

The Christian Messenger.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1875.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, September 26th, 1857.—REVIEW. Christ Rejected.—John xi. 47-53.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Isaiah liii. 3.

ANALYSIS.—I. Council called. Vs. 47. II. Reasons. Vs. 47, 48. III. Speech of Caiaphas. Vs. 49-52. IV. Christ's death determined. Vs. 53.

NOTE.—The effect produced by the resurrection of Lazarus was immense. Its facts were so public, coherent, and harmonious, as to actually compel the belief of many of the Jews in Jesus Christ. Vs. 45. The report of it brought many from Jerusalem to see the risen man. Chap. xii. 9, 17, 18. Its effect upon the ecclesiastical rulers was immediate, but, alas! unhappy. The most skeptical of them could not deny the fact of the miracle (vs. 47), and yet its popular effect was so great as to force them to call a council, whose deliberations ended in a solemn resolve that public safety demanded the death of Jesus. Before this, unbelieving Jews, both in Jerusalem (chap. v. 16-18) and in Galilee (Mark iii. 6), had sought to slay him. Officers sent to arrest him had failed. Chap. vii. 45, 46. Men had been excommunicated who had called him Christ. Chap. ix. 22, 34-38. But not until now had the Sanhedrim, in formal session, determined that Christ should die. This seems chiefly to have been the basis of their action: "If we let him alone, all will believe on him." A rejected and doomed Saviour, at the hands of his own countrymen, is surely an affecting lesson for a Sunday-school review. How true the words, He came unto his own, and his own received him not! John i. 11.

EXPOSITION.—The Review.—Our lesson to-day is entitled "Christ Rejected." Thanks to God, and joy, that besides the rejecters there were believers. Chief among them the eleven, and joined as one in honor the few women of heroic faith that stand prominent to view in the closing scenes of the gospel, central figures in the picture, all aglow with "the light of life."

Verse 47.—Then. Therefore. What is now to be narrated was done in consequence of the report of the resurrection of Lazarus carried to the Jews, as related in verse 46. Those who carried that report did it in the spirit of mischief, and were, of course, of the party which in our last lesson we heard asking why Christ could not have saved Lazarus. Gathered the chief-priests and the Pharisees a council. Those who had held the office, the heads of the twenty-four courses of priests, and some others, were included under the name chief-priests. Here it is those priests that belonged to the national council, or Sanhedrim, named first and with the Pharisees, as these two classes of members were most active in this particular business. "A council" is really the Sanhedrim, which name in Greek means, "sitting together." Said to have originated in the institution of Moses, Num. xi. 24, but comes to notice and importance after the exile. "What do we?" With the meaning of our phrase, "What are we to do?" It shows that the council, as a body, had long before this settled solidly down to the determination to give no place or chance to Christ, and to allow him no hold or recognition as a teacher. They were to watch him, somehow anyhow, by means fair or foul, peaceable or violent, to keep or hurl him from power, as expediency or necessity dictated. Mark the question, What are we to do? For this man doeth many miracles. They admit it among themselves. They might deny it publicly, or, if admitting it, refer the works to Santanic agency. The raising of Lazarus was such a miracle, and so wrought, as to crown all preceding works, the most dangerous one performed. It carried conviction to many who had never before yielded.

Verse 48.—If we let him thus alone. Allow him to be at large, teaching and working. The council can hardly be said to have let him quite alone. They had done everything they dared to bring him to grief. All men will believe on him. The new miracle was raising anew the tide of popular favor, and would do so more unless prompt measures were taken to repress it. The Romans shall come, etc. Possibly a real fear that Christ might have some political ambition that would bring down on the Jews the wrath of Rome. The "place" was Jerusalem, as the national

capital, and especially the city of the Temple and of the national Temple worship. That place, especially that Temple, was the bond as well as badge of national existence.

Verse 49.—And one of them named Caiaphas, etc. High priest of the Jews under Tiberius during our Lord's public ministry, and at the time of his condemnation and crucifixion. His being priest "that same year," is mentioned because that year was so memorable, and the office of high-priest that year was so connected with Christ's death. Ye know nothing at all. Not very complimentary, but nearer the truth in this matter than he or they suspected. They were all "stone blind." He intends to chide them for their slowness in deciding on Christ's death. "What are we to do?" Why, there is only one thing to be done. It is so clearly the expedient thing that you are fools not to see it.

Verse 50.—Expedient for us, that one man should die, etc. The nation's existence imperiled, and that by one man. Of course, then, put that man away, and save the nation. What room for hesitation?

Verse 51.—This he spake not of himself. John's comment. The priest spoke "of himself" in one view, but in John's it was of God. But being high-priest, etc. There was a fitness that the one who was in that office, all unworthy of it as he was, should somehow, at such a time, be made to speak forth the supreme purpose of God for man now on the eve of its accomplishment, and as this man Caiaphas held no such relation to God that he could consciously and willingly receive and communicate that purpose, he is made to do it not less clearly, nay, more strikingly, without either willing or even knowing it.

Verse 52.—And not for that nation only, etc. John has touched upon the extent of the Atonement in his interpretation of the unconscious prophecy of Caiaphas; and he goes on to show that though only "that nation," the Jews, was mentioned, yet the true Israel was to be gathered from all nations, and the real comprehension of Christ's love and work was the race.

Verse 53.—Then. Or rather therefore. There was no thought of breaking his power save by taking his life, because at that meeting of the council the desperate resolve had been made once for all, firmly and finally. From that day. The day of that meeting and decision. They took counsel together for to put him to death. Not whether to do it. They were past that; but how, and when, and on what pretence. Think of the supreme court of a nation holding frequent sessions to compass such an object in such a way! Justice mocked, banished from her own temple, and in her seat Injustice sitting and holding sway. Jesus "came unto his own, and his own received him not."

QUESTIONS.—Review Questions.—What did John the Baptist say was the office of the Lamb of God? John i. 29. What miracle was performed in Cana of Galilee? John ii. 1-11. What truth was taught Nicodemus? John iii. 3. What truth was taught at Jacob's well? John iv. 14. What miracle was wrought at the pool of Bethesda? Chap. v. 9. After what miracle did Jesus speak of himself as the "Bread of Life"? Chap. vi. 10, 11. After what, as the "Light of the World"? Chap. ix. 1. What have we learned about our Good Shepherd? Chap. x. 11. What great miracle did we study in our last lesson? Did it produce any popular effect?

Vs. 47. What was this council? How could they reject Jesus and yet not doubt his miracle? Ans. Possibly they thought that impostors could not do the same. Ex. vii. 14; Matt. xxiv. 4.

Vs. 48. How did they think the success of Jesus would endanger their interests?

Vs. 49. Who was Caiaphas? Under what emperor? Why speak particularly of that year?

Vs. 50. Of what expediency did Caiaphas not think? What Scripture was thereby verified? Ps. lxxvi. 10. Cf. Gen. i. 18-20.

Vs. 51. Was Caiaphas aware of the full meaning of this prophecy? Will the Jews ever be converted? Rom. xi. 25.

Vs. 53. What does David say of this taking counsel to kill Jesus? Psalm ii. 2. Cf. Acts iv. 26. Has anybody rejected Jesus besides the Jews?

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, October 3rd, 1875.—Jesus lifted up.—John xii. 23-33.

"Man proposes, but God disposes" is the old way of putting the proverb, but a colored minister lately put it thus in a prayer: "Man is able to appoint but you are able to disappoint."

Let friendship creep gently to a height: if it rush to it, it may soon run itself out of breath.

Youths' Department.

JOHN AND THE POSTAGE-STAMP.

John was a boy who "lived out." Every week he wrote to his mother, who lives on a small rocky farm among the hills. One day John picked an old envelope from the kitchen wood-box, and saw that the postage-stamp on it was not touched by the postmaster's stamp, to show that it had done its duty, and was henceforth useless. "The postmaster missed his aim then," said John, "and left the stamp as good as new. I'll use it myself."

He moistened it at the nose of the teakettle, and carefully pulled the stamp off.

"No," said conscience; "for that would be cheating. The stamp has been on one letter; it ought not to carry another."

"It can carry another," said John, "because, you see, there is no mark to prove it worthless. The post-office will not know."

"But you know," said conscience, "and that is enough. It is enough. It is not honest to use it a second time. It is a little matter to be sure; but it is cheating. God looks for principle. It is the quality of every action which He judges by."

"But no one will know it," said John, faintly.

"No one!" cried conscience. "God will know it; that is enough; and He, you know, desires truth in the inward parts."

"Yes," cried all the best part of John's character. "yes, it is cheating to use the postage the second time, and I will not do it."

John tore it in two, and gave it to the winds. The boy won a glorious victory. I hope he will grow up and be a good man and a follower of the Lord Jesus.

GOOD MORNING.

Don't forget to say "good morning!" say it to your parents, your schoolmates, your teachers—and say it cheerfully and with a smile; it will do your friends good. There's a kind of inspiration in every "good morning," heartily and smilingly spoken, that helps to make hope fresher and work lighter! It seems really to make the morning good, and to be a prophecy of a good day to come after it. And if this be true of the "good morning," it is so also of all kind, heartsome greetings; they cheer the discouraged, rest the tired one, and somehow make the wheels of life run more smoothly. Be liberal with them, then, and let no morning pass, however dark and gloomy it may be, that you do not help at least to brighten by your smiles and cheerful words.

SUBDUING A BULL.

A writer in the New York Ledger says:—One of the most thrilling scenes ever witnessed in the amphitheatre at Cadiz transpired in the autumn of 1841. I was in the city at the time, but was not present at the theatre. The circumstances were related to me by a friend. It will be understood that the really thrilling scenes on such occasions are not of blood. Blood is too common a thing at a bull fight, for rivers of it, be it brute or human, to thrill the ordinary audience. Something out of the ordinary line is what transpired on the occasion to which I refer.

Notice had been posted in all the public places that on a certain day the bull called El Moro (the Moor) would be introduced into the arena, and that when he should have been goaded to the utmost fury a young girl would appear and reduce the animal to quiet subjection. The people of Cadiz had heard of El Moro as the most magnificent bull ever brought into the city, and it soon became known that the girl thus advertised to appear in so strange and daring a part was a peasant girl of Espera, who had petted the bull, and fed it and cared for it during the years of its growth.

On the appointed day, as might be supposed, the vast amphitheatre was filled to overflowing with an anxious eager crowd. Two bulls had been killed and dragged away, and the flourish of trumpets announced the coming of the hero of the day. With a deep, terrific roar, El Moro entered upon the scene. He was truly magnificent—a bovine monarch—black and glossy, with eyes of fire, dilating nostrils, and wicked-looking horns. The picadores attacked him warily, and hurled their banderillos (small, dart-like javelins, ornamented with ribbons, and intended to goad and infuriate). The bull had killed three horses off-hand, and had received eight banderillos in his neck and shoulders, when, upon

a given signal, the picadores and matadores suddenly withdrew, leaving the infuriated beast alone in his wild paroxysm of wrath.

Presently a soft, musical note, like the piping of a lark, was heard, and directly afterward a girl, not more than 15 years of age, with the tasteful garb of an Andalusian peasant, and with a pretty face, sprang lightly into the arena, approaching the bull fearlessly, at the same time calling his name—

"Moro! Moro! Ya voy!"

At the first sound of the sweet voice the animal had ceased his fury and turned towards the place whence it came, and when he saw the girl he plainly manifested pleasure. She came to his head and put forth her hand, which he licked with his tongue. Then she sang a low, sweet song, at the same time caressing the animal by patting him on the forehead, and while she sang the suffering monarch kneeled at her feet. Then she stooped and gently removed the cruel banderillos, after which, with her arm around El Moro's neck, she led him towards the gate of the torril.

Until now the multitude had been spell-bound, but when they saw the gentle mistress triumphant a shout went up that shook the very walls. In an instant the bull turned, the flame again in his eye, but the girl very soon subdued him, and led him out from the arena—a prize which she was to carry back with her to her home.

PUNCTUALITY AT CHURCH.

If the pew be not as punctual as the pulpit—if there be steps heard in the aisle from the earliest whisper of the organ to the announcement of the text, and the sound of opening doors keep time with the footfall of every new addition to the audience—there is disturbance of the quiet, not only of the minister, but of every devout breast that is turned toward him. All are conscious of the interruption; and one of the number who has most need to be calm and collected, must eminently suffer. Every new-comer must affect, to some extent, his concentration of mind. In his efforts for the right discharge of his sacred duties, every footstep cannot but disturb his attention. The effect will be different in proportion to temperament; one will be affected more than another; but to all it must be more or less a disturbance. It may be thought to be enough to be in time for the chief part of the service, and particularly for the sermon; but if, on the part of the pew, we make bold to claim for prayer and praise an importance not second to that of the discourse, the pulpit will not gainsay the assertion. It will concur in the argument that supplication and psalmody, chapter and chant, heighten the value and deepen the emphasis of the word of exhortation. The promote that receptive frame and attitude of mind which the preacher seeks to possess in the pew. The service which he conducts does not consist of unconnected parts; it is a compacted unity. From the first syllable to the last what passes is complete. Every word of morning and evening service has its meaning and intention, and we should deny ourselves no portion of either. We should study the harmony of the whole, and make its quiet a common enjoyment. It is a lyric piece, whose music should flow unbroken to the end, and when the last word of the benediction has fallen with its sweet influence on our ears let us rest for a moment in hallowed silence, that the thoughts and feeling awakened and kindled within us may sink deep into our hearts, and remain with us through the whole. We should neither be slow to come nor in haste to go.—The London Inquirer.

"POOR" LAURA BRIDGMAN.

A writer in the Christian Union describes a visit to Laura Bridgman, Dr Howe's pupil,—who was born blind, deaf, and dumb,—at her home near the Institution for the Blind at South Boston:—

If any one supposes that by reason of her deprivation she is queer or awkward in person or manners, he is altogether in error. There is nothing at all singular in her appearance. When I entered the parlor a member of the family with whom she lives was playing on the piano, and close beside her, on a low seat, there was a very slight, very erect, quiet self-possessed looking girl, who seemed to be listening to the music, while her hands were busy over some crocheting or similar work. She would have been taken for a guest who was nimbly fashioning some pretty article while being entertained with music. The expression of her face was bright and interesting, and one watching her satisfied look would have

been slow to believe that she did not hear. The green shade over her eyes indicated that she was one of the blind. She had on a brown dress, a blue ribbon at the neck, a gold ring and chain, and a watch or locket in her belt; a neatly attired, genteel, ladylike person, looking about thirty-five, though her age is really not far from forty-four, with soft, brown hair, smooth and fine, a well shaped head, fair complexion, and handsome features. That was Laura. Dr. Howes spoke of her as "comely and refined in form and attitude, graceful in motion, and positively handsome in features," and of her "expressive face," which, indeed, in sensibility and intelligence, is above instead of below the average. As soon as the information was conveyed to her that she had a visitor from her native State who knew people in the town where her nearest kindred live, she came swiftly across the room, leaving her work on the centre-table as she passed it, and grasped my hand, laughing with the eagerness of a child. Then she sat down face to face with the lady who has charge of her, and commenced an animated conversation, by the manual alphabet, easily understood by one who has practised it; but the sleight-of-hand by which the fingers of the friendly hostess, manipulating on Laura's slender wrists, communicated with that living consciousness shut in there without one perfect sense except to taste and touch, was something mysterious, inscrutable, to my duller sense. Yet that the communication was definite, quick, incisive, so to speak, was manifest enough, for Laura's face beamed, and she was all alert. Partly by letters and partly by signs she said a great deal to me. She "ought to be at home to be company for mother," she said; and once or twice she fashioned the word "mam-ma" very distinctly on her lips. With regard to this vocal expression Dr. Howe says:—"She has attained such faculty for talking in the manual alphabet that I regret that I did not teach her to speak by vocal organs of regular speech." She asked if I knew a member of her family now dead and said, "That was a long year after Carl died." She seemed brimming over with things to tell me, and wanted me to know about her teaching some of the blind girls to sew, which is part of her daily employment in the school near by, and which she takes great pride in, threading the needles and making her pupils pick out their work if it is not done nicely. She's a good seamstress herself, does fancy work, and can run a sewing machine. Next she caught hold of my hand and led me up three flights of stairs to her room to show me her things, but the first movement was to take me to the window, where she patted on the glass and signified that I should see what a pleasant prospect there was from it. And there she, who had never seen or heard, waited by my side in great content while I looked and listened. The sky was blue, with white clouds floating over it, and birds were singing. It was a perfect April day, but she could get no consciousness of it except the softness of the air. Yet her face was radiant, and she stood there as though she both saw and heard. I wish I could bring before all those who are discontented with their lot, repining because God has withheld something from them or taken something away, the cheerful face of this girl who has so little, but who accepts it as if she had all; who has never seen a human countenance or heard a human voice; who in the infinite glory and beauty of this outward world has no part, shut in by herself in that silent, dark, unchanging awful loneliness. Finally she took out a sheet of paper, pressed it down on her French writing-board, examined the point of her pencil, and wrote her autograph:—"God is love and truth. L. N. Bridgman." And then from her needle-case and spool-box she produced a cambric needle and fine cotton, and showed me how she threaded a needle, which was done by holding the eye against the tip of her tongue, the exquisite nicety of touch in her tongue guiding her to pass the thread through. It was done in an instant, though it seemed impossible to do it at all, and then she presented me the threaded needle triumphantly, having secured it by slipping a knot.

ANCIENT COINS.—Several specimens of the ancient coins of Judea, said to be of indubitable authenticity, were sold recently in a collection known as the Chieri collection. One was described as struck at Jerusalem 144 years before the Christian era. It was of silver, rudely stamped with Samaritan characters, and on the reverse side a pomegranate twig, with three buds, supposed to represent Aaron's rod. Its weight was 212 grains Troy. This curious coin sold for £10. Others, called Macabean shekels, of which there were seven, sold at prices from £3 to £8 each. Five half-shekels, of which one was pronounced a superlatively fine coin, brought from £3 to £8 8s. each, the fine one selling for £14.