

The Christian Messenger.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1875.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY December 26th, 1875—REVIEW. The Ministry of Jesus.

- 1. Jesus Lifted up..... John xii. 23-33.
2. Washing the Disciples' Feet..... xiii. 1-9.
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8. Jesus the King..... xviii. 33-38.
9. Jesus on the Cross..... xix. 25-30.
10. Jesus and Mary..... xx. 11-18.
11. Jesus and Thomas..... xx. 24-31.
12. Jesus and Peter..... xx. 15-22.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” John xx. 31.

EXPOSITION.—John was the son of Zebedee and Salome, and brother of James. Matt. iv. 21; xvii. 56; Mark xv. 40; xvi. 1.

The fourth Gospel, the three Epistles bearing his name, and the book of revelation are from his pen.

“Probably the date of the Gospel may be about A. D. 78. The references to it in the First Epistle and the Revelation lead to the supposition that it was written decidedly before those two books.”

“The date of the Revelation is given by the great majority of critics as A. D. 95-97.”

“The time of John's death is supposed to have been between A. D. 89 to A. D. 120.”

“The Gospel by John differs essentially from the Gospels preceding it. Its testimony to Jesus is reflective, their narrative; they record what Jesus said and did, it records what Jesus was in person, character, and mission; they deal more with facts, it more with doctrines; they with Christ's humanity, it with Christ's divinity; they unfold Jesus from without, it from within.”—Abbott. Says Dr. Weston.

“In the study of the Evangelists we may see some fitness in the fancy that the distinctive features of the Gospels are symbolized by the four faces of the majestic creatures who serve in the immediate presence of God—the cherubim, Matthew, the lion, is the kingly Gospel; Mark, the ox, is the Gospel of the worker; Luke, the man, the human Gospel. The eagle has been recognized as the appropriate emblem of John. His Gospel gives us eternal truths, marvellously combining simplicity and sublimity, expressing the profoundest thoughts in the plainest words. The Evangelists, like the Apostles on their first mission, walk in pairs, each the complement of the other. Matthew and Mark, the Monarch and the Servant; Luke and John the man and the God.

“THE RECORD OF THE ETERNAL ONE.—In accordance with its character as the record of the Eternal One, this Gospel, instead of beginning as Matthew's with Christ's descent from Abraham and his birth as the king of the Jews, or as Mark's with his public and official life, or as Luke's with a letter from one friend to another, commences before Abraham or Adam or the earth was, in the remotest depths of eternity. ‘In the beginning was the Word.’ It is the first chapter of Genesis over again with sublimer and higher truths; the account of life and light and creation, only not now of a life and light which sprang into being at God's command, but of a nobler life, an uncreated, a greater light, even the primeval and fountain one, a higher existence, even life in Christ Jesus. We find in this Gospel no record of Christ's earthly birth, nothing of Mary's bringing forth her first born son and laying him in a manger. Mary and Joseph and Bethlehem do not appear, but on the contrary we read of one who was in the bosom of the Father, that he became flesh and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. There is nothing here of, what all the other Evangelists tell us, the baptism and temptation. He stands before us at once as the Eternal, the Lamb of God, the Omnipotent One who knows the character and actions of Nathanael; and the first chapter ends with the declaration from Christ's own lips, singularly unlike anything in any of the other Gospels at this stage of his ministry, ‘Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.’

“OF CHRIST AS THE WORD OF GOD.—As Christ in his eternal, divine, inherent character is presented to us in this Gospel, it is not a record of what our Lord did,

but a declaration of what he is, and this made known by what he says. Through-out he is the Word of God. Hence there are few miracles recorded by this Evangelist. For the same reason many things which are prominent in the other Gospels are here unknown. John the Baptist, for example; he does not attract our attention either in himself, or in his hearers, or in his messages, or in his fate. He appears before us only in the contemplation of Christ. ‘Behold the Lamb of God,’ he says, words which we find in no other gospel. His discourse is of the Bridegroom in whose coming he so greatly rejoices, and of the sweetness of decreasing while Christ increases. In the same spirit there is no mention of the calling of the twelve apostles—indeed, the word apostle does not occur in the gospel. Christ in this Gospel is alone, having no helpers or fellow-workers; he is, and beside him is no other.

“OF CHRIST AS DIVINE.—How peculiarly this isolation of Christ, so to speak, this thorough leaning on himself, appears in his last hours! In John only, of all the Evangelists, the Lord neither needs nor receives sympathy nor help from angels or men or nature or glorified spirit, when the soldiers came to take him, in this Gospel alone do we read that, awe struck when he spake to them, they went backward and fell to the ground. In this Gospel alone does he say, ‘If ye seek me, let these go their way,’ protecting them in the very hour of his capture. Throughout the whole scope of the crucifixion the same wonderful character is preserved. He does not receive testimony from man. From the cross you hear no complaint, no prayer—no cry, ‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’ ‘Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.’ He speaks but three words. The first breaks all human relations, and provides as if on a quiet death-bed for his mother; the second takes care that the Scriptures be fulfilled; the third is the triumphant shout of a conqueror, the battle cry of a victorious God.

“PECULIARITY OF THE DISCOURSES IN JOHN'S GOSPEL.—Let us now look at Christ's discourses as John records them. One grand peculiarity marks them: they all have the intensely divine character of the Gospel, all of them relating to the being and person of God, to the essential oneness of Christ with his Father, and to the mystical and vital union of Christ and his people. Very much of what Christ says in the other Gospels any other person may say without impropriety, but of how small a part of John's Gospel is this true. Here Christ fills out the sentence which God spake to Moses when he declared his hitherto uncommunicated name, ‘I am; ‘I am the Bread,’ ‘the Light,’ ‘the Vine,’ ‘the Door,’ ‘the good Shepherd,’ ‘the Resurrection,’ ‘the Life,’ ‘the Way,’ ‘the Truth.’ Here only do we find ‘Before Abraham was, I am.’ He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.’ ‘I and my Father are one,’ ‘Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.’ In Matthew, Mark and Luke we are told of the coming fate of the Temple, of the city over against which they sat, and of the things which are to come upon the earth. Jerusalem, Judea and the Gentiles appear before us, distress of nations and perplexity; and our view closes with the coming of the Son of Man. In John there is not one word of Jerusalem, of the Temple, of the Gentiles; not a word of false Christs, or the flight in the winter, or the great tribulation, or the perplexity that will seize the hearts of men. On the contrary, it is almost all of himself, of the Spirit, and of heaven. ‘In my Father's house are many mansions.’ ‘I will not leave you comfortless; I will come unto you. ‘I go to my Father, and if ye loved me, ye would rejoice.’ ‘If ye ask anything in my name, I will do it.’ ‘Let not your hearts be troubled: believe in God, believe in me.’

HISTORICAL QUESTIONS.—Who were the parents of John the Evangelist? Of what books of the New Testament was he the author? Which was composed first, the Revelation or the Gospel by John? How old was he when he died? How does John's Gospel differ from the three preceding it?

Who were the parents of John the Baptist? Luke i. 5.

What was his mission? Isaiah xl. 3; Mal. iii. 1.

What did he say of him whom he had baptized? John i. 29.

How did John the Baptist die? Mark vi. 21-29.

After what miracle did Jesus call himself the Bread of life? John vi. 10-12.

With what miracle did he call himself the Light of the World? John ix. 1-5.

Who was the vacillating governor that tried Jesus?

Who was the woman that first saw the risen Saviour?

Who was the doubting disciple?

To whom did Jesus say ‘Lovest thou me?’

What became of Mary, the mother of Jesus, after the crucifixion?

What became of her risen Son? Acts i. 9.

DOCTRINAL QUESTIONS.—With the statement of what wonderful truth does the Gospel of John begin? Ch. i. 14.

What did Jesus say to Nicodemus was needful in order to be saved? Ch. iii. 3.

Who is the agent of our regeneration? Titus iii. 5.

Why does Jesus say we must be born of water and of the spirit? Ans. Because baptism is the symbol of purification from sin.

What did Jesus say would happen with his being lifted up? John xii. 32.

Where was Jesus lifted up? What title was put over him?

Who did Jesus say would come after his departure? Ch. xvi. 7.

Under what dispensation are we, then living?

What is the office of the Holy Spirit? Ch. xvi. 8-11.

What have we learned about the divinity of Christ? Ch. i. 1-11; xx. 28.

What have we learned about Christ's atonement for sin? Ch. vi. 53, 54.

What does the good Shepherd do for us? Why, then, should we love him? 1 John iv. 19.

PRACTICAL QUESTIONS.—Is there anything undesirable in the religion of Jesus? 1 Tim. iv. 8.

Would God have given us his only Son to save us were we not lost without such a gift? John iii. 16; Rom. v. 8.

If we do not believe in Jesus, what must be the result? John iii. 18; Mark xvi. 16.

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Youths' Department.

MAY ANDERSON'S MERRY CHRISTMAS.

BY MABEL JORRESTER.

It was a bright, cold afternoon in December, just a week before Christmas, and splendid coasting. All the boys and girls knew that; May Anderson knew it, for she was standing at the top of the hill, just at the corner of the sidewalk, watching the boys and girls coast, with wistful eyes; but no notice was taken of her by the coasters: they did not seem to even see her.

May was cold; she had been standing there for half an hour, and before that she had had a long walk carrying home some work that her mother had finished; for Mrs. Anderson was poor and took in sewing; she was sick, too, but she had to sew just the same as if she were well; she was too poor to give up working, and have a doctor, for while she would be bed, there would be nothing for May to eat, and then there would be the doctor's bill. May and her mother lived in a little bit of a house, just they two, together. May's father was a sea-captain. He had sailed away for more than two years before, expecting to be back in six months, and they had heard nothing from him since, and never expected to, now.

It was no wonder that May was cold, while she was a looker-on at the gay times the other girls were having; for though she was nearly, she was oh! so thinly clothed: in a print dress, a thin little shawl, a black straw hat, no mittens, and thin boots, which would soon have holes in them; and where she was to get new boots, May's mother did not know.

she was half way down the first hill on Alex Merrill's sled, and Alex himself was behind her. I shouldn't want Alex to see me speaking to her either, she thought, for he'd make no end of fun of me. With that Maggie dismissed May from her mind.

Maggie's father was rather poor, now, but then, he had been rich, and Maggie was dressed almost as well as her companions. She hadn't any sled to be sure, but she didn't really need one; Alex Merrill and his sled were quite at her service, and Jack Macdonald and Joe Harte often begged the pleasure of steering her down hill on their sleds.

Maggie was a bright, pretty girl, a favourite with all the boys; and she bestowed her favor upon them all with impartiality, at least, she seemed disposed to; but somehow Alex got ahead of the other boys with his invitations, and so it happened that she coasted with him oftener than with any one else.

As I said before, May had been standing at the corner for half an hour. Some of the children had noticed her, but like Maggie, had not seemed to, and some in their excitement had not seen her at all. Alex Merrill was one, but he caught sight of her now, and, exclaimed:

“My eyes! if there isn't Polly Anderson! How do you do, Polly, pretty Polly? You're looking sweetly pretty! Doesn't Polly want a slide? Dear Pol! pretty Pol! and with a scornful laugh he started down hill.

Alex's words had drawn the attention of all to sensitive little May; the tears sprang to her eyes. She couldn't keep them back and she turned to go home. But Ross Lyneton exclaimed:

“That's too bad! Come back, May, I want you to slide with me.”

But May only hurried away; Ross ran after her, and standing in front of her, so that she was obliged to stop, he said—

“Won't you please come and slide with me?”

“Oh, no, no! I shouldn't have staid there so long, but you were having such a good time, I liked to watch you.”

Ross pulled his sled round in front of her—

“Please jump on, quick.”

“Do you mean it, really? The others will laugh at you,” said May.

“Of course I mean it! I don't care if they do laugh. Jump on, and you shall have a slide on the fastest sled in the town.”

Ross looked honest, but May couldn't feel quite sure that he was not going to play some trick on her, till they had started down hill, passing every body; down the first hill, along the nearly level street to the next hill, down that, and part way up the third hill before they stopped.

“Thank you,” said May; “that was splendid!”

She was going to walk up the hill herself, but Ross said, “Here, take hold of my hand; and after we get up this hill, I will draw you the rest of the way.”

May gave him her hand in silence; he was so kind that she felt like crying. When they reached the starting place, she was going to get off, but Ross said,

“Keep still! and we'll have another one.”

“Hallo, Ross! I didn't know pretty Polly was a friend of your's!” called out Alex, as he met them just as they were starting. Ross's face flushed, but he said nothing.

“For shame!” said Maggie Winthrop, and would not slide with him again.

Ross had behaved in so meanly a way, when Alex first spoke to May, that Maggie suddenly became ashamed of herself. I wish I had made May Anderson's eyes shine that way, she thought.

After the second slide, Ross drew May home, on his sled; “I don't know how to thank you,” she said.

“You have thanked me,” Ross answered. “I'm glad you liked it; we'll have another slide sometime.”

“Where have you been, May?” said Mrs. Anderson; “I've been afraid you would take cold, you were gone so long. Why, what's happened? childie, that you look so bright?”

“I've had such a lovely time, mother! after I went to Mrs. Hardy's, I stopped to see the girls and boys coast—they were having such a nice time! I was wishing with all my might that I had a sled and coast too; then Alex Merrill saw me, and made fun of me, and Ross Lyneton was mad with him, and gave me two slides. Oh, it was splendid, motherdie! And I think Ross Lyneton is the nicest boy I ever knew.”

“He was very kind, and I'm glad you

had such a nice time. But come to the fire and warm, dear; you must be very cold.”

“I'm so happy, I don't feel cold a bit. I wish you could have a good time too, motherdie.”

Mrs. Anderson's eyes filled with tears, but she didn't let May see it. She had given up expecting to have a good time, since she had been forced to believe that *The Seagull* had been wrecked, and that she should never see her sea-captain again in this world.

Maggie Winthrop couldn't keep the thought of May out of her mind. She dreamed of her at night, and the next morning in church couldn't listen to the service, for May's face would come before her and take up all her attention. First as she looked while watching the merry coasters, so cold and wistful—why didn't she speak to her—then how her face flushed, how hurt she looked when Alex spoke to her—how mean he was to make fun of her! then how her eyes shone, when Ross took her down the hill. Alex would have been mortified if he had known how much he had fallen in Maggie's estimation by comparison with Ross.

Walking home from Sabbath School, Maggie relieved her mind by telling her most intimate friend, Nettie Lyneton about it.

“I wish you'd been with us yesterday, Nettie! we did have such a nice time—do see May Anderson, don't she look cold, poor thing! She was watching us coast yesterday, and it you'll believe it, I didn't speak to her, just because I didn't want Irene's cousin to think I knew such a shabby girl, and I thought Alex and the others would make fun of me, too, and I'm so ashamed of myself now!”

“It's too bad that you didn't speak to her, but I guess she didn't think anything about it, for she never goes with us.”

“I know she did though, she must have. Ross didn't tell you about it, did he? He was real good to her. You see she had been standing there watching us for ever so long; nobody took any notice of her, and she did look so cold! it makes me shiver to think of it. All at once Alex Merrill saw her, and said: ‘How do you do, Polly Anderson?’ and took off his hat, and made a low bow to her, and called her pretty Polly, and talked real hatefully to her—how could he talk so? I was ashamed of him, and I'll never coast with him again, as long as I live! Then Ross looked as indignant as could be, and he asked May to coast with him; but she wouldn't at first; she was almost crying and had started to go home; but he made her get on his sled, and then how her eyes did shine! Oh, dear! I feel meaner than I ever did before in my life, and I haven't got over it yet.”

“Well, I wouldn't fell so badly about it. You can speak to her when you see her again, and make it up to her that way.”

“Do see May Anderson, doesn't she look hungry! Do you suppose she has enough to eat? Say! Christmas comes next week; couldn't we make her a present?”

“Why, I don't know but we might. I'll ask mother about it.”

“Do, and I'll come over to-morrow to work.”

They had reached Maggie's door now, and the conversation came to an end, but Maggie's heart felt lighter, and May's face ceased to haunt her so unpleasantly. When it came before her now, it was as she fancied it would look Christmas morning.

That evening after tea, Nettie told her mother what Maggie had told her, and ended up with:

“I tell you, mother Lyneton, I felt proud of my brother!”

“I am very glad Ross behaved like a gentleman, and that he gave May a little pleasure. Poor child! she don't have many good times. You and Maggie have an opportunity now to do good, but—are you sure that you will not get tired, and give up, before you get anything finished? There are only a few days to Christmas, now, and you will have to work pretty hard.”

“We'll finish what we begin, mother, certain sure!” said Nettie earnestly.

“I believe that was just what you were going to do, when you began a sofa pillow, a year ago, my dear.

“Mother mine, don't speak of that! I don't like to be ashamed of myself, and I always am, when I think of that sofa pillow. If you should see how much in earnest Maggie is, you wouldn't be afraid to let

us begin. almost always. “Well, be done.” As she Nettie was the fire and had left. “When Ross. “Went another.” “Is she?” “Don't There v Ross began. “Say o “You k “I do, “Well, awfully e eyes look-time in he “She h you conste “Maggie then, she almost for warm ye couldn't v Christinas “Your towards a “Yes, be ags be “Well, shall have with moth Maggie p something to her ye to make i “She's going to what you though, y “You Lyneton! whether I “I tho when I t pretty sc need it.” Nettie angry lon “Keall present? “Now find that things ou “How told me of the cat ou “I don can be; just as hat having a ished it splendid found it d think it d “I did I'm sorry hoo!” “You handkerc I'm a pe in the w find out a “There Why don “I'm about Ch try to ma Nettie air, that but after and Chrie tion, Ne talked as should do When making M he said: “I'm children. merrier f and you happy if week.” “Oh, “you're you woul wouldn't you'll see minded. weren't S “I wo that, my that heal mediately out of yo tribute t better be comforts