

The Christian Messenger.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1875.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

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

GOLDEN TEXT.—"He shall feed his flock like a shepherd." Isaiah xl. 11.

ANALYSIS.—I. False and true shepherds. Vs. 1-5. II. Parable not understood. Vs. 6. III. Christ the door of the fold. Vs. 7-9. IV. The thief. Vs. 10. V. The good Shepherd. Vs. 11.

The conduct of the council of the Jews in casting him who had been blind out of the synagogue (chap. ix. 22, 34) gave Jesus an occasion to speak of false shepherds, and, by contrast, of himself as the true Shepherd who giveth his life for his sheep.

EXPOSITION.—Verse 1.—Verily, verily, I say unto you. A formula by which to add utmost emphasis to a statement of weightiest import. It thus helps us to see what Christ thought of the importance of religious teaching, of the ability to discriminate between the true and the false. Christ was evidently addressing a mixed company. Vs. 19-21; ix. 40. He that entereth not by [through] the door [or gate] into the sheepfold, etc. [the fold of the sheep]. Says Thomson: "Those low, flat buildings out on the sheltered side of the valley are sheepfolds. They are called Marah, and when the nights are cold, the flocks are shut up in them; but in ordinary weather they are merely kept within the yard. This, you observe, is defended by a stone wall, crowned all around with [a hedge of] sharp thorns, which the prowling wolf will rarely attempt to scale. The same [that one] is a thief and a robber. The same man often combines the character of thief and robber, seeking to get his spoil by stealth, if he may, but ready to take it by violence, if he must. The false and wicked teachers, like the ruling Pharisees who cast the blind man out of the synagogue for holding to Christ, were real robbers, though in pretence shepherds of God's flock. They loved and sought power, wealth, position, not the purity and welfare of the people. Fraud and violence both characterized them.

Verse 2.—But he that entereth in by the door, etc. The true shepherd goes in where, and as the owner of the sheep would have him.

Verse 3.—To him a porter [gate-keeper] openeth. See on verse 2, which implies what this clause expressly affirms. God's recognition of the true shepherd, the true teacher. And the sheep hear his voice. "Hear," in the sense of recognize and obey. The true disciple, member of God's flock, has the spirit of obedience, love of the truth, and this truth-loving spirit is also truth-discerning and truth-obeying, as Christ elsewhere says: "He that is of the truth heareth my words." He calleth his own sheep by name. The shepherd of the east, living with his flock continually has for each a name. Acts xx. 31.

Verse 4.—And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them. The shepherd walks before them [the flock], and they follow after, while the dogs that Job talks of (xxx. 1) bring up the rear. . . . They [the sheep] are so tamed, and so trained, that they follow their keeper with the utmost docility. He leads them forth from the fold, or from their houses in the village, just where he pleases. And they follow him, for they know his voice.

Verse 5.—And a stranger will they not follow. The shepherd calls them sharply from time to time, to remind them of his presence. They know his voice, and follow on; but if a stranger call, they stop short, lift up their heads in alarm, and, if it is repeated, they turn and flee, because they know not the voice of a stranger. This is not the fanciful costume of a parable; it is simple fact. The earlier one enters Christ's flock, and the more constantly and thoroughly he is trained, the quicker, easier, and surer will be his recognition of his Master's voice and call.

Verse 6.—This parable. "A parable is an illustration of moral or spiritual truth through the vehicle of natural or secular processes, or occurrences." Trench regards John x. 1-19 as an allegory, rather than a parable, because the illustration and its explanation are so blended. The parable, proper, is a story complete in itself, and its meaning is given apart. But this is quite true of the verses already considered, 1-5, and thus it is strictly a

parable. From verse 7 the truth is unfolded in a kind of double allegory, Christ calling himself both the Door and the Shepherd. But that is in explanation of what precedes.

Verse 7.—I am the door of the sheep. All spiritual shepherds save the one Great Shepherd, are also sheep. All must go to God through Christ, and lead others to God in the same way. The rulers of the Jews whose conduct called out this discourse both rejected Christ as their own Saviour, and did their utmost to make all others reject him. Very fitly does Christ here present himself as being the Door before he calls himself the Shepherd, since the shepherd's care supposes a fold with its ready access. Acts iv. 12. Christ became the door, or the way of access to God by becoming our substitute and sin-bearer, made a curse for us, that his death accepted instead of ours, might secure to us pardon on our repentance and faith.

Verse 8.—All that ever came before me, etc. The word "before," seems here to refer to time. But Christ did not mean that all religious teachers who had preceded him had been false teachers, thieves, and robbers. This would have included the prophets, and especially John. The connection made it clear that he had in mind such only as rejected or disowned him, as was done in the expulsion of the blind man. But the sheep did not hear them. See verses 4 and 5. Christ has special reference to his own disciples who had adhered to him, rather than to the Jewish rabbis, and indirectly to all who adhere to the truth.

Verse 9.—Shall go in and out. "The liberty of the gospel" is that of sons, boldness of access enjoyed, having peace with God. Find pasture. Such a door, opening into such a fold on the one hand, must needs, and does, indeed, open into richest divine pasturing on the other hand. The meat and drink of the Christian are heavenly, immortal food.

Verse 10.—This draws a contrast between Christ and the false teachers. It seems to regard him in the double character of Door and Shepherd, and so prepares the way for the next verse. The thief steals, etc., not for the mere sake of the erime, but for self-gratification. More abundantly. In rich fullness, not simply saved from hell, but filled full of heaven.

Verse 11.—I am the good shepherd. Comp. the twenty-third Psalm, and above on verses 1-5. Giveth his life. See on verse 7. Says Thomson: "I have listened with intense interest to their [the shepherds'] graphic descriptions of downright and desperate fights with these savage beasts. . . . I have known more than one case in which the shepherd had to lay down his life in the contest with robbers."

QUESTIONS.—Vs. 1. What "door" is meant? What "sheepfold"? What combined idea is meant by "thief and robber"? Ans. Both secret and open plunder.

Vs. 2. To whom is reference made here? Vs. 3. Who is meant by the "porter"? What by "openeth"? What by "calleth his own sheep by name"? What by "he leaeth them out"?

Vs. 4. What is meant by "goeth before them"? What by "follow him"? What by "know his voice"?

Vs. 5. Of whom is all this description a portrait? Was the Messiah ever predicted as a shepherd? Isa. xl. 11. Is the church of Christ ever likened to a flock? Ezek. xxxiv. 31; Psalm lxxx. 1.

Vs. 6. What is a parable? Ans. A similitude drawn from nature in illustration of spiritual truth.

Vs. 7. Where else does Christ claim to be "the door"? John xix. 6; Eph. ii. 18.

Vs. 8. Do you know any sheep that did not hear the voice of robbers? Hebrews xi; Romans xi. 3, 4.

Vs. 9. Can any one but Jesus save us? Will it be well with those who trust in him? Psalm cxlv. 15.

Vs. 11. In what respect is Christ the Good Shepherd? What has he done for the sheep? Compare Judges xii. 2, 3; 1 Sam. xix. 5 with Matt. xx. 28; Rom. v. 7, 8. How many times is this gift of Christ's life for his people spoken of in this chapter? See verse 11, 15, 17, 18, 28.

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, September 19th, 1875.—The Resurrection and the Life.—John xi. 31-44.

"How is it," said Bishop Wilberforce to one of his Roman Catholic servant girls, "that you can feel so kindly toward me, when you believe that I shall certainly be lost?" "O, no," said she. "But how can I be saved," said the Bishop, "when your Church teaches that there is no salvation for those out of its pale?" "You will be saved through your invincible ignorance," was the reply.

Youths' Department.

"LET'S PLAY."

Oh! the blessed and wise little children, What sensible things they say! When they can't have the things they wish for They take others and cry, "Let's play!"

"Let's play" the chairs are big coaches, And the sofa a railroad car, And that we are all taking journeys And travelling ever so far.

"Let's play" that this broken old china Is a dinner-set rare and fine, And our tin cups filled with water Are goblets of milk and wine;

"Let's play" every one of our dollies Is alive and can go to walk, And keep up long conversations With us if we want to talk.

"Let's play" that we live in a palace, And that we are the queens and kings; "Let's play" we are birds in a tree-top, And can fly about on wings.

"Let's play" that we are school-keepers, And grown people come to our school; And punish them all most soundly If they break but a single rule.

Oh! the blessed and wise little children, What sensible things they say; And we might be as happy as they are, If we would be happy their way,

What odds, 'twixt not having and having, When we have lived out our day! Let us borrow the children's watchword— The magical watchword "Let's play!" Independent.

HOW THE DOG HAD HIS LIKENESS TAKEN.

Cæsar was a fine Newfoundland dog of great intelligence, owned by Mrs. Richardson, of Lowell. One morning she took the dog, with some of the children of her family, to a daguerrotype room, with the view of having the picture of the group taken. For nearly an hour Mrs. Richardson tried to place Cæsar in a posture suitable for the purpose of getting a likeness; but when she thought he was all right, he would slowly get up, shake his huge body, and of course spoil the picture.

Annoyed at his conduct Mrs. Richardson opened the door, and in a stern voice said to Cæsar, "Go home, sir! You have displeased me very much; you shall not stay with us any longer." Hereupon Cæsar slunk away with a crestfallen look; and Mrs. Richardson made no further attempt to put him in the picture. But the next day much to her surprize, Cæsar came home with a box tied around his neck. What could it mean? He seemed to be greatly pleased, and wagged his tail expressively while waiting for the opening of the box. His mistress was still more surprized when she found it contained a fine daguerrotype of Cæsar himself.

At her earliest convenience she called on the daguerrotypist to enquire how he had succeeded in enticing the dog into his room and keeping him quiet. He said that on the morning following the failure he heard a noise in the entry, as if some one was thumping on the door. On opening it he found Cæsar standing there with a wistful and eager face. He tried to drive him away, but the dog insisted on entering; then walked to the old place directly in front of the instrument and sat down, as much as to say, "Now, sir, I am ready to make amends for my undignified behavior of yesterday."

As soon as he saw that the artist had done with him, Cæsar rose and stretched himself, with the satisfaction of one who had wiped out a disgrace by making reparation. He then waited for the daguerrotype, which was tied around his neck, and he trotted home with it to his mistress.

THE WOUNDED ELEPHANT.

During the Sepoy rebellion in India a young elephant received a violent wound in his head, the pain of which rendered it so frantic and ungovernable that it was found impossible to persuade the animal to have the part dressed. Whenever any one approached, it ran off with fury, and would suffer no person to come within several yards of it. The man who had care of it at length hit on a contrivance for securing it. By a few words and signs he gave the mother of the animal sufficient intelligence of what he wanted. The sensible creature immediately seized her young one with her trunk and held it firmly down, though groaning with agony; while the surgeon completely dressed the wound, and she continued to perform this service every day till the wound was healed.

RULES FOR THE CARE OF THE EYES.

When writing, reading, drawing, sewing, etc., always take care that— The room is comfortably cool, and the feet warm.

There is nothing tight about the neck. There is plenty of light without dazzling the eyes.

The sun does not shine directly on the object we are at work upon. The light does not come from in front; it is best when it comes over the left shoulder.

The head is not very much bent over the work.

The page is nearly perpendicular to the line of sight; that is, that the eye is nearly opposite the middle of the page, for an object held slanting is not seen so clearly.

That the page, or other object, is not less than fifteen inches from the eye. Near-sightedness is apt to increase rapidly when a person wears, in reading, the glasses intended to enable him to see distant objects.

Never study or write before breakfast by candle light.

Do not lie down when reading.

If your eyes are aching from light, from looking at the snow, from over-work, or other causes, a pair of coloured glasses may be advised, to be used for a while. Light blue or grayish blue is the best shade.

Never play tricks with the eyes, as squinting or rolling them.

The eyes are often troublesome when the stomach is out of order.

Avoid reading or sewing by twilight or when debilitated by recent illness, especially fever.

Usually, except for aged persons or chronic invalids, the winter temperature in work-rooms ought not to exceed 60° or 65°. To sit with impurity in a lower temperature some added clothing will be necessary. The feet of a student or seamstress should be kept comfortably warm while tasks are being done. Slippers are bad. In winter the temperature of the lower part of the room is apt to be 10° or 15° lower than that of the upper.

It is indispensable in all forms of labor requiring the exercise of vision of minute objects, that the worker should rise from his task now and then, take a few deep inspirations with closed mouth, stretch the frame out into the most erect posture, throw the arms backward and forward, and if possible, step to a window or into the open air, if only for a moment. Two desks or tables in a room are valuable for a student; one to stand at, the other to sit at."—Dr Lincoln.

SOMETHING ABOUT MARRIAGE FEES.

Well, now, this is one of the prettiest stories of the day. The Rev. Dr. Furness of Philadelphia, that excellent man tells it, and of course it must be true. Not long ago a lady called upon the Doctor. He mentions that she was of "a very interesting and lovely appearance;" but that has nothing to do with the story. He had married her some years before. She told him that Heaven had not blessed her with children; and she believed the reason was because her husband did not give the doctor any fee. This she insisted upon paying then and there—possibly with interest. The clergyman like a sensible man took the money; and now, he tells us, that honest lady is very happy with her little boy! "Brother ministers," says the Doctor, "take heart! If Providence looks out so vigilantly for the marriage fees, do not concern you yourself about any subliminary matters, but give yourself heart and soul, to the good work of sowing the truth."

MONKEYS DEMANDING THEIR DEAD.

Mr. Forbes tells a story of a female monkey who was killed by friends of his, and carried to his tent. Forty or fifty of her tribe advanced with threatening gestures, but stood still when the gentleman presented his gun at them. One however, who appeared to be the chief of the tribe, came forward, chattering and threatening in a furious manner. Nothing short of firing at him seemed likely to drive him away; but at length he approached the tent-door with every sign of grief and supplication, as if he were begging for the body. It was given him; he took it in his arms, carried it away, with actions expressive of affection, to his companions, and with them disappeared. It was not to be wondered at that the sportsman vowed he would never shoot another monkey.

MISCELLANEOUS.

WE FLY.

It is not time that flies, 'Tis we, 'tis we are flying; It is not life that dies; 'Tis we, 'tis we are dying: Time and eternity are one, Time is eternity begun; Life changes, yet without decay; 'Tis we alone who pass away.

Several ladies in Nashville have signed an agreement to abstain from all outward adornment on Sundays, wearing only the plainest sort of apparel. Ruin is thus threatened to the millinery establishments, there being no place in which to display the last sweet thing in bonnets.

The Religious Herald of Richmond, U. S.; states that Mrs. Moody, the wife of the evangelist, is an Englishwoman and a Baptist. Mrs. Dr. Walker, of New England, is a sister of Mr. Moody's. This medical lady, who would seem to be a Baptist, states that at one time her brother "had serious convictions about being baptised according to the teaching of the New Testament, and she is not without hope that he may yet thus follow Christ."

NEWSPAPER MORTALITY.—People who contemplate starting a newspaper, would do well first to sit down and carefully count the cost. The statistics of such ventures as given in Rowell's American Newspaper Directory for 1875, are not encouraging. It appears that the number of newspaper failures for last year is over one thousand, involving a loss to all concerned—publishers, subscribers and advertisers—of more than eight million dollars!

A valued friend desires us to call the attention of the eminent Dr. Dobbs to the following card which appeared in a late number of the Examiner. We offer no comment. Why gild refined gold? We give it as it appears, italics and all:

The Venice Baptist Church, Cayuga Co., New York, is without a pastor. A man of talent is wanted. No other church in town. A wealthy country, yet for the first year could raise only \$500 or \$600. A rich field for one whose first object is the salvation of souls. Address—

French journals sometimes put awkward questions to their Government. Just now they want to know why the Government punishes photographers who pretend to see the spirits of departed persons; but does not punish the Mary Alacoques who pretend to see the Virgin Mary and persons of that sort.

Keep out of debt, out of quarrels, out of damp clothes, out of whisky shops, out of thin shoes, out of bad company, and,—out of doors all you can in good weather.

Our afflictions are like weights and have a tendency to bow us to the dust, but there is a way of arranging weights by means of wheels and pulleys, so that they will even lift us up. Grace, by its matchless art, has often turned the heaviest of our trials into occasions for heavenly joy. "We glory in tribulations also." We gather honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock.

MR. GLADSTONE'S AWKWARD QUESTION.—There may be different answers to W. E. G.'s question "Is the Church of England worth preserving?" but one thing is clear—the jabs are ready.—Punch.

Never go to bed at night till you know something useful which you did not know in the morning.

"I no havee, how can?" said a Los Angeles Chinaman, when asked to pay a debt.

The names of the two ships of the new English Arctic Expedition, are to be the Parry and the Franklin.

Why does a duck go under the water? For diver's reasons. Why does she go on land? For sun-dry reasons.

There is even a greater peril than being a sinner—not to know it.

"My onthankful hearers," said a backwoods preacher, "you air like unto hogs eatin' acorns. They never look up to see where the acorns come from."

Man is physically as well as metaphysically a thing of shreds and patches borrowed unequally from good and bad ancestors, and a misfit from the start.

It makes a great difference whether glasses are over or under the nose.