

The Christian Messenger.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1875.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, October 10th, 1875.—Washing the Disciples' feet. John xiii. 1-9.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Philippians ii. 5.

ANALYSIS.—I. Unending love. Vs. 1. II. Betrayal. Vs. 2. III. Condescending love. Vs. 3-5. IV. Peter resisting. Vs. 6-8. V. Peter submitting. Vs. 9.

NOTES UPON THE PASSOVER.—I. The Passover was instituted in commemoration of the deliverance of the Jews in Egypt from the destroying angel when all the first-born of the Egyptians were slain. Ex. xii. It was ever afterward observed as a feast in the month of Nisan, or April, of each year. It was preceded by a paschal supper. The people being divided into households, or families of not less than ten nor more than twenty, a lamb was slain for each family, and eaten immediately after with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Then followed a feast of seven days, during which unleavened bread only was eaten. The lamb was to be selected on the 10th of Nisan, "a male without blemish." On the 14th it was to be slain (Ex. xii. 6) at the decline of the sun, or from 3 to 6 P. M. Then came the meal, at which the whole of the lamb was to be consumed, or before morning, either by eating or by fire.

2. Having spent Tuesday night, the whole of Wednesday, and a part of Thursday at Bethany, Jesus sent Peter and John into the city to prepare the Passover. Matt. xxvi. 17-19. He describes a man whom they should meet, and who would show them a room furnished where they could make ready the supper. In the evening he proceeds to the city with the twelve. Mark xiv. 12-16. But as the disciples are about to take their places at the table, Jesus observes a strife among them for precedence, as a rebuke of which he washes their feet. Luke xxii. 24-30.

EXPOSITION.—Verse 1.—Now before the feast of the passover. John here refers, not to the paschal supper which began the seven days' festival, but to the entire festival. When Jesus knew that his hour was come, vs. 23. In the brief retreat he was, as our previous lesson shows, fully, vividly aware that the time of his mockery and crucifixion had come. John describes this death in terms given him by Jesus himself. He came from the Father into the world, by the way of the manger. He went to the Father out of the world, by the way of the cross. Having loved his own which were in the world, "his own" were not simply the faithful eleven, and others who heard and followed him during his ministry but all disciples of all time. Chaps. x. 16; xvii. 20, 21. Hence it is neither mere general benevolence, nor simply compassion for the lost. It is the Shepherd's love for the sheep of his flock, because they are his flock; a very special love, a love at once for the saved, and which saves. Christ so loved as to take to himself, keep, care for, and give himself instead of, his own. (See chap. x.) He loved them unto the end. The Greek phrase here translated "unto the end," is in Luke xviii. 5, translated "continual" [continually]. It implies that no obstacle or hinderance in the way. The horrors of death and hell, nay, death, hell, and all the powers of hell, rose in his path of love to drive him from that path.

Verse 2.—And supper being ended. John refers thus abruptly to the paschal supper, because an account of it had been fully given by Matthew (xxvi. 17-19), Mark (xiv. 12-16), and Luke (xxii. 7-13). Writing later than they, John has no need to tell, as they did, how he came to be with his apostles at this last supper. The supper was not "ended," as verse 27 and context show. One reading of the original, preferred by eminent authorities, gives us the meaning, "taking place;" that is, about to take place, the guests just seated, or sitting. The devil having now put, etc. "Now" here in the sense of already; that is, before the supper. See Luke xxii. 36. He had gone to the Sanhedrim on Wednesday, no doubt while Christ was in retirement, and made his agreement to betray his Lord for thirty pieces of silver, thirty shekels, each shekel being in amount about sixty cents. The New Testament is explicit in its doctrine of the fact of personal Satan, and of his personal evil influence on men.

Verse 3.—Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into the hands, etc. Both verses impressively exhibit the mighty

meaning of the recorded events of that hour, and fitly introduce the record. All things were placed in his power through the meeting of that which was now coming on him. This was what he knew, and needed to know, to give him the sweet, calm, peaceful heroism which he showed. "He came from God" in the incarnation, and "is going" to God [not "went"]; that is, in the very experiences of the present and immediate future. Another, perhaps more obvious, reason for the statement of Christ's kingly, lordly consciousness (vs. 14) is the emphasis given by it to his act of lowest, most menial service to each disciple, including even Judas, known by Christ to have already covenanted his betrayal.

Verse 4.—He riseth from supper. Showing that he has already reclined in his place and probably the others also; but not implying that they had actually begun their meal. And laid aside his garments. The usual dress consisted of an easy tunic coming as low as the knees, and over this the still looser mantle, or pallium, which "was a large piece of woollen cloth nearly square, which was wrapped around the body, or fastened about the shoulders, and served also to wrap one in at night." This mantle was laid aside. And took a towel, and girded himself. The girding is often mentioned in Scripture, and was a preparation for service which required freedom of motion. The looseness of the garments worn made it necessary.

Verse 5.—After that he poureth water into a bason. Note the vividness of the detailed description. We notice that he put some of the verbs in the present tense, as though he saw and heard as he wrote. And began to wash, etc. "As sandals were ineffectual against the dust and heat of an eastern climate, washing the feet on entering a house was an act both of respect to the company and of refreshment to the traveler." The sandals of one coming in were always taken from the feet at the door. "Immediately that a guest presented himself at the tent-door, it was usual to offer the necessary materials for washing the feet. Gen. xviii. 4; xix. 2, etc. It was a yet more complimentary act, betokening equally humility and affection, if the host actually performed the office for the guest." I Sam. xxv. 41; Luke vii. 38, 44; 1 Tim. v. 10. The Saviour was in some sense the host of this household. He was "Lord and Master" of these disciples. Hence the significance of the act, which was also symbolical, as appears from what follows, and according to ritualistic custom.

Verse 6.—Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Simon saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? "Dust thou my LORD, do this to ME, a mere SERVANT?" Verse 7.—What I do, etc. Peter thought only of the humiliation of Christ before him. Christ intimates that he will come to see the spiritual meaning of the act, and especially as toward him, Peter. This was probably a disguised predictive reference to Peter's denial, and his recovery by the Lord.

Verse 8.—Thou shalt never wash my feet. Still seeming to have in mind simply the unfitness of such menial service on Christ's part. If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. This is a clearer, more explicit declaration of the symbolic meaning of the act. We are not Christ's unless we have humbled ourselves so low as to allow Christ to sacrifice himself for us, to accept for ourselves his self sacrifice.

Verse 9.—Lord, not my feet only, etc. How sudden the change! Now he sees, or half sees, the spiritual import. But there is his old rashness, in demanding more than the Lord would give. It is half right not more. Foot washing has by some been regarded as an ordinance for perpetual observance, but without sufficient reason.

QUESTIONS.—Vs. 1. What made the love of Jesus at this hour remarkable? Chap. x. 28, 29. Vs. 2. For what sum did Judas betray Jesus? Matt. xxvi. 15. What became of the money? Matt. xxvii. 3-8. Vs. 3. Why this reference to his conscious connection with the Father? Vs. 4. Whose office was it to wash the feet of guests? See 1 Sam. xxv. 41. Vs. 5. Were the feet of Judas washed? Ans. Undoubtedly: but what condescension? Vs. 6. Why did Peter resist his Lord? Matt. xx. 28. Vs. 7. As applied to what, is this verse comforting? Compare Prov. xxv. 2; Isa. xiv. 15; 1 Cor. xiii. 22. Vs. 8. Of what is washing an emblem in the Bible? 1 Cor. vi. 11; Tit. iii. 5. What was there in Peter needing to be washed away? Ans. Boastfulness (Matt. xxvi. 33), Passionateness (Matt. xxvi. 51), cowardice (Matt. xxvi. 70), blasphemy (Matt. xxvi. 74). Vs. 9. What was the design of this foot-washing? Verses 12-17. Cf. chap. xv. 12. Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, October 17th, 1875.—Many Mansions.—John xiv. 1-7.

Youths' Department.

THE LORD AND THE DISTILLERS.

WHO GOT THE CORN.

BY THE REV. MANSFIELD FRENCH.

The Saturday evening meeting, which was our first, was closed, and on the way home with a brother he remarked to us: "You touched a hornet's nest to-night." "What do you mean by that my dear brother?" "Did you not see some persons leave the house during the sermon?" said he. "Yes, I observed some four or five leaving."

"You gave a side-cut at the corn question, and that is what they couldn't stand," he replied.

"What are we to understand by that?" "Why, did you not know that all this valley is laid under tribute to the distillers?" was his answer.

"And surely they were not members who went out?"

Most of them were, and more wanted to go, I think," said he.

"Then, God helping, we will draw the sword of the Lord and of Gideon on them to-morrow."

The beautiful village where the meeting was held was on a slope overlooking one of Ohio's broad and fertile valleys, whose fields of corn were measured by square miles, rather than by acres, but whose sky was darkened by black clouds, ever rolling up in all directions from numberless distilleries. Brother B., a man of precious memory, now in Heaven, had invited us to assist him in a "two-days' meeting," and we had gone not knowing what work God had for us to do.

Before Monday dawned the Lord opened the bottles of heaven, the floods came and took possession of all the fields. Work was suspended, and every farmer had leisure and license to devote the first week of the New Year to the Lord, and in laying in a fresh stock of grace for coming needs. Many were brought to see that they needed an increase of grace much more than an increase of money.

The Holy Spirit was poured out abundantly in answer to fervent prayer, and soon sinners were crowding the altar seeking for pardon, while many members of the church were mingled with them praying—some for more grace, and others for the blessing of a clean heart. Among those who were brought to deplore their lack of grace was brother A. While at the altar praying most earnestly this question was suddenly put to him. What will you do with that corn?"

Had this question come to him by the roadside or the crib, from "the agents," he would have understood it; but meeting it at the altar of prayer, where the Holy Spirit deigns oft to talk with men, it wonderfully troubled him. The meeting for that evening was a joyful one to many. Brother A., however, went home unblest, as he thought. The fact was otherwise. He was richly blessed with views of his heart and outward life. So humiliating, however were they that they really seemed more like a misfortune than a blessing.

The week rolled on, and the meetings still continued, but our brother A. came no more among us. All wondered what had become of him. The Lord holds "protracted meetings" sometimes. He was holding one that week, near the corn-cribs, for the special benefit of our absent brother. The meeting was a success, as the Lord's meetings always are. When it broke, brother A., who had been the only attendant, returned to ours to tell what the Lord had done for him. All perceived as he entered that a great change had been wrought in him. When the testimonies began, he rose and said:

"Brethren, I am glad to be among you again. Some of you may have wondered what could have kept me away so long. To tell the truth, the Lord had work for me to do at home. I have had a hard time, but bless the Lord, he helped me through. Glory be to his name for what he has done." Here he paused. His heart was too full for utterance. His whole frame shook while floods of tears poured down his cheeks. On getting some control of his deep emotions he continued:

"Brethren, I went to that altar to seek a clean heart. No sooner had I commenced praying for the blessing than the Spirit put to me this question: 'What will you do with the corn?' 'Corn!' said I to myself, 'why, I did not come here to pray about my corn! I want a clean heart.' I got the subject out of my mind as soon as I

could, and began to pray again. But it was all darkness. My heart was growing very hard. I felt alarmed, and again cried out, 'O Lord, give me a clean heart.' 'What will you do with that corn?' rang again in my ears. Oh, the darkness of that sad hour! Despair was getting hold upon me, when something seemed to say, 'If God will cleanse the inside of the platter, will you cleanse the outside?' 'What does this mean?' I said to myself. The Spirit, as I now believe it was, broke the seal. 'If God will give you a clean heart, will you give him a clean business?' was the response. I at once saw, as never before, the equal need of holiness of life as well as of heart. But, said I to myself, is a pure business life possible? Who in the church or around me, are living such a life? Here the enemy had great power over me. 'Who,' said he, 'will buy your corn but the distillers? And do not they give the highest prices? You are not responsible for the use they make of your grain.' Thus he reasoned with me. I was glad when the meeting closed. I thought it would never end. I went home in thick darkness, sometimes sorry I had ever tried to be a Christian, and then wishing the strange preacher had never come among us.

"After reading a chapter in the Bible next morning, I knelt with my family as usual to pray; but it was all dark; the heavens were as brass over my head. I did not come to meeting that day, but stayed at home and thought and thought all day long. Night came, and still I had no access in prayer. Day after day passed, the darkness all the time increasing. God gave me to see, as never before, how many things are wrong, and how many right things are done in a wrong way in the world. How men toil and sweat, eat and drink, for this life only! How few seem to have the fear of God before them! I saw the grave, and beyond it the Judgment, where we must all give account of our deeds and thoughts. Oh! I saw how worse than in vain that man lives who does not live right before his God. Then the question came, Could I live right? Could I go against the current of the world, and against the practices of so many professors of religion?"

"The enemy of my soul whispered, 'If you do a clean business you will be singular, and your family will come to want.' I was sorry, for the moment, the light had shone on my heart and life, for all my peace and joys had fled before it. But I saw I could not go back. The light must be followed, or I should lose my soul. And yet I feared and hesitated. The clouds grew darker still, and God seemed about to leave me. It was an awful moment. Setting a chair in the middle of the room, I fell on my knees before the Lord. 'O Lord, have mercy, have mercy!' I cried. He would not hear my cry. I could now see nothing before me but the corn-cribs and the distillery. A mountain wave roled over my poor heart. I thought I should die. The pains of hell got hold of me. In my agony I cried, 'O Lord, I will sell no more corn to the distillers. It may rot in the crib, or the fowls of the air may carry it off kernel by kernel. Give me a clean heart and I will give thee a clean business.' Glory to God! no sooner was the vow uttered than I felt the all-cleansing blood applied to my poor heart. The clouds gave way, and salvation, love, and joy came pouring into my soul. Oh, bless the Lord for his amazing grace and saving power!"

"And now, brethren, the platter is cleansed inside and out; all is on the altar, and I am in for a clean business—a holy heart and life. Oh, hallelujah, my soul is full! Glory be to God and the Lamb forever!" The congregation, up to this point, had repressed, as far as possible, the rising tide of love and joy in their hearts, but when brother A. proclaimed the final victory of grace in his soul, every barrier seemed to give way. Tears flowed, hands clapped, tongues loosened, and, for some moments, there was a general storm of praise to God, like as of old when the ark of the Lord was brought into the camp, and "all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again."

Right here, golden harps would have come in play, but they had none, so they did the next best thing. With voices loud and clear they sang:

"All hail the power of Jesus' name! Let angels prostrate fall; Bring forth the royal diadem, And crown him Lord of all."

But there were some in the house, who found the sword of the Lord and of Gideon too sharp for them. It had cut them to the heart. And after a few moments of almost oppressive awe and suspense, brother M., a

mechanic, rose, and with deep feeling said: "Brethren, I am a poor man, you all know, and I have to work hard for a living for my family; but, the Lord being my helper, I have made the last whiskey barrel. I will give God a clean business, too, and I don't believe he will let me suffer for doing it."

Amen and amen, rang out from all parts of the house. The holy fire spread, and many inscribed on their lands and over the door posts of their business, "Holiness to the Lord."

The trial test of brother A's faith will be better appreciated when something further is known of his position. He had to meet a heavy mortgage on his farm in the coming Autumn. His corn, then in the cribs, was his only reserve. The distillers, the highest bidders by far in the market, had made him their best offer. If he should accept the offer, he would fall short, by nearly a thousand dollars, of enough to cancel the mortgage. No other market was open to him, except he transported his crop, at a heavy expense and a great distance, to Cincinnati. He had concluded in his own mind, under these circumstances, just before the meeting commenced, to accept the distiller's offer, although he had not yet notified the agent. When he decided to withdraw, altogether and forever, from the distiller's foul market, his prospects were very dark. But he ventured his all upon God. Now for the result. A wide-spread drought ensued through that region the coming Summer, nearly doubling the price of corn; every bushel being now needed for food for man or beast. While others had emptied their cribs into the distiller's vortex of ruin, his were full. He then saw that God had opened his way to carry out his vow, "to do a clean business." With clean hands he now enters the Lord's market, and sells his corn at an advance above the distiller's offer, sufficient to pay off all his mortgage. How grandly in this case did God verify his promise, "He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, he shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation."—N. Y. Methodist.

THE GROWTH OF LONDON.

The Leisure Hour, in speaking of the growth of London, says, The metropolis of the British Empire, the largest city the world ever saw, covers, within fifteen miles radius of Charing Cross, nearly 700 square miles, and numbers within these boundaries 4,000,000 inhabitants. It contains more Jews than the whole of Palestine, more Roman Catholics than Rome itself, more Irish than Dublin, more Scotch than Edinburgh. The port of London has every day on its wharves 1,000 ships, and 9,000 sailors. Upwards of 1200 persons are added to the population daily, or 40,000 yearly a birth taking place every five minutes, and a death every eight minutes. On an average, twenty-eight miles of streets are opened and 9,000 new houses built every year. In its postal districts there is a yearly delivery of 238,000,000 letters. On the police register there are the names of 120,000 habitual criminals, increasing by many thousands every year. More than one-third of all the crime of the country is committed in London, or at least brought to light there. There are as many beer shops and gin-palaces as would, if their fronts were placed side by side, reach from Charing Cross to Portsmouth, a distance of seventy-three miles, and 38,000 drunkards are annually brought before its magistrates. The shops open on Sunday would form a street sixty miles long. It is estimated that there are a million of the people who are practically heathen, wholly neglecting the ordinances of religion. At least 9,000 additional churches and chapels would be required for the wants of the people.

PLUCKING OUT THE RIGHT EYE.—Miss Eastman writes that the mission school at Toungoo embraces 125 pupils, of whom forty are girls. Many of the pupils are from heathen villages. Lessons in the Old and New Testament and Catechism form part of the instruction of every day. Nearly an hour every forenoon is devoted to music. The Karens when trained, sing beautifully. An interesting notice is given of a Red Karen boy, a Christian, who, on being asked his idea of the meaning of the passage, "If thy right eye offend thee pluck it out," said he thought he could illustrate it, which he did as follows: "I love my father and my mother, but they are heathens. I cannot persuade them to become Christians, I cannot worship God if I stay with them; so I have left them. I think this is plucking out the right eye."