

The Christian Messenger.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1875.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES. SUNDAY, November 14th, 1875.—Jesus Interceding.—John xvii. 10-21.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“ He ever liveth to make intercession for them.”—Heb. vii. 25.

ANALYSIS.—I In the world, but not of it. Vs. 15, 16. II. Sanctification “ in the truth.” Vs. 17-19. III. Prayer for future believers. Vs. 20. IV. Power of Christian oneness. Vs. 21.

The intercessory prayer of Christ, recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John, is the simplest, deepest, and sublimest language in the whole Bible. “ Plain and simple in sound, it is yet so deep, rich and broad, that no one can fathom it.”—Luther. John Knox had it read to him “ punctually every day during his last sickness.” “ When I wish to nerve myself for duty,” said Kingman Nott, “ I read the seventeenth chapter of John.” In vs. 1-5, Jesus prays for himself, that, having finished his earthly work, he may be invested with his original glory. In vs. 6-19, he intercedes for his disciples, and prays particularly for their preservation from evil, and their sanctification unto eternal life. In vs. 20-26, his intercession extends to all future believers, for their unity on earth, and for their happiness and glorification in heaven.

EXPOSITION.—Verse 15—1 pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world. Christ was wont to pray. Matt. vi. 9-13; xi. 25, 26; xxvi. 39; John vi. 11; xi. 41, 42; xii. 28. This prayer, however, is entirely peculiar, in both extent and nature. He here speaks as just stepping from earth to heaven; his course finished; the atonement made; and he looking down and back upon his disciples. Thus in verse 13, he says, “ And now I come to thee,” as being already more in the heavens than on the earth, and so speaking this prayer to show how he acts for us, where and while he “ ever lives to make intercession for us,” and since his body has disappeared. Behold a Saviour's love, that even at such an hour, in the very presence of the cross, his prayer was not for himself, but for his people; for all his people, as appears from vs. 20, though necessarily the eleven were first in mind, but in mind as representing all. The words, “ I pray not,” etc., mean that he wishes and asks that they be not removed, that they remain; as though he had said, Do not take them, leave them, let them remain. This was Christ's will, as it was the Father's. It might be hard to be thus separated. Here they were to ripen through toil and trial. They were “ the salt of the earth,” “ the light of the world.” Through the saints that are, God calls and gathers the saints that shall be. But that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. The Greek words translated “ from the evil” [the wickedness], may also mean, “ from the evil one,” that is, “ Satan, the devil,” the prince of this world, xvi. 11. It is more likely that the latter is the thought, though it makes not much difference as to the real substance of the request. To be kept from wickedness is to be kept from the wicked one, and vice versa. “ The evil” here is thus not what are more often counted and called evils, for example, sickness, poverty, trouble, death, etc., but the taint and power of sin. Christ would have his own like himself, living in the midst of sin, but undefiled by it. God's grace enables one thus to go unharmed through the flames; thus even to “ drink any deadly thing,” and not suffer. The practical lesson, that we keep ourselves from sin only as God keeps us; that he is the spring of all our spiritual life; and that self-trust is self-destruction. “ Lord, save or I perish,” is a life-long prayer.

Verse 16.—They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. To be “ of the world” is to belong to the world-party, having its spirit, aims, life. It is the party of anti-Christ, of sin, and of the devil. This party, in the whole, and in each member, has a character which is in its very root, “ enmity against God.” Christians have been born of God; this old life and character exchanged for the life of God; and hence they as a party, and as individuals, have for the root of character, holiness. They are of God, and not of the world. Of course, it does not follow from this that a Christian is quite sinless, but only that the central and permanent principle of his life is divine. In his members there may be another law which wars against the controlling law of his life; but

his party position is determined by the law which controls. Hence, just as truly as Christ was not of the world, they are not of it. Verse 17.—Sanctify them through thy truth. An end and the means. As related to verse 15, it is the complement—the positive of which that was the negative. There it was, “ keep them from the wicked one”; here it is identify them with the Holy One. The Greek word translated “ sanctify,” like the corresponding Hebrew word, according to derivation means to make clean, and then to separate from common and defiling use, and then specially to separate for God's use, to him; to be devoted to him, consecrated, or standing in special and close relation to him; as the Temple, its utensils, offerings, servants, etc.; and of men in the New Testament to come into a relation of spiritual fellowship and oneness of life with God, and so be for God by being with God, and like him, as every man of wicked heart is “ far from him,” and will not be owned as belonging to him. The agent for first effecting this change is God, in the person of the Holy Spirit. Thy word is truth. This word is the Gospel, the whole revelation of God, whether as given in Old Testament or New Testament, all knowledge pertaining to the way of life, wherever given. Thus is the supreme importance of a correct knowledge of divine truth witnessed, the rationality of the Christian religion asserted, and a perpetual frown put upon a preference of blind impulse, or mere sentiment and feeling, instead of intelligent, consistent principles. Those who despise doctrine, and the study of doctrine, despise God and his Son, and the Bible, and the church, and the rational nature of man.

Verse 18.—As thou hast sent [didst send] me into the world, even so have I also sent [did I also send] them into this world. To be in it, as explained in vs. 15. The word translated “ have sent,” is that from which comes the word apostle. Christ was God's apostle (Hebrews iii. 1), adequately and fully representing and manifesting the Father. These words refer primarily to the eleven, vs. 20.

Verse 19.—And for their sakes I sanctify [am sanctifying] myself. Jesus refers to his surrender of himself to death as an offering for them. He and Christians are consecrated to the same divine will and holy life, because they are one through faith. They differ in the perfection of separation attained, in their original condition, and in the method of separation. Christians are to sanctify themselves for others as did Christ for them. Verse 20.—For these. The eleven, not excluding other genuine disciples known to Christ. But for all, etc. Showing the largeness of Christ's aims, and expectations, and love; a word of grand foresight, and designating again. Faith was to be the bond of union, and this faith was to come by hearing. This is the process from first to last, simple, natural, divine. Verse 21.—That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. A prayer for union, but only for a genuine union. It was to be a union in the truth, not to its sacrifice. (Vs. 26, “ their word”) Such was Christ's union with the Father. It was to be through sanctification, a union in sameness of character, like Christ's and the Father's. It was also to be like theirs, a union of conscious, loving fellowship. It was to be in Jesus and in the Father (“ in us”) as the source, the fountain. Such union we may well desire with all men.

QUESTIONS.—Vs. 15. Had Jesus prayed before? Will you cite some of the occasions? When a man is converted, why does God leave him in this wicked world? Vs. 17. What is meant by “ sanctify them”? What by “ through thy truth”? When is sanctification completed? Ans. Not before the close of this life (1 John i. 8), a passage, according to Dr. Honey, that is “ entirely decisive.” How does truth sanctify the heart? Psalm xix. 7-14; 2 Timothy iii. 15. What ought we to say of the Bible? Ps. cxix. 97, 105, 167. Vs. 18. What word embodies the mission of being sent to this world? Ans. Apostle. Vs. 19. How was Jesus sanctified for us? Should not his consecration to his work be an example to us? 1 Peter ii. 21. Vs. 20. For whom besides his immediate disciples did Jesus pray? Did God hear his prayers? Chap. xi. 42. How does Jesus say faith is awakened? Cf. Romans x. 16, 17. Vs. 21. Whose oneness ought the oneness of Christians to resemble? In whom ought all Christians to be one? What is the power of brotherly Christian love upon the world? Is there not more union among Christians than is sometimes acknowledged? Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

YOUTH'S DEPARTMENT.

THE DISOBEDIENT MOUSE.

BY ASBURY MELVILLE. Once a rat and a mouse Lived in a snug house, Not far from the pantry shelf; And often went they, It grieves me to say, Into this pantry for pelf.

They lived merry-wise; The old rat had eyes That could shun both cat and trap; The youth always did As his elder bid, So they'd never met any mishap.

But one fatal day, The mouse, tired of play, Thought 'twould be of sport most rare, To run away from home, In the pantry to roam, And feast on the good things there,

So he quietly stole From out of the hole, While rat lay asleep on the floor; He had said “ Don't go” Mouse said, “ Silly!” O He wished he had tried it before.

He came to the pantry, Effected an entry, And spied on a shelf some cheese, Which just seemed to say, “ Come and nibble me pray, I'm on purpose for you to seize.”

He seized it with grit, But no sooner had bit, Than something fell with a bang; The mouse turned to flee, But in vain! you see, A trap on poor mouse sprang.

How loudly he cried, As from side to side Of his prison he frightened ran. He was in there fast; Kit got him at last, And to crunch his bones began.

Now, children, don't fail To learn from this tale A lesson you'll never forget; Or like mouse in the fable, You will not be able To keep out of traps evil set.

SOME SCOTTISH PROVERBS.

For the illustration of my subject I have gone to that grand old storehouse of sententious truisms and common-sense, the Book of Scotch Proverbs.

And first, let us take those which refer to that worst of all good things, money. “ Baith weal and woe,” says the proverb, “ come aye wi' world's gear.” And again, “ There's a slippery stane afore the ha' door.” And again, “ Muckle corn, muckle care.” And again, “ Content is nae bairn o' wealch;” “ He that has muckle would aye hae mair.” And again, “ Poverty is the mother o' health.” “ Mony ane's gear is mony ane's death.” And yet again, “ A penny in my purse will gae me drink when my frien's winna.” Then we have those which refer to fair and fine things, such as:

“ Beauty is but skin deep,” “ Bonnie bires are aye the warst singers.” “ A fat housekeeper mak's lean executors.” “ Fair folk are aye fusioneer.” “ Fire and water are gude servants, but bad masters.” “ Fat hens are ill-layers.” “ Bees that hae honey i' their mouths hae stangs i' their tails.” “ Glib i' the tongue is aye glistek at the hairt.” “ A green yule mak's a fat kirkyard.” “ Nearest the king, nearest the waddy.” “ Muckle pleasure, muckle pain.” “ A' are gude lasses, but whar do the ill wives come frae?” “ A dink maiden aft mak's a dirty wife.” “ Ae braw thing seed twa to set it aff.” “ A new pair o' breaks will cast down an auld coat.” “ An ilka-day braw mak's a Sabbath-day's daw.” “ Fair words winna mak' the pot boil.” “ Love ower hot soon cools.” “ A kiss and a tinniefu' o' cauld water mak's a gey wersh breakfast.” “ The higher the hill, the laigher the gres.” Another lot of wise saws deals with the cardinal virtues:

“ Penny-wise, pound-foolish,” for example. “ Spare at the spigot, and let out at the bung-hole.” “ He that counts a' costs will ne'er pit pleugh i' the grun.” “ He that lives on hope has a slim diet.” “ He that's first up is nee aye first served.”

PIN-FEATHER RECOLLECTIONS.

Rev. D. Matlock, recently of New Orleans, tells the following good story:

In 1868, a series of missionary meetings was projected among the colored Methodist Episcopal churches of that city. At one of these it was arranged that an eccentric veteran, named Scott Chinn, should make the last speech and take the collection. The brother who preceded him greatly tried the old man's patience by the length of his address, a thing never done by a white man.

“ He'll spile de meetin',” said Brother Chinn to the Doctor, who presided. “ He's too long in de wind—to much blowin'.” “ Be patient, be patient,” said the Doctor. “ O, I'se patient enough,” said he, “ but the people's getting tired, and den dey won't gib de money,” said the old philosopher.

At length the long speech closed with an eloquent reference to the angel of the Apocalypse flying through the heavens, having the everlasting Gospel to preach. Scott Chinn was on his feet in a moment.

“ I've been afeared some ob dese brodders would talk too long, and dat angel get clear out ob sight. Dat angel, brethren, is de missionary angel. He takes de eberlasting Gospel wid him where'er he goes—to every nation, kindered, tongue, people!” “ Mighty angel!” shouted some in the congregation.

“ Mighty! mighty!” repeated others as the excitement rose. Inspired with his conception and the enthusiasm of his congregation, his patriarchal form rose to its full height, and, stretching out his hand toward the angel, whom he seemed to see before him, exclaimed, “ O dou angel ob de mighty wing, tarry wid us a lottle while in dis missionary meeting. We's de people your Lord sent you to find. Fold your wings and rest awhile here. You's been flying so long, and you has many a long weary trabble before you. Blessed angel, ain't you berry tired? Den rest, for dis is de Lord's house, and de Lord's people.”

Turning to the congregation, now up to the white heat of excitement, he continued: “ Children, you may tank your stars and and de good Lord dat dis angel come dis way to-day, and he's gwine to stay awhile now. He's foldin' his wings and lookin' right at you now. He wants to see what we's gwine to do to send dis eberlasting Gospel round de world. I tell you what we'll do, children; de angel's wing's broken a lottle by de wind from de four corners of de world. See i' he needs some more fadders in de wing. He fly better wid dis eberlasting Gospel, troo' de midst ob de heabens to de ends ob de earth. Up, now, and bring on the fadders for the angle's wings.”

In an instant the people were on their feet, filing into the aisle, and marching in time to the swell of song, to the table in the altar, on which they placed their offerings of pennies and postal currency. Suddenly the preacher called out, “ Stop dar—stop dat singin'.”

The order was promptly obeyed, and all waited to see what was wrong. “ What dis on de table?” he continued, pointing to pennies and postage-stamps. “ What you call dese? Fedders for de angel's wings? He can't fly round de world wid dese! Dese am notting but pin-fadders! Bring on your long quills for the angel's wings!”

The song and marching were resumed, offerings greatly enlarged, and the series of meetings among these poor colored people netted over \$1,000.

KATY'S SPELLING LESSON.

“ What is it, Katy,” asked the teacher, as she noticed the tiny uplifted hand. Katy sat with the slate and pencil before her, evidently very much perplexed. “ Will you please tell me how to spell tankan?” “ What is the word?”

BLESS GOD FOR RAIN.

“ Bless God for rain!” the good man said, And wiped away a grateful tear; That we may have our daily bread, He drops a shower upon us here, Our Father! thou who dwell'st in Heaven, We thank thee for the pearly shower! The blessed present thou hast given To man, and beast, and bird and flower.

CHILD'S PRAYER.

“ O, God! bless father and mother, and sister Mammy, and please make my boots go on easy,” was the prayer of a little boy that prayed for what he wanted. He did not use a great deal of circumlocution to pray for things he did not want. His boots were the things that troubled him most; and it was very natural he should tell his Father about them.

To be sure, they were only boots—low, earthly things, that many good people would not think fit to carry to the throne of grace. Not so thought the little boy. He thought he had a right to go to his Father with anything that troubled him. Maybe his pinching boots had made him say bad words and put him in a bad humor. At any rate he wanted them to “ go on easy,” and why not pray for the things he wanted?

How very natural for a child to say what it thinks, and tell what it wants! It seems to me, children often have a truer idea of prayer than many grown-up people. They pray for what they desire with a beautiful simplicity of faith and trust. Older people pray more for the things they suppose they ought to pray for, than for the things they really do want. If they get an answer to their prayer, they are more surprised than they would have been had they not obtained it.

Let us pray more child-prayer. Let us pray more earnestly for the things we really want, and not be surprised if we obtain them.—Independent.

RAIN AND FINE WEATHER.

“ I don't like the rain,” said little Octavius: “ it hinders my running about and getting a good game of play in the garden.” “ I like it,” answered Colin, the gardener's little boy. “ It comes just in time to spare my father the trouble of having to water the flowers and vegetables.”

This is a history of the world, what pleases one displeases the other; but nothing God does is wrong, and when you are inclined to grumble at the rain coming to hinder your out-of-door amusements, think of the poor gardener, who is perhaps, old and weak, and who now will not have the trouble of watering the plants.

At the sale of the late Bishop of Manchester's books, some high prices were realised. The principal work was the “ Biblia Polyglotta Ximenii,” which was designed by Cardinal Ximenes and published in 1522, five years after the cardinal's death. This was knocked down for £340. But a valuable Greek Testament, bearing date 1521, was sold for the absurdly low price of 11s., and was resold immediately afterwards for £10.