

The Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, N. S., JULY 15, 1874.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1874.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, July 19th, 1874.

The Leper Healed.—Mark i. 38-45.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." Matt. viii. 2.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 40-42.

SUMMARY.—At Christ's touch and word, all uncleanness removes.

ANALYSIS.—I. The preaching tour. vs. 38, 39. II. The request granted. vs. 40-42. III. The cleansed man charged. vs. 43, 44. IV. His conduct. vs. 45.

EXPOSITION.—Connection.—The expulsion of the unclean spirit, of which our last lesson treated, was in the synagogue at Capernaum. The Saviour after that went to the house of Simon, whom he had called to follow him, and there healed Simon's wife's mother—from which it appears that Peter had a wife—a fact that stands ever as a rebuke and condemnation of Papists in forbidding their "priests" to marry. Subsequently, Christ went through the villages of Galilee, to teach and preach. As he is about to start on this tour our lesson finds him.

Verse 38.—He said unto them. To Simon [Peter] and his brother Andrew, and to James and John. vs. 36, 16, 19. It was the day after his healing labors in Peter's house. vs. 29-34. He had risen very early, before the dawn, and before men were astir, in order to have time to renew his spiritual strength, and to satisfy his spiritual cravings, in solitary communion with his God. Let us go into the next towns. The neighboring towns, villages, or small cities—literally, "city villages"—the centres of population in the region. That I may preach there also. As well as here in Capernaum. This city is my home, but my work is not to be confined to it. Christ was conscious of the extent of his mission. For therefore came I forth. Came forth from the Father into the world, and especially into public life. Comp. Luke iv. 43; John xviii. 37. He does not refer, as some claim, to his coming forth from Peter's house, and from the city.

Verse 39.—And he preached. The Greek expresses the thought that he continued in the work of preaching, that is, spent his time in that as his business. In their synagogues. Literally, "into their synagogues"—going into them as a herald, or heralding into them the message—causing the good news to enter. Throughout all Galilee. Literally, "into all Galilee"—bearing the tidings into every part of it. And cast out devils. Or, rather, demons. There is only one devil, and wherever the plural "devils" appears in our English Bible, it should read demons, as in the original. From Matt. iv. 23-25 it seems that he performed multitudes of cures, of every sort, in this excursion, and that his fame extended throughout Syria, which bordered on Galilee to the north.

Verse 40.—For other accounts of this miracle, see Matt. viii. 2-4; Luke v. 12-15. From Matthew's account, it seems to have been performed immediately after the preaching of the "Sermon on the Mount." There came a leper to him. As Luke says "one full of leprosy"—an extreme case. This foul disease, not uncommon in the East, was utterly incurable, especially at such a stage. Num. xii. 12; 2 Kings v. 7. For a description of it, and of its treatment, read Lev. xiii. Beseeching him and kneeling down to him. Matthew says that, having come, "he worshipped him;" and Luke, that he "fell on his face and begged him." The words which follow show that he thoroughly believed in Christ as one having either in his own person, or at his command, Divine power. If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. There is in the leper's mind no doubt as to Christ's power. Of this he was assured by the miracles already seen. And though an extreme case of leprosy was equivalent to death, yet this man was sure that such an one as Jesus had power even over death. "Thou canst." "Thine is the power." "If thou wilt." Ah, but wilt thou? Why should Jesus heal him? What claim had he on Jesus? Many a man now goes to Christ with just such a feeling, and just such a cry of the heart. He knows that he is literally full of the leprosy of sin; that he bears about in himself eternal death; that he is thereby excluded from the city of God, and the people of God.

Verse 41.—And Jesus, moved with com-

passion. Not displeased with such doubt as the leper's, but only with such as came from some secret or open hostility to him. Such was the doubt, unbelief, and disbelief of the Scribes and Pharisees. Christ saw in the leper the man, and for human grief he had ever deep and tender sympathy, because he knew the worth of a man—a human soul—however conditioned outwardly. Put forth his hand and touched him. The touch of a leper, as of a dead body, made one ceremonially unclean, but nothing could make Him really unclean at whose touch uncleanness itself at once and visibly vanished, no more to return; nor ceremonially unclean, who was the fulfilment of all ceremonial laws. Death could not pollute Him who was—not simply who had, but who was—the Life. To the touch Christ added the word, explaining the meaning of the touch. I will, be thou clean. Says Trench, "ratifying and approving his utterance of faith, by granting his request in the very words wherein the request had been embodied." This teaches us, when we do favors, to do them in the kindest, most considerate way. A gift is doubled in value if rightly given. There are many like instances in our Lord's ministry.

Verse 42.—As soon as he had spoken, the leprosy departed from him. With the touch and word went also the power. The cure was instantaneous. It was also complete. He was cleansed. That is, from his disease; the man becomes at once "a new creature," and takes his place in the city of God and among his people. In him now is the eternal life.

Verse 43, 44.—Straitly charged. Literally, "being angry at," or "having threatened." The original is very strong, indicating great urgency in the tone and manner of Christ, and is translated in Mark xiv. 5, "murmured against"; in John xi. 33, "groaned." So also the Greek word translated here sent him away, is literally "cast him out," that is, hurried him out of the throng, to be off and away. See thou say nothing to any man. That is, as to this cure—who did it, and how it was done. Say nothing of it at present, until you shall have done what I now further bid you. Go thy way, [to Jerusalem] show thyself to the priests, etc. For the Jewish law here referred to see Lev. xiv. 4-7. Compare also Num. xix. 6, 13, 18, which passages show that the uncleanness of leprosy was that of death. For a testimony unto them. Unto the people, not "against the priests." Why did Christ thus send him away with these injunctions? Several reasons have been suggested. For example: Christ did not wish to have a needless excitement raised. He would have the Jewish authorities themselves examine the man, and in pronouncing him clean become witnesses of the genuineness of the miracle.

Verse 45.—But [instead of obeying] he went out, and began to publish it much. If he did this despite the injunctions, what might he not have done without them! Here was disobedience, which we condemn. And yet the man we do not condemn, as we would if malice, rather than repressless gratitude, had urged him on. Jesus could no more openly enter into the city. The man did just what he meant not to do—hindered rather than helped the Master. So much for taking his own way, rather than Christ's.

QUESTIONS.—Where did our last lesson leave Jesus? vs. 21. Where does this lesson find him? vs. 35. How much time had passed? vs. 29, 35.

Vs. 38, 39. Who were now with Christ? vs. 36, 16, 19. What did he say to them? In what province were these towns? vs. 39.

Vs. 40. What is a leper? Lev. xiii. 2, 3. What does Luke say of this one? Luke v. 12. Why may we regard the leper as representing a sinner? How did this leper come to Christ? What did he say? What did this show as to his view of Christ? What as to his feelings concerning himself? Do you see anything in his conduct or feelings to blame? How should a sinner go to Christ?

Vs. 41. What was Christ's feeling toward him? What did he do? What is said in Lev. xiii. 45, 46? What did Christ say?

Vs. 42. What was the effect? What is said in 1 John i. 7?

Vs. 43, 44. What did Christ say to the man? Why this?

Vs. 45. What did the man do? The reason? The effect? The lesson?

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. Scripture Catechism, 198, 199.

SUNDAY, July 26th, 1874.—The Publican called.—Mark ii. 13-17.

"Have you read my last speech?" asked a political haranguer, of a wit. "I hope so," was the reply.

Youths' Department.

For the Christian Messenger.

A TRIP TO LAKE MAJOR.

Published by request, but without the permission of the writer.

Riverbank is an exceedingly pleasant place to spend a few days or weeks, snatched from the never-ceasing whirl and bustle of the city. But if your visit can only be measured by days, let me assure you that you will return to your home with delightful memories enough. Yet underlying these, will remain sensations similar to those of a dyspeptic epicure, who under the promptings of a hidden monitor, arises from the well-spread board with an appetite but half assuaged.

Riverbank is situated about six and a half miles from Dartmouth, in a narrow vale of great natural beauty, whose length is traversed by a shallow and slowly moving river, bearing on its surface numberless white-petalled lilies, with their yellow centres rivaling the noon sunshine of an August day. These are encircled by their equally countless (only more so) round glossy leaves, much resembling the plates on a breakfast table pushed towards the butter-dish, patiently waiting their turn to be supplied. (This bona-fide original and sweetly domestic simile is kindly placed at the disposal of writers of light, readable articles in morning papers.)

The mountain rising rather abruptly from the brink of this meandering stream, is clad with evergreens, whose sombre hading enhance the beauty of the lighter green foliage of the few hard wood trees scattered among them.

A pleasant family circle was gathered around the breakfast table at Riverbank on the morning of Friday, August the 18th, A. D., 1871. (As the said table was a square one, may this not be taken as a practical demonstration that the circle may be squared?) I merely throw out the suggestion.

The head of the household speaks, "Who are going to Lake Major?" Breathless silence. The children looked expectant and excited; the young people (this division includes neither the married, nor the children), appear astonishingly calm and indifferent, but a very observant person might have caught furtive looks passing among them which plainly indicated their unalterable resolution to go together, or die in the attempt. Silence is broken by our hostess; "How many will the boat hold, John?" John replies "Twelve." Chorus of incredulous "Oh's."

General discussion ensues. At last the house rises with the understanding that the question might be laid on the table until dinner-time, leaving all in a state of delightful uncertainty.

The gentlemen prepare for their drive to town in great seeming haste. The carriage presently comes round from the stables piled up with children, and driven triumphantly by a boy of eight. While the children tumble and scramble out, each in his or her way, warm embraces are exchanged by the youngest of the married couples, the others looking on philosophically. At last they take their seats in the carriage which moves off after a reasonable amount of leave-taking, considering that this ceremony occurs every morning.

This matutinal excitement over, the women folk disperse. The morning passes swiftly in the performance of household duties, and other employments incidental to a country residence.

One o'clock soon draws near, and our eyes are directed towards the road by which the returning carriage is to approach the house. Soon the sound of the wheels is heard, and all gather at the top of the bank to welcome the guests—a sister of our host, and her stalwart son.

We shortly are seated at the dinner table; everybody's face beaming with satisfaction, and laughter indulged in to an unlimited extent, especially when a letter is produced and is passed from hand to hand until it reaches a young lady, whose sparkling eyes and blushing cheeks denote an unusually friendly interest in the writer.

The breakfast table discussion was resumed, and the suggestion by one that the older portion of the company go on the lake that day, and the younger the next, was listened to with approval, and adopted unanimously.

Does not every one know by experience the excitement and ridiculous bustle of the last few minutes before starting on an expedition of this kind? How every one calls to every one else directions which

each one quite disregards, excepting a few conscientious individuals.

Cries of "Come Mary," "Do make haste," "John don't wear those boots, they'll be ruined," "Where's the—? Don't leave that behind," "How much longer are we to wait?" "Oh! what a hat!" "Who's got the rudder?" "Bring the cushions Louie," "What a guy you look!"—strike the ear with a pleasing variety.

At last we set off in procession, the children accompanying us to the lake, carrying various cushions, baskets and shawls.

After following the road for a few hundred yards, we turn off into a far preferable, wood-bordered, grass-covered path. We cross several brooks, pass three young girls sitting picture-quely under the trees each with a book, and presently we emerge from the wood path into another road, and from that follow a somewhat irregular foot-path down to the shore of the lake.

We embark with no serious accident, beyond that of carrying off a gentleman whose wife had at the last declined going, and who stood on the shore with the children watching us. Grave doubts immediately presented themselves to the mind of this gentleman, as to whether indulgence in such a course as this might not be attended with disastrous consequences; and wisely resolving that if the perils of the deep must be braved, to encounter them in the company of his wife, he made known to us his desire to be rowed ashore, which we immediately complied with.

Lake Major lies north and south, nearly parallel with Halifax harbour, and is narrow in proportion to its length, which is seven or eight miles. Its bottom is curiously uneven, the rocks in some places touching the surface of the water, and in others the eye cannot fathom the shadowy depths.

We were told that the lake is of glacial formation, which accounts for the masses of rock piled up in it.

It is narrow at first, yet deep, but as we near the Devil's Punch-bowl, the depth of water grows less and less, and great care needs to be taken by the steersman that the boat does not strike a rock or run aground. The large sheet of water representing the vessel holding his Satanic Majesty's refreshment, is enclosed by the shores in a circular form, except where a narrow passage gives egress to the lake proper.

General timidity is exhibited here by the ladies, which, we might remark in passing, affords an excellent opportunity for the gentle and fond words of reassurance, which novel-writers would have us believe the lords of creation so gladly give utterance to on occasions like this, but experience compels us to state that in the present instance, no dependence could be placed on such assertions.

The lake safely reached, our boat shot forward swiftly by the propelling power of our oarsmen. The depth of the shadows drew exclamations of delight and admiration from all. The unstirred air left the water smooth as a mirror, and the stones on the shore, with the trees, wild flowers and shrubs, were so reflected that the point where the water touched the shore seemed the sharp angle of a wedge, from the under-side of which seemed to hang down-wards the motionless trees, the bright yellow, white, and pink flowers, each with every leaf, spray or tendril as distinct and defined as if really growing there.

Then the rocks on the shore appeared to encrust the edge of the roof of this marvellous green cave, with every point and edge sharpened and magnified by the crystal water. Mere words can never do justice to the glorious scene. Once gazed upon, the remembrance will last for years.

The loveliness of it all recalls this verse to the mind;

"If God hath made this world so fair, Where sin and death abound, How beautiful beyond compare Must Paradise be found!"

Even with all the inexpressible beauties that God has revealed to us here through nature, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for those who love Him."

As we passed up the lake, we presently arrived near a group of rocks; one immense one resembling a gigantic lounging chair, is designated Satan's arm-chair, and opposite this on the other side of the lake lies a mass of black stone appearing above the water, which by a very strong effort of imagination might be brought to resemble some body lying in state; this, some one in a fit of aberration has named after the personage whom we have been assured "goes up and down the world seeking whom he may devour."

Leaving these celebrities behind us, we after a short interval arrive at our destination—Westbrook.

Here a noisy rushing stream comes tumbling down the hill-side over and around the mossy stones, until it reaches the lake into which it pours itself with a vast amount of fuss and excitement. Here a little way from the shore, and within sound and sight of the brook we found a camp made of branches and the bark of trees, which had probably been erected by men who had come there for fishing or shooting.

The thick foliage of the lofty beeches excluded the sun very effectually, so shawls and cushions were disposed of within, and at the door of the camp, and our merry party seated themselves and proceeded to discuss the bountiful refreshments provided. Time passes too quickly to allow of any extended explorations of this beautiful spot. With reluctance we turn to leave it, and embarking once more, our homeward way is taken, and the echoes resound with our shouts, singing and laughter.

As the hush of the twilight hour falls upon us, the jests and merriment cease, the conversation gives place to a calm and thoughtful silence, which is only broken by the pleasant sound of the water as it falls from the oar, and the distant faint call of a bird to its mate. The resting time of nature has come, and its sweet influence falls on us all. The shadows grow deeper and weird-like. The young moon has a twin sister in the calm still lake, where also are reflected the many-tinted sunset clouds, which might well represent the tapestry hung before the gates of the King's Palace.

The shallows are safely passed, and then we hear the voices of the children, who have come to meet us, ringing out clear as bells on the still evening air. As we step out of the boat we feel assured that this visit to Lake Major will last as a very pleasant memory for a long time to come.

THE CHAINED FOX.

A fox that had been caught young, was kept chained in a yard, and became so tame that fowls and geese approached it without fear.

"Pretty thing!" said its mistress. "It does no harm. It is cruel to keep it chained."

So she unbuckled its collar, and let it run about. Scarcely, however, had she turned her back, than she heard a great clucking from her poultry. Looking around, she saw the fox scampering off with her plump, red pullet, thrown over his shoulder.

"You treacherous, ungrateful little villain!" cried the woman, "and I thought you were so good."

"So I was, mistress," answered the fox, "as long as I was chained." There are many little foxes that need chaining. There is the "put-off studying-your-lessons-to-the-last-minute" fox, that runs off with your good marks at school; Master Reynard "speaking-without-thinking," which is always getting its owner into trouble; and Sly-boots "nobody-will-see-you-do-it." Chain them up! Chain them up! that's the only way to manage them.

THE TWO ANGELS.

A traveler who spent some time in Turkey, relates a beautiful parable which was told him by a dervish, and it seems even more beautiful than Sterne's beautiful figures of the accusing spirit and recording angel. "Every man," said the dervish, "has two angels, one on his right shoulder and one on his left. When he does anything good, the angel on his right shoulder writes it down and seals it, because what is done well is done forever. When he does evil he waits till midnight; if before that time the man bows his head and exclaims: 'Gracious Allah I have sinned, forgive me!' the angel rubs out the record, but if not, at midnight he seals it, and the beloved angel on the right shoulder weeps."

A QUAKER GAOL CHAPLAIN.—The American newspapers announce the appointment of a member of the Society of Friends (Mr. M. W. Painter) as "Moral Instructor" in the Northern State Prison of Indiana, at Michigan City. This office, we suppose, corresponds to that of chaplain in English gaols.

Faith looks to the word of the thing, hope to the thing of the word.—Adams.

Flattery corrupts both the receiver and the giver; and adulation is not of more service to the people than to kings.