

The Christian Messenger.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1875.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, August 22nd, 1875.—Jesus the Christ.—John vii. 40-46.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"The Lord hath anointed me."—Isaiah lxi. 1.

ANALYSIS.—I. Differing opinions. Vs. 40-43. II. Capture desired. Vs. 44. III. Failure explained. Vs. 45, 46.

HISTORICAL CONNECTION.—The last time Jesus was in Jerusalem was at the healing of the impotent man by the Pool of Bethesda. Chap. v. 5-15. At that time the Jewish rulers determined to put him to death. Chap. v. 16-18. A year and a half has passed since then, full of events belonging to the ministry of Christ in Galilee. But now Christ is once more in Jerusalem, for the Feast of the Tabernacles, occurring the last of September and part of October, is at hand. Vs. 2. Contrary to the wishes of his brethren, who, in a spirit of purely worldly wisdom, wished him to show himself openly in Jerusalem as the ecclesiastical centre of the world (vs. 3, 4), Jesus tells them that his time "is not fully come," and bids them go up to the feast. Vs. 6, 8. When they "were gone up, then went he also up," unattended, and possibly by an unusual route. Vs. 10. After his arrival he went into the Temple and taught. Vs. 14, 28.

EXPOSITION.—The Feast of Tabernacles.—Compare Lev. xxiii. 16, 34-43; Deut. xvi. 13-15; Num. xxix. 12-38; Deut. xxxi. 10-13; Neh. viii. From these passages we learn that it was one of the three great annual national festivals at which all the males, not provisionally prevented, were to come to Jerusalem; it was a harvest festival observed in green booths temporarily erected in the open courts, squares, streets, on the flat house-tops. Throughout the eight days special sacrifices were offered, the first and eighth days were specially sacred; among the other exercises the reading of the Scriptures publicly was specially enjoined. It was on the eighth, the last great day of this festival, that Jesus had been teaching the people, gathered, as they were, from every quarter. Vs. 37. He closed his instructions, which were at testimony to his own nature and office as the Son of God, and Saviour of men, with the majestic invitation to all souls thirsty for the water of eternal life to come to him and drink. Vs. 37-39.

Verses 40.—Many of the people therefore. The mixed multitude who were at the feast and heard Christ, especially in distinction from the Jewish authorities, who were plotting and seeking Christ's destruction. Vs. 32, 45. When they heard [literally, "having heard"] this saying. "This saying," most naturally, would mean the loud, earnest invitation in vs. 37, 38. The reference is to the entire discourse given at the feast. Said, of a truth this is the Prophet. Compare i. 20, 21, which shows the interpretation currently put upon certain passages of the Old Testament. "The Prophet" here is the one promised in Deut. xviii. 15, who it thus appears was expected to be not the Messiah, but another and different person.

Verses 41.—Others [than the "many"] said [were saying], This is the Christ. The words, Christ from the Greek, and Messiah from the Hebrew, each mean anointed. The Christ, or the Messiah, is thus the Anointed One. The high-priest, the prophet, and the king, were each set apart to their respective offices by the solemn rite of anointing with oil, in token of the spiritual graces required for the proper discharge of the duties belonging to those offices, and supposed to be imparted to the persons thus anointed. See 1 Kings xix 16; Lev. iv. 3, 5, 16; 1 Sam. ii. 10, 35; xii. 2, 5; xvi. 6; xxiv. 6, 10 etc. It seems that some took Jesus to be the king, who had come to deliver Israel from the Roman yoke, though not nearly as many as regarded him merely as "the prophet;" for the latter were "many," and the former were only "others." There was in the personal appearance, words and history of Jesus far more that fitted the Jews' idea of prophet than of king. Probably few had any even faint conception of the nature of Christ's kingly authority and sway. Even the apostles could not understand it till the day of Pentecost, and but partially even then. Even now there are many who fall back on the old Jewish idea of an earthly, temporal, visible kingdom, and urge that not yet has Jesus sat down on the throne, and not yet does he sway his sceptre. But

some [or "others"] said, [for] Shall [doth] Christ come out of Galilee? The Greek carries almost exactly, Don't you know? the true Christ doesn't originate in Galilee, as this Jesus did.

Verses 42.—This verse expands and confirms the objection already given in the question. Hath not the Scripture said. "Scripture," here is, of course, only the Old Testament. The Pharisees, some of whom probably were in the crowd, and led this faction of earnest opposers, prided themselves on their knowledge of Scripture and reverence for its authority. Christ always approved their regard for Scripture, but often showed the falseness of their pretended reverence, and yet more of their interpretations. That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, etc. Referring to the predictions Micah v. 2; Isa. xi. 1; Jer. xxiii. 5. They seem to have been ignorant of the fact that Christ was born at Bethlehem, of the family of David; and also to have been ignorant of that in the Old Testament which pointed to his Galilean origin. See Matt. iv. 13-16, and ii. 23. The former passage quotes from Isa. ix. 1, 2. The latter finds in the prophets a reference to Nazareth. Fausset remarks on it: "The best explanation of the origin of this name [Nazareth and Nazarene] appear to be that which traces it to the [Hebrew] word netzer in Isaiah xi. 1—the small twig. The little town of Nazareth was probably so-called from its insignificance—a weak twig in contrast to a stately tree, and a special contempt seemed to rest upon it (John i. 46.)"

Verses 43.—A division among the people because of him. As just described—chiefly into three parties, which, as we saw, were narrowed to two, the friendly party and the hostile party, the latter headed by the Pharisees, and especially those in authority. The division because of Christ, is just as marked and decided and active to-day as then, and on a far greater scale.

Verses 44.—Some of them. Doubtless the third party, or at least its leaders, not "the officers" in verse 45. Would have taken him. Desired to arrest him, or forcibly seize upon him. No man laid hands on him. Restrained, either by the fear of the favoring many, or by a certain majesty in the bearing of Christ, or miraculously by the hand of God, or by all combined.

Verses 45, 46.—See verse 32. The chief priests and Pharisees here are the Sanhedrim, the supreme national council. The officers did not share their masters' hate, and hence their impression and answer. Most true was it, that never man spake as did Christ. Not strange that even the officers of the Sanhedrim should have been filled with wonder and awe. Unlike all mere prophets and apostles, Jesus spake from and of himself, out of his own consciousness, as the Divine Redeemer.

QUESTIONS.—What feast is now at hand? When did it occur? How many feasts had the Jews? Ans. Weekly, monthly, anniversary, periodically. Weekly, that one of the Sabbath. Monthly, the new moons. Anniversary, Passover in April; Pentecost, seven weeks after; and the Feast of the Tabernacles, or ingathering of harvest, in October. Periodically, the Sabbath year in every seven, and the Jubilee year in every fifty. Why did the brethren of Jesus desire him to go to Jerusalem? Vs. 3, 4. With what temptation does their desire correspond? Matt. iv. 5-10. How did Jesus go up? Vs. 10. What did he do after his arrival? Vs. 14.

Vs. 40. What sayings are meant? Whom do the people mean by "the Prophet"? Deut. xviii. 15; Matt. xvi. 14.

Vs. 41. Whom do these "others" mean by "Christ"? Meaning of Christ? Ans. Christ is Greek for Messias in Hebrew, meaning anointed.

Vs. 42. What Scriptures have they doubtless in mind? Isa. xi. 1; Jer. xxiii. 5; Mic. v. 2.

Vs. 43. Has this division of judgment regarding Christ ceased? What did Peter call Christ? Matt. xvi. 16. What question does this lesson make personal to every one? Matt. xxii. 41, 42.

Vs. 44. Why did no man lay hands on him? Who controls the hearts of all men? Prov. xxi. 1.

Vs. 46. For what was Christ's speech remarkable? Matt. vii. 29; Luke iv. 22. Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, August 29th, 1857.—Freedom by the Truth.—John viii. 28-36.

A leading Unitarian Minister in England, speaking before the Unitarian Conference in Liverpool, recently, while Moody and Sankey were there, said:—"These men have done, during the few weeks they have been among us, more for the correction of public morals than all of us have done for the last dozen years."

God's gifts are not in man's currency.

Youths' Department.

WORK AND WAIT.

A husbandman, who many years had ploughed his field and sown in tears, Grew weary with his doubts and fears.

"I toil in vain! These rocks and sands Will yield no harvest to my hands! The best seeds rot in barren lands."

"My drooping vine is withering, No promised grapes its blossoms bring, No birds among its branches sing."

"My flock is dying on the plain; The heavens are brass, they yield no rain; The earth is iron; I toil in vain!"

While yet he spake, a breath had stirred— His drooping vine, like wing of bird, And from its leaves a voice he heard:

"The germs and fruit of life must be For ever hid in mystery; Yet none can toil in vain for Me."

"A mightier hand, more skilled than thine, Must hang the clusters on the vine And make the fields with harvest shine."

"Man can but work. God can create; But they who work and watch and wait Have their reward, though it come late."

"Look up to heaven! Behold and hear The clouds and thunders in thine ear, And answer to thy doubts and fear."

He looked: and lo! a cloud-draped car, With trailing smoke and flames afar, Was rushing from a distant star;

And every thirsty flock and plain Was rising up to meet the rain That came to clothe the fields with grain;

And on the clouds he saw again The covenant of God with men, Rewritten with His rainbow pen.

"Seed-time and harvest shall not fail; And, though the gates of hell assail, My truth and promise shall prevail!"

—Christian Intelligence.

THE STORY OF A CLOVER BLOSSOM.

BY AMELIA E. DALEY.

A bunch of pink clover opened her eyes one morning at sunrise, and looked about her. She grew near the gate of a little garden in the country, and was one of a large number of pink clovers.

On each side of the pathway, leading from the gate, were little flower-beds, bordered with white shells, and filled with gaily tinted flowers. There were panicles with their purple vests, roses with pink, blushing petals, fragrant white lilies, and many other flowers. They nodded to each other in the morning air, and seemed very happy. Pink Clover thought they were beautiful, and looked at her own dress as well as she could.

"Am I like you?" she said to a large clover that grew near her.

This clover had been in existence three days, and her blossoms were beginning to turn brown on top, but she did not know it. She nodded her head to the young clover, and said, "Just like me, only as you have not lived as long as I have, you cannot have so much sense."

"Is my head turning brown?" said Pink Clover.

"No," answered the other, "you are quite pink and fresh. We clovers preserve our beauty a long time." And she straightened herself, and shook a drop of dew off one of her leaves.

Pink Clover thought it very strange that the other did not know she was fading; but she said nothing, for fear of giving offence.

The door of the cottage was opened, and a little girl came out and ran down the walk. Her eyes were as blue as violets, her hair shone like corn silk, and her cheeks were as pink as the roses. She wore a white frock, and a long blue sash. She ran to the flower-beds, and began to pick the flowers. Her mother came and stood in the doorway. "Gather the most beautiful," she said.

Pink Clover watched the child as she went from flower to flower. She thought she would not like to be plucked from her stem, and wither away. She leaned forward and whispered to the rose that grew near her, "Why do you not resist? Your thorns are long and sharp."

"We do not bloom for ourselves," answered the rose; "we are made to give pleasure to man, and when we are gathered, though we droop and die, our mission is fulfilled. I heard the mother and child talking last night about us. We are to be taken to the great city, where people have no flowers, and are to be given to a

sick servant of God. When he sees us his heart will swell with thankfulness, and we shall be the cause of a loving prayer. Thus shall even the flowers glorify their Maker."

Pink Clover was silent. She wished the little girl would pluck her also, that she might gladden a human heart; but the child passed her by and took the beautiful rose.

"No one thinks much of clover blossoms," said a tuft of grass, "or of the grasses, but the same Hand made us all." "We too have our work," said the old clover who had spoken before; "Whole countries would be desolate without us. We make glad the waste places."

The little girl had gone into the house, but she soon came out again, bearing her flowers. Her mother came with her. They got into a little wagon that rattled up to the gate. The child's father stood by the wagon.

"We had better take some grass with us for the horse to eat," said the mother; "eat that close to the gate."

The man brought a scythe and did as she told him. He cut down Pink Clover, too. The back of the wagon was filled with grass; the father took his seat, and Pink Clover found herself going to the great city.

"But only for a horse to eat," she said to herself.

The wagon rolled on and reached the city. It jolted over the stones of the streets, and tossed Pink Clover quite high in the air sometimes. Everything around looked so dirty that she wondered how any one could want to live there. The little girl wondered too, but her father told her they would soon come to pleasant streets, and would see many beautiful houses.

At length, in turning a corner, the wagon jolted so hard that poor Pink Clover, when she was tossed up, did not come down on the grass again, but right in the dirty street. No one saw her fall. She lay there, and the wagon passed out of sight. "Not even to be eaten by a horse," she sighed. "I must wither, and be trampled on by careless feet."

Several hours passed, and the little bunch of clover lay fading in the street. The hot sun beat down upon her; the dust blew over her; but she had not been stepped on.

A boy passed along the street. His clothes were clean, though patched and old. He looked down as he walked. When he reached the corner where Pink Clover lay he saw her. His face brightened; he stooped and picked her up. "Poor little blossom," he said, and walked on holding her tightly in his hand.

He turned out of that street into one still narrower and dirtier. He entered a wretched house, passed up the stairs, and went into a small room: It was clean, but very scantily furnished. A sick girl was lying in the bed asleep. Her hands were so thin that every blue vein in them was visible. Her mother was bending over her. When the boy entered she raised her head.

"How is sister?" he asked.

"She is easier now," answered the mother, "but she has been suffering very much. She longs for pure air. If she could have that she would live."

The boy held up the bunch of clover blossoms. "I found it in the street," he said; "it seems like my poor sister fading away in the close city. I will revive it if I can."

He placed Pink Clover in a glass of cool water, and set the glass on the table. He sprinkled some drops of water over her, and she left herself beginning to revive. She held up her head, and her fragrant breath stole into the room.

Soon the sick girl opened her eyes, and saw the little blossoms. She held out her hands towards them, and her mother gave them to her. She inhaled their perfume, and a glad light came into her eyes.

"Oh! dear mother," she cried, "I said that if I could only have a breath from the country I should get well, and God has sent it to me in these little flowers."

Then the little clover knew that, through unthought-of ways, she had been brought to fulfill her mission; that when she lay unheeded in the dust she had been coming nearer and nearer to the work of cheering a human heart.

A certain ambassador to a European Court was asked by the queen, a remarkably handsome woman, whether a noted beauty in his own country was in reality the most beautiful lady he had ever met. "Your majesty, I thought so until to-day," was the graceful reply.

"AS HAPPY AS AN ANGEL."

"Since I found the Lord, I have been as happy as an angel," said a young nobleman's daughter to an intimate friend.

She had every worldly blessing to which the heart aspires—rank, fortune, culture, loveliness, esteem—before she found the heavenly treasure, but with all the advantages that she possessed over others, she was unhappy. She felt that her life hung by a slender thread, and that death would remove every object to which she gave her heart. She sought in earnest prayer the enduring happiness that comes from the better world. She laid aside the glitter and glare of rank, and became as humble and loving as a child. God heard her prayer and blessed her, and from that hour the sunshine of heaven fell on her soul. She was no longer attached to the fading pomps of the world; immortal prospects opened before her, and she was "as happy as an angel."

The person addressed was a young lady of rank and fortune, and a leader in circles of fashion and pleasure. Her life was aimless. She sought enjoyment in those social excitements that come and go, and leave the heart unsatisfied. "As happy as an angel!" The remark haunted her; it disquieted her conscience. She had everything that the world could offer to make life attractive, but she was unhappy. She saw that the sunniest day had an end. She, too, sought the Lord, and, in the enjoyment of his favor, became "as happy as an angel." She built churches, educated the pious, loved and helped the poor. There are more than one hundred houses of worship in England to-day that were erected for the poor either at her direction, or through her influence. She lived to a great age, and when she was dying, she was "as happy as an angel."

It may be that you are unsatisfied and unhappy now, and that you desire to become, like the young countess, "as happy as an angel."

Begin, then, aright. If you have a difference with any one, be reconciled. You can never be happy while you bear ill-will in your heart.

Read the Bible. That young person begins life aright who makes himself familiar with the precepts and directions of the Word of God.

Pray daily to God to enlighten your mind and lead you in the way of truth. Destiny lies in prayer; blessings as thick as the flowers in Summer-time, spring up from the prayers of the young. "Commit thy way unto the Lord," says the Scripture, "trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass."

Be humble, gentle, loving. Be a home-herd, patient, forgiving, self-forgetful. Make others happy, and you will become as happy as the world can make you; seek the Lord, and you may become "as happy as an angel!"—Christian Era.

TURN YE!

I can imagine one man down there says, "How about repentance? How about getting into the ark or the city of refuge before repentance?" My friend, let me ask you, what is repentance? It is, right about face! I think these soldiers understand that expression. Some one has said that every one is born with his back to God, and that conversion turns him right around. If you want to be converted, and want to repent, I will tell you what you should do. Just get out of Satan's service, and get into the Lord's. Leave your old friends, and unite yourselves with God's people. To-morrow, if nothing happens, I expect to go to Liverpool. If, when I am in the train, my friend Mr. Shipton says, "Moody, you are going in the wrong train. That train is going to Edinburgh," I should say, "Mr. Shipton, you have made a great mistake; the guard told me the train was going to Liverpool. You are wrong, Mr. Shipton. I am sure you are wrong. The guard told me this train was going right straight for Liverpool." Then Mr. Shipton would say; "Moody, I have lived here forty years, and I know all about the trains. That train is going to Edinburgh, and will not take you to Liverpool." Mr. Shipton at last convinces me, and I get out of that train and get into the one going to Liverpool. Repentance is getting out of one train and getting into the other. You are on the wrong train; you are in the broad path that taketh you down to the pit of hell. Get out of it to-night. Right about face! Who will turn his feet towards God? "Turn ye, for why will you die?" In the Old Testament the word is "repent." "Turn ye, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"—Mr. Moody.