

The Christian Messenger.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1875.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, September 19th, 1875.—The Resurrection and the Life.—John xi. 34-44.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death."—Hosea xiii. 14.

ANALYSIS.—I. Question answered. Vs. 34. II. Silent tears. Vs. 35. III. Differing judgments. Vs. 36, 37. IV. Groaning at the grave. Vs. 38. V. Human aid enlisted. Vs. 39-41. VI. Prayer. Vs. 41, 42. VII. Lazarus raised. Vs. 43, 44.

NOTE.—The chief interest of Bethany to us is in connection with Lazarus and his two sisters, Mary and Martha. It lies on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, about fifteen furlongs (one and a half miles) south-east from Jerusalem. It is now a small village of about twenty houses, occupied by Arabs, called El-Lazarith. There is mention of Christ's presence in Bethany but once before the resurrection of Lazarus, Luke x. 38-42. Subsequent to this event he made it a convenient and loving resting-place in his journeys to and from the feasts. It was from Bethany he went to his crucifixion. With reference to the raising of Lazarus, observe—1. His sickness, vs. 1; 2. The message sent to Jesus, vs. 3; 3. His intentional delay, vs. 4-6; 4. His departure from Peræa "beyond Jordan," vs. 7; 5. His purpose revealed, vs. 11; 6. His conversation with Martha, vs. 20-27; 7. His mysterious groaning, vs. 33.

EXPOSITION.—Verse 34.—And said, Where have ye laid him? Christ's words, spoken to the sisters. It is but a part of the sentence which begins with vs. 33. He was profoundly moved, and in part with displeasure, as the Greek word translated "groaned" shows. The lamentation of the sisters, and their Jewish friends, seems to have brought vividly to his consciousness, sin, man's great, sole enemy, and hence Christ's, working universal death and woe. Lord, come and see. Said by the sisters, who promptly lead the way, in tender, affectionate sorrow, as when we take to the new-made grave of a friend, a common friend too late arrived for the funeral, but also, possibly, with some trembling remnant of the nearly vanished hope that Christ might even yet save the beloved from death's clutch. So simple, so sadly solemn, this "Come and see."

Verse 35.—Jesus wept. Briefest, saddest, sweetest verse in all the Bible. Jesus is the human name of our Lord, though, as meaning Salvation or Saviour, it does imply the divine. The tears of sympathetic affection were of Christ's human nature, though the divine also enters into such grief. In the original, the word translated weep in verse 33, designates rather lamentation; but here, that grief which flows forth in falling tears. Jesus stands before us now, mighty, almighty, to conquer death; yet so tenderly, lovingly gentle, nurse-like, child-like, mother-like—the great High Priest, but touched with the feeling of our infirmities. So above us, yet so of us. Cruelty, hardness, insensibility, stoicism—no one of these belong to greatness, least of all to Christian life. Christianity refines, not kills, sensibility. It makes perfect in all that belongs to a pure and genuine humanity. Not one of the natural relations of life that is not made by it beautiful and sacred. How we love to linger and look into those two words, "Jesus wept," so full of heavenly attraction, of heavenly comfort, bringing Christ so near to us, so near to him—a window through which we look into Christ's never-changing heart, and from which streams into the world's sorrowing heart the healing light of love divine.

Verse 36.—Then said the Jews. Who had come from Jerusalem as mourners to condole with the sisters. Vs. 19, comp. vs. 31. Their purpose is one of several indications that the family was in good repute and position. Behold how he loved him. Said, seemingly in good faith, with natural surprise and approbation. They doubtless knew that pretence was alien to his character, as it should be to ours. Christ's consciousness and sympathy embraced more than what was present to sight.

Verse 37.—And [but] some of them said, Could not this man, etc. These Jews also were of the friends of the family, but of a spirit most unlike that of the sisters and of the other Jews. They were of a hostile spirit, ready to turn anything, no matter what, against Christ.

Verse 38.—Jesus, therefore, again groaning in himself, cometh to the grave. Groaning, as in verse 33, rather an expression indignation. See on verse 34. Here it was immediately occasioned, in part, at least, by the hostile demonstrations just noticed, "the contradiction of sinners against himself." It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Persons of means among the Jews were wont to have private burying places on their own property. They were sometimes in a hill-side, in which case the door was upright, as to a house. Sometimes, as in this case, they were excavated from above, and a stone laid flat over the opening.

Verse 39.—Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. The stone mentioned in vs. 38, which would be flat, and of considerable weight, as its size was sufficient to serve as a door. Martha saith . . . Lord, by this time he stinketh. She makes answer as though she thought his wish was simply as a friend to see the corpse, and that for the moment he had forgotten the long interval since the death. She, too, may have instinctively shrank from an exposure of the body at such a late date. For he hath been dead four days. Jesus had been in retirement beyond Jordan. (x. 40), a day's journey from Bethany. On hearing of the sickness of Lazarus he waited two days before starting, vs. 6. Thus it appears that Lazarus died the same day the messenger was sent to Jesus. The length of time seems to have made quite hopeless in Martha's view the prospect of miraculous aid.

Verse 40.—Said I not unto thee that if thou wouldst, etc. See vs. 21-27, especially vs. 26. Other words more exactly corresponding to this reply of Christ's may have been spoken. Thus is made to appear more clearly Martha's wrong in objecting to the command to open the tomb. "The glory of God," is the manifestation of any of God's perfections. The resurrection of Lazarus revealed not simply power, but all that which moved God to put forth his power—especially his grace.

Verse 41.—Then [accordingly] they took away the stone, etc. The clearer revelation of his purpose did what his simple command should have done. Blessed the servant who obeys without question or objection. Praise to the Master who bears even with questions and objections. Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said. We associate together the ideas of God and elevation, God's home and the material heavens. This is natural, and hence the naturalness of looking up in prayer. Father, I thank thee. Thanksgiving, not petition, the familiar, yet reverent address of a son to a father. The petition had preceded, and the assurance of its answer Christ had.

Verse 42.—Because of the people, etc. Speech is to convey thought to men, rather than to God. Christ's communion with the Father was silent, inward, perpetual, conscious. It was expressed only when circumstances required, but then not as a hollow form.

Verse 43.—He cried with a loud voice. The voice was for the living, not the dead, but was a sign of his power to waken the dead though long dead, and to appearance doubly difficult to waken. Lazarus, come forth. From the now open tomb.

Verse 44.—How quickly Lazarus obeyed! Death was vanquished. Sign and pledge of the final conquest and the general resurrection.

GENERAL QUESTIONS.—Where was Bethany? What family of interest lived in it? What member of it was taken sick? To whom did the sisters send? What did they say? vs. 3. Did Jesus leave Peræa immediately? Why not? How long did he delay? What wonderful words did he say to Martha? Vs. 25, 26.

QUESTIONS.—Vs. 34. Why did Jesus ask this question?

Vs. 35. What have you to say of these tears? What great cause of death occasioned them? Rom. v. 12. Did Jesus weep at any other time? Luke xiv. 41.

Vs. 36. Is personal friendship consistent with piety? Whom should we love? 2 Cor. vi. 14.

Vs. 38. Will you describe this cave? Was it a common mode of burial? Matt. xxvii. 60. Does not the family in Bethany seem to have a competence? Matt. xxvi. 6, 7.

Vs. 39. Why this command to these sisters? Does it teach any lesson to us?

Vs. 40. What is meant by "the glory of God"? Who is the Prince of life? Vs. 25; Rev. i. 8.

Vs. 41. Why did Jesus pray by this grave? Ans. To show that he did nothing without his Father. Was his prayer in Gethsemane heard? Heb. v. 8.

Vs. 43. When again did he utter a loud voice? Matt. xxvii. 50. When will his voice be louder yet? 1 Thess. iv. 16. Had

Jesus referred to this last event? Chap. v. 28, 29.

Vs. 44. Were the evidences of this miracle confirmed? Vs. 7. In summing up the events connected with this miracle, what should we say was the glory of the gospel? 2 Tim. i. 10. What resurrection is coming? 1 Cor. xv. 5-55.

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, September 26th, 1857.—REVIEW. Christ Rejected.—John xi. 47-53.

Youths' Department.

IN THE ROUGH.

The marble was pure and white Though only a block at best, But the artist, with inward sight, Looked further than all the rest, And saw in the hard, rough stone, The loveliest statue the sun shone on.

So he set to work with care And chiselled a form of grace— A figure divinely fair, With a tender, beautiful face; But the blows were hard and fast That brought from the marble that work at last.

So I think that human lives Must bear to God's chisel keen, If the spirit yearns and strives For the better life unseen, For men are only blocks at best, Till the chiselling brings out all the rest.

WHAT ONE APPLE DID.

In a small house on the outskirts of Salisbury lived old Job Peterson. No one lived in the house with him but his little grandson Ben. Back of the house was a little garden in which Job raised his potatoes and cabbages; in front was a small grassy yard, in which, by the side of the door, grew a tall apple-tree—a constant source of delight to little Ben, who was so lame that he could not get about from place to place without help. Every morning old Job's kind but rough hands helped him in his washing and dressing; then, when breakfast was over, he lifted him into his chair, which in winter stood by the window arranged the pillows and soft cushions, placed his toys and picture-books within reach, and then left him till dinner time. The afternoon was spent by little Ben alone; but when the day's work was over, his grandfather came with him in the evenings. On rainy days, and in the evenings, when he was too tired, he had taught little Ben to read, and by books from the children he knew, he kept the poor child supplied with reading matter. But in the summer Ben's chair was by the open door, shaded by the long arms of the old apple-tree. You children who can run about and play, and see so many things, can scarcely imagine the pleasure Ben took in watching all the changes of that one tree, from the first putting on its leaf-buds, and its pink and white blossoms, till the limbs were covered with their dense foliage; nor how regretfully he watched the leaves begin to fall, and knew that the cold weather must ere long begin again and shut him within his four walls. His keen eyes spied out every pair of birds which began house-building in its branches, and the progress of the little builders was of great interest to him. How Ben loved the summer and his apple-tree, and how he fairly sang with joy when his grandfather, having a little leisure at home, would lift his chair out in the grassy yard where the wind blew gently on his face, and he realized the joy, so seldom his, of being out-of-doors.

Ben had one trouble. A big boy, named John Smith, who lived on the same street, took intense delight in teasing him. Morning, noon and night, he kept it up. He rarely passed Ben's window, or saw the child seated at the door, without mocking his lameness, or daring him to come out and run a race. The child had read in the New Testament about the Lord Jesus, who forgave his enemies, he really wanted to forgive John Smith, and make friends with him; but, as he sorrowfully told his grandfather, John would not let him.

One day old Job was finishing off a piece of work in a great hurry. He had been hired to put away a supply of coal; night was coming on, and he had still much to do. He had just filled two baskets with coal and was preparing to lift it into the cellar, when a little girl, who lived in the adjoining house, took a notion, as she came home from school to clamber over the pile of coal. Her foot slipped, and in her fall she struck the full basket, rolling them over and emptying them. Old Job was not generally impatient, but things had been contrary that day, and the old man was tired; therefore he astonished the little girl, who was accustomed to his usually kind face and

pleasant voice, by his harsh words and sharp reprimand.

"I didn't mean to do it; I'm sorry," she said, and passed into the house.

There she was met by her mother with a large, rosy-cheeked apple, a perfect beauty. Apples were scarce that season, and her mother was very much surprised to hear her say, as she looked at the beautiful fruit, "I won't eat this apple; I'll give it to old Job."

"Why will you do that?" said her mother.

"Because I was careless and knocked over his coal; he scolded me about it, and I'm sorry for him. I'll give him this, and perhaps he'll forgive me."

Old Job was heartily ashamed of his harsh words by the time the child had entered the house, and when she returned with the apple, he wanted to refuse it.

"No, no, little one," he said, "keep your apple. Job is sorry he spoke so cross."

But the little girl insisted, and so the old man took it, but as he put it into his pocket he said:

"I won't eat this apple; I'll take it to my little Ben."

That night Ben received the apple, and an account of the circumstances which had caused the little girl to give it. Now Ben had long been wanting an opportunity to do a favor to John Smith, that he might turn him into a friend, and he thought here was a chance.

"Grandpa," said he, "I won't eat this apple; please let me give it to John Smith."

The old man looked at him with a queer smile, but only answered, "You may do as you like."

Next morning Job went as usual to work, but before he started he placed the carefully treasured gift within Ben's reach. Poor Ben! It was a sacrifice to him to give away the apple, for fruit was a rarity to him; but he remembered a verse [which spoke of kindness to an enemy "as coals of fire upon his head," and he had fully determined upon the sacrifice.

He looked patiently up and down the street for hours. At last the object of his search came in sight, and no sooner was he in speaking distance than he began with taunts and nick-names. Ben rattled on the window, and beckoned so earnestly, that John was enticed into the yard, and at Ben's repeated invitation through the closed window, he opened the door, and came into the house, saying as he did so:

"What do you want with me, broken-back?"

"I want to give you this," said Ben, holding up the apple. "I kept it for you; grandpa said I might; he gave it to me."

"You want to give it to me! what for?"

"Because I want you to be kind to me. O! it is so hard to be lame and have to stay all by myself, and not run about like other boys. And please be friends with me, and don't call me ugly names;" and the tears came into Ben's eyes as he spoke.

Now John began to feel really ashamed of himself, for he had not meant to be cruel; he had not thought how much his words hurt little Ben.

"Well, boy, keep your apple. I'm sorry I hurt your feelings; I'll stop it, though. There, now, don't cry."

"Then you'll be friends? But please take the apple."

"No, keep it yourself."

"But I don't want it now. I've kept it for you. Please take it."

John Smith took the apple to please Ben; but as he thought it all over, he had no appetite for it, and he felt really ashamed to eat it.

"I won't eat this apple," said he. "I'll give it to Joe and Jane, and I'll be kinder to them, too."

Joe and Jane, his little brother and sister, were wonderfully surprised when John divided that large apple between them, and would not even take a bit himself. But they grew accustomed to John's kinder treatment after a while, for he zopped teasing Jane's cat, and helped Joe's dog out of trouble, and to make a long story short from day to day he began to be a better boy. Often, after that, when old Job was busy, John would find time to lift the lame boy's chair into the yard, and many were the kind turns he did for him.

So you see how a good deed and a soft word kept moving on.—Hearth and Home.

STOP MY PAPER.—The man who cries "Stop my paper," because a journal, whose general character he thoroughly approves, differs from him in judgment on some single point, is second cousin to the man who stalks indignantly out of church, because the minister is bold enough to say something that does not exactly please him. Once or twice we have heard from such, and we sincerely pity him; for his rash, fiery temperament injures himself far more than it can possibly harm any one else.—Canadian Baptist.

SUNDAY.

The Sundays of man's life, Threaded together on Time's string, Make bracelets to adorn the wife Of the eternal, glorious King. On Sunday heaven's gate stands open; Blessings are plentiful and rife, More plentiful than hope.

Thou art a day of mirth; And where the week-days trail on ground, Thy flight is higher, as thy birth, Oh let me take thee at the bound, Leaping with thee from seven to seven Till that we both, being tossed from east, Fly hand in hand to heaven.

A THOUSAND BOYS WANTED.

There are always boys enough in the market,—but some of them are of very little use. The kind that are always wanted are:—

- 1. Honest 2. Pure 3. Intelligent 4. Active 5. Industrious 6. Obedient 7. Steady 8. Obliging 9. Polite 10. Neat. Fully one thousand first-rate pieces are open for a thousand boys who come up to the standard. Each boy can suit his taste as to the kind of business he would prefer. The places are ready in every kind of occupation.

Many of these places of trade and art are already filled by boys who lack some of the most important points, but they will soon be vacant. One is an office not far from where we write. The lad who has the situation is losing his first point. He likes to attend the circus and the theatre. This costs more money than he can afford, but somehow he manages to be there frequently. His employers are quietly watching to learn how he gets so much spending money; they will soon discover a leak in the money-drawer, detect the dishonest boy, and his place will be ready for some one who is now getting ready for it by observing point No. 1, and being truthful in all his ways.

Some situation will soon be vacant because the boys have been poisoned by reading bad books, such as they would not dare to show to their fathers, and would be ashamed to have their mothers see. The impure thoughts suggested by these books will lead to vicious acts; the boys will be ruined, and their places must be filled. Who will be ready for one of these vacancies?

Distinguished lawyers, useful ministers, skillful physicians, successful merchants must all soon leave their places for somebody else to fill. One by one they are removed by death. Mind your ten points, boys; they will prepare you to step into vacancies in the front rank. Every man who is worthy to employ a boy is looking for you if you have these points. Do not fear that you will be overlooked. A young person having these qualities will shine as a star at night.

We have named ten points that go toward making up the character of a successful boy, so that they can be very easily remembered. You can imagine one on each finger, and so keep them in mind; they will be worth diamond rings, and you will then never be ashamed to "show your hand."

How many are inclined to pray "Lead us not into temptation" with a spirit similar to the following incident, told by the Vicksburg Herald?

A member of the colored church was the other evening conversing earnestly with an acquaintance, and seeking to have him changed into better paths, but the friend said that he was too often tempted to permit him to become a Christian.

"What's yer backbone, dat ye can't rose up and stand temptation!" exclaimed the good man. "I was dat way myself once. Right in dis yere town I had a chance to steal a pair o' boots—mighty nice ones, too. Nobody was dar to see me, and I reached out my hand and de debil said take 'em. Den a good sperit whispered far me to let dem boots alone."

"An' you didn't take 'em!"

"No, sah—not much. I took a pair o' cheap shoes off de shelf an' left dem boots alone!"

NOT "A REMARKABLE FACT."—The Rev. J. O. Moss, Methodist itinerant for Lunenburg county, Va., writes to the Advocate: "It is a remarkable fact that nearly all the unconverted young people on the circuit belong to those families who do not take a religious paper." We do not consider the fact remarkable by any means. If a man is known by the company he keeps, a family is known by the literature it has. In this age when religious knowledge is so easily obtained, there are few indeed, so poor, as not to be able to avail themselves of that knowledge. In the case of the unconverted young people referred to above, it is evident that the families to which they belong are not burdened with religion. It is rather ominous when you enter a house, and find no religious paper, but instead thereof the commercial and political sheet. We need not wonder at the young people being unconverted.