

The Christian Messenger. HALIFAX, N. S., OCTOBER 21, 1874.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1874.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, October 25th, 1874.

Blind Bartimeus.—Mark x. 46-52.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." Psalm cxix. 18.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 49-52.

SUMMARY.—To them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up.

ANALYSIS.—I. The appeal of the beggar. Va. 46-48. II. The response of the Lord. Va. 49-52.

EXPOSITION.—Introductory.—We have now come very near to the close of Christ's ministry. Only a week remains before his crucifixion. Meanwhile a considerable time has passed since we were last with him. He was then at Capernaum, and, as it seems, afterwards went up to Jerusalem to the feast of Dedication, and returned into Perea, east of the Jordan and Sea of Galilee, and then went up to Bethany to raise Lazarus some time before the miracle of the present lesson, and spent the intervening time in retirement at Ephraim. Mark x. 1; John x. 22-40; xi. 54. The Feast of Dedication was in December (the 27th), in the "winter," as John says, and it is now early April. During these intervening months Jesus taught and wrought. Mark (x. 1-45) gives a few selections from his teachings. John's record of this period is more full (x. 22-xii. 50). An account of to-day's miracle is given by each of the evangelists. Compare Matt. xx. 29-34; Luke xviii. 35-43. The accounts vary, and at first seem to be contradictory. Mark and Luke speak of but one blind man; Matthew, of two. Matthew and Mark represent him as being cured as Christ was going out of the city; Luke, as though it were on his entrance into the city. This has led some to hold that there were either two or three miracles; that it is not, and cannot be, one and the same event that is thus variously described. That Matthew mentions two, and the others but one, is just what we found of the miracle upon the Gadarene demoniac. Bengel thinks one of the two blind men cried to Christ on his approach to the city, but was not cured till the next day as Christ left the city, and that meanwhile another blind man had joined him.

Verses 46.—They came to Jericho. Jericho was between Jerusalem and the Jordan, northeast of the former, and quite near the latter. It was exactly opposite the place where Israel crossed the Jordan to take possession of the land and was the city first given them after a most extraordinary siege. Josh. vi. Jesus had been preparing himself and his disciples specially for the impending sacrifice of himself, and now came with them to join the people on their way to Jerusalem to the Passover. As he went out to Jericho. Luke's statement, literally rendered, is, "on his nearing into Jericho." A great number of people. Pilgrims to the Passover from Perea, coming down on the east side of the Jordan, and crossing, go up by this way. Blind Bartimeus, the son of Timeus. The other evangelists do not give his name. Sat by the wayside begging. The begging was doubtless in this case the consequence of his blindness.

Verses 47.—When he heard, etc. From Luke xviii. 36 it seems that he heard the multitude first, and "asked what it meant," and learned in answer to his question—Jesus of Nazareth "Jesus the Nazarene." He began to cry out. Began at once, as soon as he knew who it was. He had before this heard of this Jesus, and of his works. He had very likely known accurately of "him who was born blind," whom a short time before Jesus healed. John ix. Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me. Matthew gives as his cry, O Lord, thou Son, etc., while Luke gives only the title, "Thou Son of David." He may have varied, giving each form, or he may have combined the whole together into one call. This title of Messiah was naturally a favorite one with Israel. See Psalm lxxii. Christ was raised up to sit upon that throne of which David's was a type, and to be that king of whom he was type. He was also, literally, in the way of natural descent, as well as legally through Joseph, a descendant or Son of David. We may well suppose that devout blind man fixed specially on the promises in Isaiah xxix and xlii, that in Messiah's time the eyes of the blind should be opened. See Matt. ix. 27-30.

Verses 48.—Many charged him that he should hold his peace. The word translated "charge," includes the idea of chiding, rebuking. They blamed the man for this loud outcry. Who did, and why? Not the enemies of Christ, as some have thought, trying to prevent another miracle, but rather persons friendly to Jesus, perhaps some of the twelve, acting in the same spirit as when they would have kept the children from Christ. Luke xviii. 15. It seemed to them a sort of liberty not to be taken by such a character with such a lofty personage. What to them was a miserable beggar? The more they rebuked, the more he cried out. So it is with the sinner fairly aroused to a sense of his ruin, and assured that hope and help are in Christ only. The one cry still is: Have mercy on me. A very short, but very comprehensive prayer.

Verses 49.—Jesus stood still. Will he, too, rebuke as the rest did? What if he had done so? Suppose he had thrust away this man and his prayer—what then? No, not he. He could not do so. He commanded him to be called. He always made a way from misery to himself, from deepest wretchedness to God. To make that way he came to earth and died. To keep that way he lives at God's right hand. Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee. Spoken perhaps by the very ones who just now rebuked. The Master's word corrects us, and sometimes brings us quickly to ourselves. Note the three curt imperatives, betokening haste, urgency; just such as would be felt at such a time.

Verses 50.—Casting away his garments. The loose outer garment which in sitting was wont to be loose, and girded only in walking or running. There is no time for girding now. He rather casts it off. This is because of haste, not because of its shabbiness. So do earnest souls, hearing Christ's call, throw off every hindrance.

Verses 51.—What wilt thou, etc. The prayer had been general. For some reason perhaps to call "out into yet livelier exercise the faith and expectation of the petitioner," he asks this. Those who insist that in all our prayers we must be very specific, and name the exact thing wanted, find here a proof text. Only let us not try to make human experience run in too narrow a channel.

Verses 52.—Thy faith hath made thee whole. Christ gave the wholeness, and faith brought to Christ. So is it in spiritual disease. "By faith are ye saved." Immediately he received his sight. In a previous case sight came gradually. viii. 24. So we will not hasten to say that all spiritual blindness, if cured at all, is cured instantaneously. Christ's touch of the eyes is mentioned by Matthew (xx. 34). Followed Jesus in the way. He could now see the way and how to follow, and love prompted him to go. Are we doing likewise?

QUESTIONS.—Vs. 46. What do you know of Jericho? Joshua vi. From what place did Jesus come to this city? John xi. 54. How near the time of the crucifixion was it? John xii. 1. What feast of the Jews since our last lesson? John x. 22. To what festival were the multitude, met at Jericho, going? John xii. 1. What blind man by the wayside? How does Matthew's account (xx. 30) differ from this? Luke's account? xviii. 35. How do you reconcile the three?

Vs. 47. What did this blind man here? Luke xviii. 36, 37. Why was Jesus called "the Nazarene," or "of Nazareth"? What did the blind man do when he heard of Christ? Why did he call him "the Son of David"? Is. ix. 6, 7; Matt. i. 17. Why are sinners called blind? John ix. 39-41; 1 John i. 5-10.

Vs. 48. Who rebuked the blind man? What did they tell him? Why think you, did they do so? Have you ever seen anything like that in spiritual things? What was the effect on the blind man? Why that? The lesson for us?

Vs. 49. What did Jesus do? Who called him? Their words? Does Jesus wish all sinners to come to him? Matt. xi. 28. Is the way open? Who may bid them go? Rev. xxii. 17.

Vs. 50. The effect on the man? Lesson for us?

Vs. 51. Christ's question? Why asked? the answer?

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, November 1st, 1874.—The Fig Tree Withered.—Mark xi. 12-14, 19-24.

Prof. Charles F. Hartt, of Cornell University, will sail shortly for Brazil to continue his scientific researches in that country. His aim is to make a reconnaissance of the gold and diamond region north of Rio, concerning whose geology and physiography little is known. He proposes at the same time to review carefully his observations on the southern glacial drift and new archaeological and paleontological localities discovered on previous expeditions.

Youths' Department.

A NIGHT IN A BOAT.

BY S. ANNIE FROST.

"Tell me a story!" Harry said, climbing upon his Uncle Robert's lap; "a story about a bad boy."

"It was one of Harry's greatest pleasures to have Uncle Robert tell him a story, and he liked, the best of all, stories about bad boys."

"A bad boy?" said Uncle Robert. "I have told you about all the bad boys I ever knew, excepting myself."

"Were you a bad boy?" asked Harry.

"Sometimes. Once my bad conduct almost cost my life. Shall I tell you about that?"

"Yes, please."

"I was just seven years old, and my mother had taken a cottage at Bay Bridge for the summer, when this particularly naughty act of mine happened. We were rich folks, but I had lost my father, and was not always as obedient to my mother as I should have been. Our new cottage was very pleasant, and I was very happy there; but one of my greatest pleasures caused my mother so much anxiety that she finally forbade my enjoying it. I was fond, Harry, of going to the river, getting into a row-boat fastened there, and rocking up and down on the water. When the man mother employed to care for the horses had time to row me out upon the river, mother allowed me to go with him, but she strictly forbade my getting into the boat alone. Being, as I have told you, a naughty boy about minding, I still went to the river whenever I could escape from home, and would spend hours rocking in the little row-boat, until I would be missed, discovered and brought home."

"One evening, just before bed-time, I slipped away from the parlor, where mother had company, and ran down to the boat. I remember I had on a very thin linen suit, for the day had been hot, and no hat. I found the boat in its usual place, tied to a stump, and climbed in wetting my feet through a pair of thin kid slippers. Nobody missed me, for the moon rose while I rocked up and down, and at last I fell asleep. When I awoke, cold and shivering, I sat up in the boat, rubbed my eyes, and then gave a great cry of terror; for the boat, instead of being tied fast to the shore, was floating down the river, not very fast, but already in a strange and unfamiliar place. The moonlight made everything around me as plain as if it were day-time, and I was all alone on the water, drifting out to sea."

"When I had slipped out of the drawing-room I had kissed my mother and said good-night, so she thought I was quietly sleeping in my little bed, instead of drifting alone in a little open boat far out upon the water. The current was strong, and I went on and on, past Coney Island, past Rockaway, out, further and further from home, mother and safety."

"I was but seven years old, but I had no thought of help coming to me. I seemed to know that if any of the great steamers I had so often watched were to pass, they would easily ride over my little boat and sink it with me. I cried bitterly, I even stood up in the boat, waving my handkerchief and shouting, but there was no one to hear me. I was suffering, too, from the chill night air, which was like an iced bath through my thin clothes. My feet were numb, my hands aching, and I shivered as I tried to get some warmth by buttoning my little jacket around me."

"It was after midnight, I knew later, and I was sobbing in my boat, when I thought of saying my prayers. God, I thought, would not help a naughty, disobedient boy, who had brought his trouble upon himself by doing what he had been forbidden to do; but if I was drowned I wanted to pray to say I was sorry, very sorry I had been so bad. So I knelt down and said the Lord's Prayer first, then I asked Jesus to forgive me for being a bad boy, and then I prayed to be saved. I prayed with all my childish heart, that God would send some one out upon the water to take me back to my mother. Never would I disobey her again if only I might be saved from drowning."

"I was crouched on my knees in the bottom of the boat, my face hidden on the seat, crying, praying, shivering, when I heard a great shout:

"Robert! Robert!"

"And then I heard oars splashing in the water, and again a shout:

"Robert! Robert!"

"I tried to answer, but my sobe choked

me. I stood up, and could see far behind me, but coming closer and closer, a boat rowed by two men, and in it a lady. When I stood up there was a great shout from the boat:

"There he is! There is your boy, ma'am! And then I knew my own dear mother, who was so afraid of the water that we could never coax her out for a pleasure-sail, but who had come in the night to find her boy. After her friends had left her, she had gone to my little room to find it empty. Frightened, she ran to the river, and found the boat gone! My poor mother, frightened as she was, roused the man-servant, sent for another boat, and insisted in coming herself in search of me."

"Oh! how long it seemed before the boat following mine reached it, and I was lifted into my mother's arms. All alone, drifting on the water, God himself must have guarded me, Harry, and directed my mother to me. I was very ill for a long time, chilled by the night air, and excited by fear into a fever. In my delirium I was always floating away in the open boat, crying and praying, and for many days my mother thought I must die; that she had me only to lose me again. But I did get well at last, and I learned one lesson, Harry—to mind my mother, or those older than myself."

"Were you ever a bad boy again?" Harry asked.

"I am afraid I was, very often; but I was never again a disobedient one."—The Methodist.

HOW LONG IT TAKES TO MAKE A SLICE OF BREAD.

"Oh, I'm so hungry!" cried Johnny, running in from play; "give me some bread and butter quick, mother!" "The bread is baking, so you must be patient," said mother. Johnny waited two minutes, and then asked if it was not done. "No," answered mother, "not quite yet." "It seems to take a long while to make a slice of bread," said Johnny.

"Perhaps you don't know, Johnny, how long it does take," said mother.

"The loaf was begun in the spring"—Johnny opened his eyes wide—"it was doing all summer; it could not be finished till the autumn."

Johnny was glad it was autumn, if it took all that while; for so long a time to a hungry little boy was rather discouraging. "Why?" he cried, drawing a long breath.

"Because God is never in a hurry," said mother. "The farmer dropped his seeds in the ground in April," she went on to say, partly to make waiting time shorter, and more perhaps to drop good seed by the wayside; "but the farmer could not make them grow. All the men in the world could not make a grain of wheat, much less could all the men in the world make a stalk of wheat grow. An ingenious man could make something that looked like wheat. Indeed you often see ladies' bonnets trimmed with sprays of wheat made by the milliners, and at first sight you can hardly tell the difference."

"Put them in the ground and see," said Johnny.

"That would certainly decide. The make-believe wheat would lie as still as bits of iron. The real grain would soon make a stir, because the real seeds have life within them, and God only gives life. The farmer, then, neither makes the corn nor makes the corn grow; but he drops it into the ground and covers it up (that is his part), and then leaves it to God. God takes care of it. It is he who sets mother earth nursing it with her warm juices. He sends the rain, he makes the sun to shine, he makes it spring up, first the tender shoot, and then the blades; and it takes May and June and July and August, with all their fair and foul weather, to set up the stalks, throw out the leaves, and ripen the ear. If little boys are starving, the corn grows no faster. God does not hurry his work; he does all things well."

By this time Johnny lost all his impatience. He was thinking, "Well," he said at last, "that's why we pray to God, 'Give us this day our daily bread.' Before now I thought it was you, mother, that gave us daily bread; and now I see it is God. We should not have a slice, if it were not for God, would we, mother?"—Child at Home.

Seventeen Methodist preachers belonging to one family, two great-grandchildren, ten grandchildren, and five children of the late Luther Peck, of Syracuse, were to have a gathering at the residence of Mrs. Bishop Peck, in that city, on October 23.

WATER FOR THE THIRSTY.

It was a time of great drought. The rain had not fallen for months, and the small river upon which all the people depended had run dry. There was much distress on all sides, as day by day the sun shone bright and strong on the dry, parched land; there was scarcely a blade of grass to be seen, and the flowers were withered and fell at the slightest touch.

The king of the country, hearing of the sufferings of his people, sent his servants through the land, to tell all the people that he had a spring of fresh water, and that any who came to him might have as much as they wanted; he would be willing and glad to give it them for nothing, were they rich or poor, young or old. And more, he told his servants to urge and press upon the people to come, as it was a joy to him to give freely and fully to all.

Eagerly the servants went on their errand, and proclaimed the king's message far and wide. Some of the people went at once and gladly accepted the boon, rejoicing in the abundant supply of clear, fresh water. But some feared to go, not believing the king would be as good as his word, and so they stayed away, thirsty and weary, longing for refreshment and yet not going to the only place where they could get it. Some who were rich would not take the water unless they could pay for it, as they did not like to be put on a level with all the rest of the people. But the king would not accept their money; he offered the water freely to all.

Others went with small jugs, imagining themselves to be very humble, and fearing to presume on the king's kindness, forgetful that love likes to be used.

Two men, who were almost fainting with thirst, met a child looking fresh and bright, carrying a large jug, that was almost too heavy for her to lift, brimming over with sparkling water.

"Where did you get that water, little one?"

"From the king; he said we might all go."

"But if we all go, there might not be enough water; the supply might cease," said the men.

"It's a spring—it never runs dry," was the confident answer of the child.

"But perhaps the king wouldn't like our going so often?"

"Have you tried?" she said. "Come for as much as you want."

"But you take such a large jug."

"He said 'as much as you want.' And I am hot and thirsty, and dusty, oftentimes. So I go often and with a large jug, and he always fills it."—The Christian.

NOT ASHAMED.

Justice McLean, of Ohio, heard a minister preach. He had been a skeptic, and this minister spoke to him in such a way as convinced him of the truth of the Christian religion. He was led to see how Christ had died for him, and was born again. He went home. He hardly got there before he said: "We are going to have family prayer; let us go into the drawing room and pray together." "But," said his wife, "there are four lawyers in there; they have come to attend court. Let us go to the kitchen to have prayers." Judge McLean replied: "It's the first time I ever invited the Lord to my house, and I don't propose to invite him to the kitchen by any means." He went into those lawyers and said: "My friends, I have found out that Jesus died on the cross for me, I have given myself to him, and now I propose to invite him to my house. You may do as you please; stay or go. But I am now to make my first prayer in my own house." They said they would like very much to stay, and did stay. From that day Judge McLean lived a consistent Christian life, and died a Christian death.—Hammond.

Miss Robinson (better known as the "Soldier's Friend") has at last succeeded in establishing a soldiers' institute at Portsmouth, notwithstanding the opposition with which she has been met. It will be remembered that the War Office, after giving land for the proposed institute, withdrew the grant on the ground that a Bible-class which it was proposed to hold would militate against the success of the institute. The necessary funds have now been raised by private subscription, and what will be in fact a soldiers' club, containing nearly sixty rooms, will shortly be partially opened.—London Freeman.

TEMP... As "fro... peneth... "As in... heart of... WORTHY... As you... and a frie... you will... in some p... intellige... I like... nics, tes... gathering... strict tem... old and y... men and... enjoy the... or any int... Vesper... ed at the... visit to R... Rawdon, ... a right-he... mittee wa... for the en... take cha... having sa... spread in... room, to c... dialogues... es followe... by membe... by some o... time to cl... some fitte... By the... there is a... two divis... Vesper, a... Division, ... boast that... in various... outdo each... kind of ri... wish there... As in d... a fratern... the appoi... our proce... headed by... brothers... and a n... followed a... waggons, ... suited th... cracking... close conv... you what... ture prosp... Gore we... hung up... ception, a... tifully spr... our keen... sion to the... and flags... three hear... Vesper Di... usual on... and we bo... if proper... a benefice... would say... county, G... No h... Th... Of T... Fic... From w... amount of... the manuf... of rags, a... eyes of t... saith, "I... with rags... made of t... even thou... judge."... SMOKING... lately pat... dandy wit... In the ped... operated... small cigar... er; and w... the dandy... until the... An inter... left alone... recently p... liness, "G... I'll go to... some moun...