their weapons and spent the rest of the day arguing as to the probable amount of lead a buffalo will carry before he will weaken. Pictures of railroad trains passing through herds of buffalo are numerous, but the actual experience is one of which the passengers may feel proud. They were probably but straggling bands from the main herd, which is forty or fifty miles north of the track. From Sentinel Butte east to Pleasant Valley (Dickinson) at least 500 antelope were seen, which is a daily occurrence. Verily the North Pacific is the sportsman's paradise.

Death of Supercargo Burkart, who Brought about a Historical Battle.

Valentine Burkart, a veteran of the war of 1812, died on Tuesday week in 94th year of his age, at No. 428 Arch street. His death occurred in the very same room, and within a few feet of the same spot, where he had been married sixty-six years before. The old soldier was the sole survivor of a company of the Washington Guards commanded by Captain Requet, and stationed during the war with Great Britain at Chester and New Castle.

The deceased was born in Philadelphia, and after receiving the best educational advantages in those days, he was placed by his parents in the shipping and commission house of Willing & Francis, then a widely known firm among the shipping interests. The young man was quick to learn, methodical and intelligent, and so fully gained the esteem of his employers that, at the age of twenty-one, he was given the responsible position of supercargo on the ship Margaret, and sent on a cruise to Lisbon. On the return passage the Margaret encountered the British man-of-war Guerriere, and was boarded by her, much to the surprise of the officers and crew of the Margaret, who were unaware that war had been declared between the two countries. Mr. Burkart was always of the opinion that the Guerriere, also, did not know that hostilities had been begun, for the Margaret was simply searched for contraband goods, and then permitted to continue her course. She put into Halifax, Nova Scotia, for water, and there learned that war had been declared. The young scapegrace at once made inquiries as to whether there were any American war vessels near, and was overjoyed to find that the famous old Constitution was in port. To her commander, Captain Isaac Hull, he told of the meeting with the Guerriere, and described as closely as he could her possible location. The Constitution set sail on the 16th of August, 1812, and encountered the enemy three days later. The famous battle and the speedy defeat of the British "terror of the seas" that followed are facts well known to every schoolboy. The passport carried by Mr. Burkart, which entitled him to admission to foreign ports, is still preserved by the family, and is in itself a reminder of one of Philadelphia's oldest families. It is drawn up in an old-fashioned, clerical hand, and signed in bold characters by Clement Biddle, notary public.

After the young supercargo returned to Philadelphia, he gave up his position and enlisted in Captain Requet's company. After peace had been declared, he came home to find both of his former employers dead. He obtained a position in the Farmers' and Mechanics' bank as runner, and held it for sixty years, resigning a few years ago on account of his age. He was a remarkably healthy man, and never employed a physician during his lifetime. He never lost a tooth by decay, and had a glossy head of brown hair on the day of his death. Mr. Burkart had been a communicant at St. John's Lutheran church for seventy-five years, and was largely respected among a large class of business men for his sterling integrity, and continuous faithfulness to duty.