

The Christian Messenger.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1876.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, November 14th, 1876.—Dorcas Restored to Life.—Acts ix. 31-43.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Vs. 39-41.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance." Psalm cxii. 6.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, 1 Corinthians xiii. Tuesday, Matthew xxv. 31-46. Wednesday, Romans v. 1-5. Thursday, 1 Kings xvii. 19-23. Friday, 2 Kings iv. 32-36. Saturday, Matthew ix. 20-26. Sunday, 1 John iii. 11-18.

ANALYSIS.—I. Prosperity of the churches. Vs. 31. II. Healing of Dorcas. Vs. 32-35. III. Raising of Tabitha. Vs. 36-43.

EXPOSITION.—I. The Saints' Rest. Verse 31.—All Judea, Galilee, and Samaria. The three great divisions or provinces of Palestine. Were edified, refers to Christian life. This figure of a rising and perfecting temple is often thus used, especially by Paul, with whom Luke was closely associated. 1 Cor. viii. 1; xiv. 4; 1 Thess. v. 11. It indicates growth in Christian knowledge and character. Walking. A change of figure, where life is regarded as a way, and conduct as a walking or travelling in the way. In the fear of the Lord. The inner spirit controlling the outer walk. The "fear" was holy, loving reverence, and "the Lord" here, means Jesus Christ.

II. Dorcas Healed. Verse 32.—And it came to pass. This free, open ministry of apostles was made possible by the "rest." As Peter passed throughout all quarters. The word "quarters" is in italics, showing that the translators supplied it to complete the sense. We last met Peter at Jerusalem. vs. 26. Came down. From the higher country further inland. Perhaps Jerusalem is in mind as the point from which Peter set forth. Also to the saints. To these saints "also," that is, as well as the other saints met in his ministry. Lydda. Now called Lud or Lid, in Old Testament. 1 Chron. viii. 12; Ezra ii. 33. "It is nine miles from [the seaport] Joppa, and is the first town on the northernmost of the two roads between that place and Jerusalem."

Verse 33.—A certain man named Eneas. The name is Greek, and may indicate that the man was a proselyte, Hellenist Jew. Nothing is known of him save what is here told. Kept his bed eight years. Furnishing the stronger appeal to sympathy. Palsy. Paralytic—and so the next thing to death. The subjects were usually, if not uniformly disciples, but not all sick or dead disciples were miraculously healed or raised.

Verse 34.—Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole. Christ had, in and of himself, the omnipotent power, and was strictly and properly the author of the miracle. Arise. In the effort to rise would be shown the faith, for doubtless he felt no change in himself until that effort was made. Make thy bed. Literally, "Spread for thyself." The word "pallet" used in vs. 33, is of course understood. He could now do for himself this simple duty which for eight years past others had done for him. And he arose immediately. Testifying at once to the man's faith and the Saviour's faithfulness. Each had acted, and at once, neither before the other, nor apart from the other. So it is in the soul's healing.

Verse 35.—Saron. Called in Old Testament, Sharon. 1 Chron. v. 16, etc. Between the mountains of the central part of the Holy Land and the Mediterranean, from Joppa to Cesarea, about thirty miles. Lydda was at the southwest extremity. And turned, etc. Influenced by their knowledge of the miracle.

III. Tabitha Raised. Verse 36.—Joppa. "Now Jaffa, a town on the southwest coast of Palestine, (Josh. xix. 46.) Having a harbor attached to it—though always as still a dangerous one—it became the port of Jerusalem in the days of Solomon, and has been so ever since. Here Jonah took ship to flee from the presence of his Maker. . . . The existing town contains about six thousand inhabitants." Tabitha. A Chaldee word, meaning the same as the Greek word Dorcas. Full of good deeds and alms. A very remarkable and

honorable description of character in quantity and quality.

Verse 37.—Was sick and died. She as well as others. In an upper chamber. This was doubtless because of the intended delay in order to secure the presence of Peter. Usually the burial took place soon after the death, on the same day.

Verse 38.—Had heard that Peter was there, etc. Not improbably had also heard of the healing of Eneas, which would suggest more impressively the possibility of the scarcely greater miracle of raising Dorcas. Two men. No doubt their chief men, sending two for the greater influence. Not delay to come. An urgent case. The friends were violating custom by delaying for him the burial.

Verse 39.—Arose and went with them. Promptly, as desired, without doubt feeling inwardly moved by the Spirit so to do. Into the upper chamber. Notice here "the upper chamber," but in vs. 37, "an upper chamber"—"the" one just mentioned where the precious form lay. This whole audience was profoundly in sympathy with Peter, and the purpose of his summons. All the widows. Objects of her benefactions, whom in life she had greatly befriended, and who were sincere mourners. Here in the room of death is indeed a "touch of life." Showing the coats and garments. Such as were worn by men and women. Which Dorcas made. Or more exactly, used to make, had been wont to make. While she was with them. What delicate tenderness in this phrase, how very like the language of loving sorrow used when standing beside the form of the departed and recalling their lives. This clause in substance must have come from that very room. It is not that of the mere historian.

Verse 40.—Put them all forth. To be alone with God and the dead. Compare 2 Kings iv. 33; Matt. ix. 25. Tabitha, arise. A command to the dead. Yet not in vain, for she opened her eyes. With and in Peter's voice had gone "the voice of the Son of God," which dead and living alike must hear and heed. Sat up. In restored strength.

Verse 41.—Called the saints and [the] widows. Some were here drawn by Christian feeling and sympathy in general, and others drawn especially by gratitude for favors received. Hence the mention of the two clauses separately. Presented her alive. Happy hour, and holy hour—awful for the presence of the Lord thus testified.

Verse 42.—Known throughout all Joppa. Because of the greatness of the miracle. Many believed in the Lord. As above in vs. 35, in consequence of this knowledge of the miracle. Many at the present time depreciate the value of miracles as attestations of the divine origin of Christianity, and the divine authority of those working them. Not so did Christ and the apostles. God's word is truth. God's way is reason.

Verse 43.—Turried many days, etc. This is the connecting link between this and the next lesson. Simon the tanner. Doubtless a believer. His business is said to have been counted unclean by the Jews, and Peter's stay with him is thought to show that already he had half learned the lesson which was completed by the vision of the sheet.

QUESTIONS.—Vs. 31. What act besides the conversion of Saul tended to the peace of the Christian churches at this time? What is meant by "edified?" What by "walking in the fear of the Lord?" What by "the comfort of the Holy Ghost?"

Vs. 32. Where was Lydda? Did Peter find a church, or plant one there?

Vs. 33. Whom else did Peter find there? What is the palsy?

Vs. 34. Who healed Eneas—Peter or Jesus? Why did Peter tell him to "make his bed?"

Vs. 36. Where was Joppa? For what was it celebrated?

Vs. 38. Why did the disciples send to Lydda for Peter after Tabitha's death? Had any apostle as yet raised the dead?

Vs. 39. Why did these widows exhibit the coats and garments that Dorcas had made?

Vs. 40. Who did Peter imitate in the act of putting "them all forth?" Did Jesus ever kneel in working miracles? Why not?

Vs. 43. How was the trade of a tanner regarded by the Jews? What does Peter's abode with Simon show? Do Christians love enough, as Dorcas did, in deeds? 1 John iii. 18. Whose praise did Dorcas win? Matt. xxv. 36, 40.

—Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, November 26th, 1876.—Peter's Vision.—Acts x. 1-20.

YOUTHS' DEPARTMENT.

Uncertain what to do.

The writer, as he was leaving a prayer-meeting, turned as he saw the face of a well known Christian brother; and close at hand stood a young lady dressed in deep mourning, with whom he had been conversing, standing there a child of sorrow. The big tears were slowly rolling down her cheeks, and she would wipe them away, as if she had been half unconscious of their falling.

"Here is a lady," said the gentleman, "to whom I wish you to say a few words. She tells me that 'she is uncertain what to do.'"

I soon saw that she was in some spiritual trouble.

"Why are you uncertain what to do?" I inquired.

"I do not understand the next step to be taken," said she.

"Where are you now?" I asked.

"I have been coming daily to the meetings for four weeks, and all that time I have felt anxious about my soul; but all I do does not seem to make my case any better."

"What do you try to do?"

"I have striven to convince myself that I am a great sinner—as I know I am. But although I know it is a truth, I do not feel about it as I should."

"How would you feel about it if you could?"

"I would have deep conviction."

"What is your present impression about yourself?"

"That I am a great sinner—that is all."

"And what would you have more?"

"That is what I do not understand. My next step should be for deeper conviction, but what further can I do?"

"Your mistake is a very common one. Your next step, and your only step, is to go to Christ, just as you are. Go to him at once. You can do nothing. Hitherto you have been relying upon yourself. Renounce this as a dishonor done to Christ as a Saviour, and go to him for all the help you need, hope for, or desire."

"Is that all?"

"That is all. You must stop trying to do anything, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Go to him who says to you, 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.'"

"O," said she, as if a new light had dawned upon her mind: "is that my next step?"

"Not your next step, as if you had already taken one or more right steps. Going to the Saviour is your first and only step. He does not say, 'Come to conviction—Come to deeper sense of sin; but he says, 'Come unto me.'"

"O, what a self-righteous creature I am! I see it all now; I have been refusing Christ, while all this time I thought I was preparing to come to him," she said, evidently disappointed in herself.

"Will you go to Jesus now?" was hastily asked.

She looked up with a smile, and great resolution depicted in her intelligent face, as she answered, "I will."—Christian Advocate.

Cat Mail-carriers.

No animal has been more thoroughly misunderstood by the careless and prejudiced observers, who constitute the majority of mankind, than cats. Because the cat is a beast of refined taste, accustomed to wear neat and elegant fur, and preferring to sleep on cushions rather than door mats, he has been constantly classed among useless and brainless dandies. His fondness for mice has been pointed out as a proof that low propensities accompany luxurious habits. His accusers, with wonderful inconsistency, praise the terrier who is quite as much addicted to rats and mice as is the cat. The fortunate few who have broken through the disdainful cloak of cynicism, in which the unappreciated cat has wrapped himself, and who have learned that, however heartless he may seem, there is always an angel in him, will be pleased to learn that certain Belgians have formed a society for the mental and moral improvement of cats. Their first effort has been to train the cat to do the work now done by carrier-pigeons. It has long been known that the cat cannot be intentionally misled. The most astute and ac-

complished scientific person would have his ideas of locality totally confused by being tied up in a mail-bag, carried twenty miles from home, and let out with a loud request to "Scat" in a strange neighborhood, in the middle of the night. This experiment has, however, been repeatedly tried upon cats of average abilities, and the invariable result has been that the departed animal has reappeared at his native kitchen-door the next morning, and calmly ignored the whole affair. This wonderful skill in travelling through unfamiliar regions without a guide-book or a compass, has suggested the possibility of cats being used as special messengers. Recently thirty-seven cats residing in the city of Leige were taken in bags a long distance into the country. The animals were liberated at two o'clock in the afternoon, and promptly proceeded to "scat." At 6.48 the same afternoon, one of them reached his home, and beyond hinting, though in a much more delicate way than that employed by Mr. Wegg, that a saucer of milk would be peculiarly "mellering to the organ," he did not make the slightest allusion to his long and troublesome journey. His felins companions arrived at Leige somewhat later, but it is understood that within twenty-four hours every one had reached his home.

It is proposed to establish, at an early day, a regular system of cat communication between Leige and the neighboring villages. Messages are to be fastened in waterproof bags around the necks of the animals, and it is believed that, unless the criminal class of dogs undertakes to waylay and rob the cats the messages will be delivered with rapidity and safety. —New York Times.

Two Sets of Recipes.

Are you deficient in taste? Read the best English poets, such as Thomson, Gray, Goldsmith, Pope, Cowper, Coleridge, Scott, and Wordsworth.

Are you deficient in imagination? Read Milton, Akenside, Burke and Shakespeare.

Are you deficient in the power of reasoning? Read Chillingworth, Bacon and Locke.

Are you deficient in judgment and good sense in the common affairs of life? Read Franklin.

Are you deficient in sensibility? Read Goethe and McKenzie.

Are you deficient in political knowledge? Read Montesquieu, the Federalist, Webster and Calhoun.

Are you deficient in patriotism? Read Demosthenes, the Life of Washington, Wallace and Bruce.

Are you deficient in patriotism? Read some of President Edwards' works.—Independent.

Very good for those who have access to a choice library, or means to purchase for themselves. There is for the less favoured class a very good substitute. Read critically, with a view to the style and dignity of thought.

For defective taste—Christ's Sermon on the mount; Paul's addresses to Agrippa, and the Epistle of James.

For imagination—The descriptive passages in Job, and generally the Apocalypse of John.

For reasoning—Christ's refutation of the Sadducees and Generally the Epistle to the Romans.

For judgement and good sense—Solomon's Proverbs.

For sensibility—The last chapters of any of the four Gospels; the Book of Ruth.

For the political knowledge—Study the Constitution of the Jewish Commonwealth before the establishment of the establishment of the Kingdom.

For patriotism—The life of David; the restoration after the Babylonish captivity.

For cultivation of the conscience, you can scarcely go amiss. Peter's Epistles, John's James', and above all the words of Christ.

This is no ab captandum suggestion. The Scriptures furnish the best models and the most suggestive material to be found in the English language.—Interior.

The old, though, perhaps, bootless question, "Where do all the pins go to?" is recalled by the statement in an American paper that there are now eight pin factories in the United States, which make 47,000,000 pins daily. In addition to these, the importation of pins reaches 25,000,000 daily. As these are sold, it is safe to say that 72,000,000 pins are lost daily, or 50,000 every minute!

A Temperance Story.

At a temperance meeting we held in our town,

It may be a year ago,
A Quaker lady rose up to speak,
A Quaker lady, aged and weak,
With hair as white as snow.

A reverent stillness came over the crowd
As we all bent forward to hear,
While she told a story in Quaker phrase,
Simple and sweet, like her people's ways,
In a voice still firm and clear.

In our household, she said, many years
now gone by,

When I was a new-wed wife,
We had a servant much given to drink,
Tottering hard by the fearful brink,
Of a drunkard's death in life.

Deeply I grieved o'er the man and his sin,
And said, "I entreat thee shun
Thy evil habit, and take the pledge,
Thou art so near a perilous edge,
Abstain, or thou art undone."

"At your table, good madam, I wait," he replied,

"And when company comes to dine,
I place three glasses, by your command,
Three glasses fair, at each guest's right hand,
And serve them all with wine.

And every day by your chair do I stand
Throughout the whole of the year;
And every day your glass I fill;
You always drink it, thinking no ill—
Why shouldn't I have my beer?"

The words of that man went home to my soul,

And my conscience smote me sore:

"I know thou hast done so, James," I said;

"Thou hast, and I take the blame on my head—
Thou shalt do so now no more.

Greatly I fear that my thoughtless ways
May lead thy soul to death;
But if thou wilt abstain, by holy Divine,
From thy spirits and beer, I will leave
my wine
From now till my latest breath."

So we took the pledge, and for many a year

We kept our temperance vow,
And a happy home and children dear
Had James; and all of us left, reverent
His name and memory now.

And when he was dying he thanked God
for me,

As only the dying can,
That the Lord had helped me to make
that stand

Against evil ways, and to stretch out my hand
To save a sinking man.

I trust that his soul is safe above,

For he sought the Lord of a truth;
And I thank my God now I'm feeble and old

And the days of the years of my life are
nigh told,
For the pledge I took in my youth—
LUZIE ALDRIDGE.

SOME GOOD ANAGRAMS.—A good story

is told of an English lady, Mrs. Eleanor

Davies, who imagined herself to be a

prophetess and fancied that the spirit

of Daniel was in her, because she could

transpose her name into "Reveal, O

Daniel." Her anagram was faulty, how-

ever, lacking an s and containing an t

too much. Her surprise and consterna-

tion was great when, one day she saw an

anagram of the same "Dame Eleanor,

Davies" which read "never so mad a

ladie." Here are a few examples of ana-

grams. They are excellent, because the

anagrams form an answer as it were to

the original word:—Astronomers, moon

stares; telegraphs, great helps; gallan-

tries, all great sins; encyclopedia, a

nice pye; lawyers, sly ware; misanthrope,

spare him not; old England, golden

land; Presbyterian, best in prayer;

punishment, nine thumps; penitentiary

nay, I repent it; radical reform, rare

mad frolic; revolution, to love ruin;

James Stuart, a just master.

At a meeting of the homoeopathic

doctors of the kingdom of Saxony, which

has just been held at Dresden, a report

was made of the general congress of

their colleagues which met at Philadel-

phia from the 26th of June to the 1st of

July of this year. More than 400

practitioners assembled from all parts

of the world. A decision was come to

that a meeting should be held every

five years, and that a committee should

be appointed to produce an "Internat-

ional Homoeopathic Pharmacopoeia."

To show how important it is that all

young people should learn some trade

or profession the Christian Life men-

tions the fact that the statistics of one

year show that, during the last forty

years, of 7,868 prisoners only 633 had

learned a trade.

ALIENATION from the love of God leads

to alienation from the love of man;

hence fallen men are described as

"hateful, and hating one another."