

The Christian Messenger.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1875.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, September 5th, 1875.—The Light of the World.—John ix. 1-11.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."—Psalm cxix. 18.

ANALYSIS.—I. Observation. Vs. 1, 11. Speculation. Vs. 2, 11. Answer. Vs. 3-5. IV. Miracle wrought. Vs. 6, 7. V. Wonder expressed. Vs. 8, 9. VI. Beggar interviewed. Vs. 10, 11.

EXPOSITION.—Verse 1.—And as Jesus passed by. This refers to viii. 59, where the word "Temple" means the whole Jewish sanctuary, including its spacious open courts, in which the mad Jews might find stones to cast at him. He had passed beyond and came to the blind man near the entrance to the Temple, favorable for beggars. He saw a man which was blind from his birth. When he was weeping for his life. This shows his calmness. That he was born blind, the man may have told to explain his beggary and excite sympathy; and the Evangelist tells it to bring out the magnitude and meaning of the miracle.

Verse 2.—And his disciples asked him. Master [Rabbi], who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? They assume it as an unquestionable fact that all unusual affliction in this life is punishment for unusual sin. Ex. xx. 5. This was the prevalent view. Vs. 3. It knew no other end for suffering than simply and purely punishment.

Verse 3.—Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents. Of course, meaning that they had not so specially sinned as the question implied, as in Luke xiii. 1-5, Christ here denies that one's personal afflictions are simply punishments, and hence measures of particular sin. We instinctively and rightly believe in the necessary connection of sin and suffering. But that the works of God should be made manifest in him. This man's suffering, aside from all penal relation to sin, whether in the man or in others, was to be, and so was designed to be, the occasion to reveal the mercy and power of God—reveal it to him and to others, and so reveal the Gospel of salvation. Thus is it of most, if not of all, the sufferings of earth. Even if to an individual or a community there be a stroke which to the stricken is retribution, to the observers it is warning, and hence mercy. God rules the world in love, by and for the Redeemer. Precious to the saints is the comfort of this high truth.

Verse 4.—I must work the works of him that sent me. God's will carries to every servant and child of God the highest necessity—it is a supreme "must." Alas, that so few know that will to reverence and obey it, and are thus at one with Jesus. While it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work. These last words are plainly a proverb. Christ applies it to himself. His death would end his life-work, this form of it. This was his opportunity for this work, given him to do just this. Every opportunity is the day, and the only day for just the work presented by the opportunity. The Saviour does not here mean that he ceases all work at death. He often taught that after death he would work on forever. But his work after death was after-death work—other in form than that before. To each work its time, and each work in its time. Our life-work in life, and so we fit ourselves for the achievements which shall follow.

Verse 5.—As long as [when, i. e., while] I am in the world, I am the light of the world. Here he refers to himself in the years of his public ministry, as the Light of the world. Of course, he does not mean that before his birth the world had no light, or that after his death it will be in darkness only. He knew that from him went forth the light which had shone from the beginning, and would more brightly shine till the end. But it was from him, Jesus Christ, God in the flesh. He makes our day, is our sun, reveals to us our world and our work. This reference to himself, like the remark about the day, is suggested by the beggar's blindness, to whom all time had been night, and who had been thus made a beggar by inability to work, but to whom Christ was about to give and become light, both temporal and spiritual, in the eyes of both body and spirit.

Verse 6.—When he had thus spoken. Before he began his miracle he aroused attention. He spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle, and anointed, etc. On this Trench remarks: "A medicinal value

was attributed, in old time, to saliva, and we have a similar instance of its use in the case of another blind man (Mark viii. 23), and also in the case of one who was suffering not from the same defect, but from a defect in the organs of hearing (Mark vii. 33); neither are we altogether without examples of the medicinal use of clay." He however properly rejects the notion that it was used merely as a medicine, or as aiding in any way the mere work of restoration; but finds in it rather an aid to the man's weak faith, as an external appliance.

Verse 7.—And said unto him, Go, wash in the Pool of Siloam. These waters are frequently mentioned in Scripture as though specially sacred. Christ begins the healing by the anointing. He then requires the man, as the prophet did Naaman, to do something himself. He went his way therefore and washed, and came seeing. He obeyed, and hence was blessed. His faith in Christ had been awakened, and was shown by works. He received according to his faith and works. The lesson for us is clear.

Verse 8.—The neighbors, etc., said. This talk of the neighbors may have gone on for days. Nothing here indicates the time. Is not this he that sat and begged? The first question was as to identity. Such a change, so great, so sudden, so without means, seemed incredible. The change of regeneration is always in fact, if not in appearance, thus wonderful—from darkness to light, from blindness to sight.

Verse 9.—Some said. Different opinions expressed, according to the degree of acquaintance with the man. He said, I am he. He heard their disputes and he knew his own experience. He testifies to what he knew, by experience. So should a Christian man.

Verse 10.—How were thine eyes opened? A most natural question.

Verse 11.—A man that is called Jesus. Here is the Gospel preached—how simply, how fitly! Jesus did thus and thus; I did as he bade me; I see—that is all I know.

QUESTIONS.—Vs. 2. Why did the disciples ask this question? Is misfortune always due to personal sin? See Luke xiii. 14. Are afflictions ever the occasion of great blessings? Heb. xii. 11.

Vs. 3. How were the "works of God" made manifest in the blind man? What is meant by "while it is day"? What by "when no man can work"? Eccles. ix. 10. When is the day of our salvation? 2 Cor. vi. 2.

Vs. 3. What appropriateness was there in Christ calling himself on this occasion the light of the world? Who now reveals this light? John xiv. 26.

Vs. 6. Why did he use these means? Did he do so invariably?

Vs. 7. Where was the Pool of Siloam? Who was bidden to wash in the Jordan, to heal his leprosy? Is obedience tested by results, or the reverse?

Vs. 11. What character does the restored man display? Ans. Straightforward manliness. Where does it further appear? Vs. 24, 25. What practical lesson does this teach us? Ans. That a truthful statement of a personal experience of religion is an argument which the mightiest opponent cannot overcome.

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, September 12th, 1875.—The Good Shepherd.—John x. 1-11.

Youths' Department.

GETTING A PICTURE.

BY ERSKINE M. HAMILTON.

"Oh My," was the baby's name at the start. You see, when Master Georgie was called in to see his little sister for the first time, Aunt Mary asked him:

"Well, Georgie, what name shall we give the baby?"

Georgie did not answer. He stood for some time with his plump hands planted on his knees, gazing down into the cradle with the utmost surprise, and astonishment. Then in a burst of sudden admiration, he exclaimed:

"Oh my!"

And Oh My was all the name the baby had for a long time after that, when by common consent it finally settled down to Amy. However, the admiration Georgie had so fully expressed at first sight was kept up, and when the baby was able to walk the two were almost constantly together. And the baby became as fond of Georgie as he was of her; wherever Georgie went Amy was sure to go.

One summer afternoon, when mamma was very busy in the kitchen, Georgie trudged in from the back-yard leading Miss Amy by the hand.

"Say, mamma," he asked, "don't you guess Amy's picture ought to be took?"

"Perhaps so; we will have it taken sometime," answered mamma, turning to some bread she had in the oven.

"Don't you guess maybe I had better take it?"

Mamma did not reply; she was taking out the bread and placing it on the table.

"Say, mamma, don't you guess so?"

"I suppose so," answered mamma at last thinking it some new play Georgie had in view. "I hope you will make a good picture if you try."

"Well, mamma says we may, so come along Amy," and Georgie took his little sisters hand and passed out of the yard.

Now it is very probable if Georgie's mother had known what he intended she would not have consented so readily; but as it was she went on with her baking. With Georgie it was different. He knew what he meant to do if his mother did not, and still holding his sister's hand he passed out a side gate on to the street.

"Now we'll go to the picture man's and get our pictures took just like big folks, won't we?" he said.

"Yes," answered Amy, submissively.

To be sure they were not in a very good plight for having pictures taken; Georgie's face and hands were far from being clean, his clothes decorated with spots of mud, while Amy's face and once white apron told her fondness for raspberry jam; but what of that? Such trifles were not considered for a moment by the children, and they trudged down the street very gravely indeed.

Although it was quite a long walk, Georgie knew the way; he had been over it before, and after numerous stoppings to look in at the shop windows, he and Amy arrived at the photograph gallery. Then they climbed the stairs and entered a richly furnished room. As they did so, a pleasant looking gentleman came out from another room to meet them.

"Hello, little ones! what can I do for you," he asked, looking merrily at his two very small, and very soiled visitors.

"We want our pictures took," answered Georgie, soberly.

The gentleman began to laugh.

"Well, you don't look in a very taking condition," he said. "Did your mother know you were coming?"

"Yes, sir; she said I might come and get Amy's picture," replied Georgie.

"She did, eh? Well why didn't she wash your faces and dress you in clean clothes before you came?"

"I—she didn't—I guess, maybe, she forgot about it," stammered Georgie; "but I guess it won't show much in the picture—not very much."

"Perhaps not," laughed the gentleman. Then his face assumed a look of pretended seriousness. "Have you any money to pay for them?" he asked.

Money! to be sure they needed money to get the picture! Georgie hadn't thought of that, and he hardly knew what to say.

"I haven't got but two cents," he said after a moment's silence, fumbling in his pockets in a troubled way; "but then," his face brightening, "my papa will pay for 'em. My papa has got lots of money; as much as—twenty dollars, I guess."

"Indeed! why, he must be surprisingly wealthy," and the gentleman laughed again. "What is your papa's name?"

"Mr. Curtis, and he keeps a bank."

"Mr. Curtis! oh yes, I know him. Well, I will take your pictures. I want them anyhow," he added to himself: "they look so cute standing there." Then he spoke to the children. "Now remain just as you are for a few minutes."

The operation was not a long one, but it was all Georgie could do to stand still and keep Amy from moving about. Indeed it was difficult to keep still himself. However, after several trials, the picture was successfully taken, when the gentleman said it would be several days before they could have copies to take home. Georgie was a little disappointed at not getting them right away, but he said nothing, and turned to go.

"Wait a moment," said the gentleman, taking some money from his pocket, "here is ten cents to buy candy with."

"You're just the nicest kind of a picture man, and we'll come again!" exclaimed Georgie, in a burst of gratitude.

The gentleman only laughed, and watched his small customers until they passed down the stairs to the street.

"Now we'll go and buy lots of nice things, and then we'll go home," said Georgie.

Amy's only reply was to take her brother's hand, and they began their search for the "nice things."

But it was a long search. Ten cents

would not buy so much as Georgie had thought, and after going into a number of stores they finally purchased two small oranges and a few sticks of candy. And then, when they went on the street again, Georgie could not remember which way they came. They were lost.

"O dear! I don't know what we'll do now!" said Georgie, looking anxiously up and down the street.

Amy did not answer; she had perfect confidence in Georgie's ability to keep out of trouble, and waited contentedly for his motion. At last he started up the street for some distance, then he turned back the other way, and finally began to explore a side street, but nowhere could he find any object that seemed familiar. On and on they wandered for a long time until Amy became so tired that she began to cry, and sank down on a doorstep. Georgie tried to encourage her to go on, but his own heart failed him, and he sat down beside in despair.

"Hello! What is the matter here?" questioned a pleasant voice just then, and a gentleman stopped before them.

Georgie recognized the voice at once; it belonged to Mr. Burton, the cashier of his father's bank.

"Oh, Mr. Burton! Mr. Burton!" he exclaimed, laughing and sobbing together "we're lost."

"Why Georgie Curtis! is this you. How came you here?" asked the gentleman in surprise.

"We came to get our pictures took," replied Georgie, and then he told the whole story.

Mr. Burton listened and laughed, and by the time the story was told Georgie was himself again. A passing carriage was called and soon the two tired little wanderers were safe at home. And oh how glad they were to get there, and how glad mamma was to see them. They had been missed, and search made in every place it was thought possible for them to be.

But the day's adventure made a profound impression on Georgie, and after supper he sat a considerable time thinking about it.

"My being lost to-day makes me think of my Bible text," he said.

"What is it?" asked mamma.

"All we like sheep have gone astray," repeated Georgie, slowly.

"Do you know the last part of the verse?"

George shook his head.

"It is this," said mamma, "and I want you to remember it: 'The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.'—Methodist."

HOW SAINT PAUL LOOKED.

Some years since the pastor of a New England village church adopted a plan to interest the members of his flock in the study of the bible. It was this: At the Wednesday evening meeting he would give out some topic to be discussed on the ensuing week, thus giving a week for them to study up. One week the subject was St. Paul. After the preliminary devotional exercises, the pastor called upon the deacons to "speak to the question." One immediately arose and began to describe the personal appearance of the great apostle of the Gentiles. He said Paul was a tall, rather spare man, with black hair and eyes, dark complexion, bilious temperament, etc. His picture of Paul was a faithful portrait of himself. He sat down, and another pillar of the church arose and said: "I think the brother preceding me has read the Scripture to little purpose if his description of St. Paul is a sample of his Biblical knowledge. St. Paul was, as I understand it, a rather short thick man, with sandy hair, gray eyes, florid complexion, and a nervous, sanguine temperament," giving like his predecessor, an accurate picture of himself. He was followed by another who has a keen sense of the ludicrous, and who was withal an inveterate stammerer. He spoke as follows: "My bre-bre-brethren, I have never never found in my Bible much ab-a-boat the p-per-sonal ap-pe-pearance of St. P-p-paul. But one thing is clearly established th-that is, Saint P-a-Paul had an im-pediment in his speech." The effect can be imagined.

SCOTTISH CHARACTERISTICS.

A Scotsman is always afraid of expressing unqualified praise. If you remark that "It's a good day," the usual reply is, "Aweel, sir, I've seen waur." If you say his wife is an excellent woman he returns, "She's no a bad body." A buxom lass smartly dressed, is no sae very unpurpose-like." The richest rarest viands are "No

bad." A man noted for his benevolence is "No the wairst man i' the worl'd." And should anybody make a remark, however novel, that squares with a Scotsman's idea he will at once say, "That's what I've often thoocht!"

Old Armstrong, the laird of Sobietrees, in Liddesdale, had been attending one of those convivial meetings of neighbor lairds, common in the district in the last century. He had, as was usual with him, drunk over much, so that on crossing the ford of the river Liddell, he fell from his horse partially into the water. He was discovered in the morning by one of his people, his head resting on one margin of the current. As a ripple of the stream occasionally touched his mouth, he exclaimed, believing that he was still in the banqueting place, "Nae mair, I thank ye; not a single drap mair."

"READING IS NOT SPEAKING."

Some who object to the use of manuscript in the pulpit enforce their view by the assertion that reading is not speaking; and if so, it is not preaching. One may think them right in this, without agreeing in their unqualified condemnation of preaching with the aid of notes. To speak with the aid of the manuscript is not the same thing as merely to read.

But there is another side to this maxim, or rather, another application of it. "Reading is not speaking"; but in too many pulpits the Bible is read as if the reader were uttering his own ideas. He looks on the book, and looks off again, finishing a sentence with the emphasis of eyes directed to the people, as well as with that of an oratorical delivery. But he who stands up to read the word of God in the hearing of the congregation ought to beware of putting himself between the word and the people. The scriptures should be simply, clearly, reverently read, never declaimed: Too much anxiety for what is called an effective style of reading, a too careful emphasis, gives an impression that the reader is endeavoring to add some force of his own to the Divine Word. Thoughts that have weight make themselves felt all the more, when the attention is not withdrawn to contemplate the style of utterance.

NEW CASES, in Ex. & Chron.

POPULAR-FOLLIES.—That you can receive one dollar a day, spend two, and get rich. Refuse to do a man a favor and then refuse at another time won't make him twice as mad as if you had refused him at first.

That when a man presents you with a bound pup that the gift will cost you nothing.

That when you buy on credit, knowing very well that you won't be able to pay, it is not stealing.

That next year the taxes are to be lighter.

That if you have a good cause in love, war or law, pitch in, you are bound to win.

That when you buy a horse he will be sure to turn out as represented.

That if you always say what you think, you will win the regard of the entire community.

Temperance.

"BETTER TAKE A SHEEP TOO."

A valuable friend and able farmer, about the time the temperance reform was beginning to exert a healthful influence, said to his newly-hired man:

"Jonathan, I did not think to mention to you when I hired you, that I shall try and have my work done this year without rum. How much must I give you to do without it."

"O," said Jonathan, "I don't care much about it. You may give me what you please."

"Well," said the farmer, "in the fall I will give you a sheep if you do without rum."

"Agreed."

"Father, will you give me a sheep too, if I do without rum?" asked the elder son.

"Yes, you shall have a sheep if you do without."

The youngest son then said, "If I do without, father, will you give me a sheep?"

"Yes, Chandler, you shall have a sheep, too."

Presently Chandler speaks once more.

"Father, hadn't you better take a sheep, too?"

The farmer shook his head; he hardly thought that he could give up the "critter" yet; but the appeal came from a source not easily to be disregarded, and the result was that the demon rum was then forthwith banished from the premises, to the great joy and ultimate happiness of all concerned.—Christian Advocate.