

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1877.

STUDIES ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.

SUNDAY, July 15th, 1877.—Turning to the Gentiles.—Acts xiii. 45-52.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Vss. 44-48.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Add in his name shall the Gentiles trust.”—Matt. xii. 21.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, Acts xiii. 42-52. Tuesday, vs. 45; Deuteronomy xx-xxx. Wednesday, vs. 46; Luke ii. 25-35. Thursday, vs. 47; Romans ix. 14-26. Friday, vs. 48; Romans viii. 28-39. Saturday, vs. 51; Luke x. 1-16. Sunday, vs. 52; Matthew v. 1-12.

ANALYSIS.—I. Result of first Sabbath's work. Vs. 42, 43. II. The next Sabbath's audience. Vs. 44. III. Jewish prejudice aroused. Vs. 45. IV. The gospel for the Gentiles. Vs. 46-49. V. First experience of persecution. Vs. 50, 51. VI. Joy of Pisidian Christians. Vs. 52.

QUESTIONS.—Vs. 42. What was the effect of Paul's first discourse in Pisidia? What was he asked to do? Was it the "Gentiles" alone who asked him?

Vs. 43. What is meant by "the grace of God"? What by continuing in it?

Vs. 44. What kind of an audience did the missionaries the next Sabbath have? What motive brought the people together? Who came besides Jews and proselytes?

Vs. 45. Why was the great multitude more than the Jews could bear? How did these exclusive Jews express their feelings?

Vs. 46. What was Paul's judgment of this Jewish conduct? Why was it necessary to offer the gospel first to the Jew? Was it so offered? By whom in Jerusalem? To whom does Paul now turn?

Vs. 47. What first Gentile instalment of the faith have we in the Gospels? What one before this have we in the Acts? Are the counsels of God ever frustrated by the unbelief of man?

Vs. 48. What is meant by "as many as were ordained"? Mysterious as the doctrine of election is, is it not plainly taught in the word of God? Rom. ix. 20, 21, etc. Will any one be lost who earnestly desires to be saved? Matt. xi. 12. What is eternal life?

Vs. 49. What was the success of the gospel near Pisidia?

Vs. 50. What were Jews now impelled to do? What was the result of their measures?

Vs. 51. Who had commanded this shaking off the dust of the feet? What did the act express? To what city do the apostles now go? Name the places visited so far on this first missionary tour?

Vs. 52. In what state of mind did the missionaries leave the Pisidian Christians? What words of Christ were now fulfilled? Matt. v. 10-12.

THE DIVINE PLAN CARRIED FORWARD.—

Paul's first address in the synagogue in Antioch, in Pisidia, made a deep and thrilling impression on his audience. While the congregation were pouring out of the synagogue, many of them crowded round the speaker, begging that these words which had moved their deepest feelings might be preached to them the next Sabbath. To this clinging group of Jews and Gentile proselytes Paul and Barnabas spoke tenderly, persuading them "to continue in the grace of God." During the week the new teachers were much talked about in Pisidia; their new doctrines were noised abroad, so that on the following Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. The synagogue was crowded. Multitudes of Gentiles, in addition to the proselytes, were present. This was more than the Jews could bear. Their spiritual pride and bigotry were roused. They could not admit that the Gentiles were entitled to the same religious privileges with themselves. Thus in Pisidian Antioch they who on one Sabbath had listened with breathless interest to the teachers who spoke of the promised Messiah, were on the next Sabbath filled with the utmost indignation when they learned that this Messiah was a "light to lighten the Gentiles," as well as the "glory of his people Israel." A systematic persecution, intensified by the controlling influence of women, was excited against Paul and Barnabas and, for the present at least, expelled them from the colonial limits. It was not, however, without leaving to Pisidia a large church of united Jews and Gentiles.

EXPOSITION.—That these words, etc. That the same subject should be again and further opened. God's Spirit had

attended the word. The next Sabbath, The Jewish Sabbath, which was the seventh day of the week, our Saturday. The apostles were Jews as well as Christians, as they wished to get the ear of the people, they met with the people when and where the people met. The practice was no sanction of the Seventh instead of the First day as the special day for Christian worship. When it was left to Christians under the Spirit's direction to fix upon a day on Christian grounds, they took the day of the resurrection. John xx. 1, 26; Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 2; Rev. i. 10. Sunday is "the Christian Sabbath."

Verse 43.—Broken up. Dismissed. Many of the Jews, etc. Such as had received the word in saving faith. The "proselytes" were converts from heathenism to Judaism, and the word "religious" here, means simply worshipping, that is, the true God, with the Jews, as opposed to their former heathen life. Who speaking to them persuaded, etc. Very like a modern "inquiry-meeting" following a public service. The new converts and the convicted met with the apostles, apart from the multitude, for spiritual inquiry and conversation. The language of Paul and Barnabas to them fitted the situation.

Verse 44.—Almost the whole city, etc. The synagogue was the place of meeting. The usual assembly, as we have seen, consisted only of Jews and proselytes, but now came the mass of the heathen population also. The apostles had probably discoursed much and to many during the week. The word of God. A better reading, is "the word of the Lord," that is, of Christ. But it is equally true that Christ is both its Author and its Object.

Verse 45.—Saw the multitudes. The heathen masses, not even as yet made proselytes. Filled with envy. Mark both the nature and the degree of their feeling. A wicked feeling and a great deal of it. Two causes of this feeling existed, (1) that these two strangers had such great influence, (2) and chiefly that the new doctrine was to destroy their religious caste, break down the wall of partition between them and the Gentiles, and make all men alike before God—a bitter thing for a Jew. Speak against. Contradicted, a bad spirit in which to discuss. Contradicting and blaspheming. "Blaspheming" was not necessarily profanity, but slanderous and abusive epithets.

Verse 46.—Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, Means first of all to speak freely, and then to have a spirit enabling one to speak thus. In times of danger such a spirit is manly, heroic moral courage. For this the apostles were wont to pray and ask the prayers of all their brethren. iv. 29, 31; Eph. vi. 19, etc. It was necessary, etc. The emphatic word in this clause is "you," and is made so in the Greek. To you-desertion. To the GENTILES salvation. Put it from you. Rather, "thrust it from you." Judge yourselves unworthy, etc. Their conduct expressed their judgment, that they and the gospel had nothing in common. Paul's language charges the responsibility of the rejection and its consequences upon the Jews themselves, and upon them wholly. Turn to the Gentiles. In that city; in other places they continued as heretofore to preach first to the Jews in their synagogue. xvii. 5.

Verse 47.—For so [viz., to turn] hath the Lord commanded us, etc. See Isaiah xlix. 6. Compare Rom. ix. 25-33; Isaiah xi. 6-10. The apostles are as usual careful to show that they are moving in the line of God's revealed will, and not, as the Jews alleged, against it.

Verse 48.—When the Gentiles heard, etc. Glad both that Paul turned to them and that he could show that his course was according to revelation. The truth had taken hold of them. Glorified the word of God. It was exceedingly precious to them, and was joyfully welcomed and honored as indeed God's Word. So always when God's Spirit opens man's heart. As many as were [had been] ordained, etc. This "ordination" had God as its Author. Rom. viii. 28-30; John xvii. 6, 7. No man believes and receives the gospel unless God by his Spirit moves him to do so.

Verse 49.—All the region. All the vicinity of Antioch. Powerful interest, especially in salvation, makes interest.

Verse 50.—The Jews, etc. The mass of them evidently remained unbelievers, and so hostile as to become unscrupu-

lous. Devout and honorable women. Women worshipping, and of high standing in the community—influential. As proselytes they could rouse their jealousy for the Jewish religion, and as influential their aroused jealousy could be used to stir up persecutions. Women were powerful Christian helpers in the early church. Chiefmen. The officers, thus turning legal force against the missionaries. See 2 Tim. iii. 11.

Verse 51.—Comp. Luke ix. 5. "As though the very dust of the land were defiling." Iconium. Principal city of Lycaonia.

Verse 52.—The disciples, etc. Their joy was the effect of the Holy Spirit—and the degree of each corresponded to the degree of the other. Christian faith makes one joyful, even in the time of greatest affliction.

—Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, July 22nd, 1877.—Paul at Lystra.—Acts xiv. 8-20.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"But the Lord is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king."—Jeremiah x. 10.

The Story of the Lesson.

FOR THE PRIMARY CLASS.

As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue many of the Gentiles crowded around them, begging that "these words" might be preached to them again the next Sabbath; and there were many who walked on with Paul and Barnabas, to hear still more. The two friends begged these to hold fast to that which they had already heard. The next Sabbath the synagogue was crowded; for almost every one in the city came to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw so many Gentiles in the meeting, they were full of envy; for they did not want the Gentiles to be equal with them. So they contradicted Paul, and denied that Jesus was the true Saviour. But Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, and said to the Jews, "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves not worthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the GENTILES. For so hath the Lord commanded us." This was indeed glad news to the Gentiles, and those who now heard helped to tell it all around. But the Jews stirred up some women to get the chief men to put the apostles out of the city. Before they left they shook the dust off their shoes, as a sign that they would have nothing to do with those who rejected the Saviour.

Youths' Department.

Making things go God's way.

"I think it will be nice, dear mother," said gentle Maggie, one night, "When we are dead and cold and still, and they've buried us out of sight, To be one of Christ's ministering spirits Who see him night and day, And come sometimes to this dear old world To make things go God's way."

Ah, darling! with thoughts so tender, You need not wait till then; For the Lord has ministering service For even a child of ten. Before your hands are folded And eyes shut out from the day, Before we cry, "Dear Maggie is dead," You can make things go God's way.

Whenever you make the sunshine On a darkened face to break; Whenever a self-denial For another's sake you make; Whene'er for the souls of the wandering In Jesus' name you pray,— You are being a ministering spirit, And making things go God's way.

The world is full of Christ's children, Who have never heard of his love. Can you nothing do to lead them, To the better home above? With sad and darkened faces, To some idol god they pray; O, tell them the story of Jesus, And make things go God's way.

Missionary Echoes.

Those who get through the world without enemies, are commonly of three classes: the supple, the adroit, and the phlegmatic. The leader ruler surmounts obstacles by yielding to them; the oiled wheel escapes friction; the cotton sack escapes damage by its impenetrable elasticity.—Whately.

If we had no faults ourselves, we should not have so much pleasure in discovering the faults of others.

Select Serial.

From "The Day of Rest."

DORA'S BOY.

BY MRS. ELLEN ROSS.

CHAP. XXV.—LISA'S OPINIONS OF TEACHERS AND TAUGHT.

Hugh Haldane was of too open a nature to attempt to hide anything from Matthew Pedder. So after his little talk with Lisa, he went and told Matthew all about it, and asked leave to go and see Lisa's father some evening.

"What on earth does she want ye to go for?" asked Matthew.

"I don't know, sir. She seems to be in great trouble about him, and she doesn't like telling people, nor having anybody saying unkind things about him."

"Unkind things!" exclaimed Matthew, impetuously. "I'd wring his old neck for him!—and see how he neglects that poor child."

Hughie seemed to understand fully that this indignation was born of kindest pity, and had in it far less of anger against Mr. Maurice, than of tender concern for the innocent victim of his wrong-doing. Therefore he took no notice of Matthew's angry words, but said quietly, "And though she doesn't like anybody to see him, yet she wants me to go. Isn't that strange? But perhaps it's because I asked her why she didn't get a place, and she wants me to believe that she really can't leave her father."

"Well, if it'll please the poor lass you shall go," said Matthew; "but I jest wish you'd carry a piece o' my mind to the old wretch, and give it him hot and strong for me! I guess it 'ud do him a sight more good than some o' the hot and strong things as he's 'customed to swallow."

Hugh was very glad to get this permission from Matthew; for, while wishing to please Lisa by going to see her poor home and the schools he attended, he looked forward with the greatest interest to him to partake somewhat of the adventurous to be going into a locality where known thieves actually existed, and where he would be running the risk of losing his tidy clothes, if he ventured to show himself in daylight.

So day after day he looked out eagerly for Lisa, and when the shop-door was open listened for her soft humming outside. But more than a week passed away before she came, and then she made her presence known by tapping on the window, keeping time to the tune that she was singing quietly to herself. Hugh popped on his cap, and was outside in a trice.

"Are you come to call for me, Lisa?" he asked.

"Yes, Will old Matthew let ye come?"

"Oh, yes. He's very kind," answered Hugh, who always liked to give that testimony whenever he got a chance.

Lisa did not reply to this, and they set out in silence along the street. Turning out of this one into another, they presently came to a dingy-looking building, with placards pasted on the doors announcing sundry meetings and addresses to be delivered within.

"Is this your school?" asked Hugh, with interest.

"Oh no; this is a awful bad place as dad goes to sometimes of Sundays, when he does get out at all. They calls it the Hall of Sighin,* or somethin' like that; but it ought to be called a miserabler place than that."

"Why ought it?" asked Hugh, with deeper interest.

"Why!" echoed Lisa, with a mysterious, doleful look and tone, as if she were about to tell a dismal ghost-story. "Why! cos the folks as goes to that place don't believe in God, nor love the Lord one bit. Dad says as he don't either, and when he comes to this place they jest keeps him up to it. But you should jest hear him when he's drunk, poor dad! he hides his face in his hands and says, 'Lord! Lord! Lord!'—oh, so miserable! That makes me think," added Lisa, in a thoughtful old-fashioned way, "that he does believe a bit after all, cos they say as people that's drunk 'always lets out what's in their hearts.'"

* "Hall of Science," a name adopted by some pot-houses in London, where infidel papers are taken and read to their customers.—Ed. C. M.]

Hugh looked back at the building as they walked on, and said, "No; it doesn't look much like a school."

"I guess not,—a school o' the right sort," said Lisa, and with a little mocking laugh she added, "Ketch the folks as goes there caring for the likes o' me! It isn't them sort as comes round dirty courts like ours, lookin' up the boys and girls to teach 'em to read and write, and to give 'em good dinners at Christmas, and warm clothes to them as is all in tatters. Ketch 'em at it! They ha'n't got that love in 'em as makes 'em look after the poor and the wicked to do 'em good. And what good could they do if they did come to such poor cre'turs as we?—What's the good o' tellin' the likes of us that there ain't no Lord Jesus to love us, and no God to care for us, and no heaven to go to, when our troubles are ended here? Why, if I didn't believe, I should jest think what's the use of livin'?—and then p'raps I should go and pitch into the river to get away from the cold and hunger, and the trouble of dad; or else I should be 'alays wishin' that I was a dog, or somethin' without a soul."

"Yes," responded Hugh, when Lisa paused for a moment; "that was all the comfort mother had when we were without a home and food and warm clothes, and all those things that make people comfortable: she knew that the Lord Jesus loved her and cared for her though she was so poor, and that she was going to live with Him in heaven."

"Yes, I can bear bein' poor and hungry and all that," said Lisa, "when I think that the Lord Jesus feels for me. And 'course He does, cos wasn't He poor and hungry, too, and hadn't He heaps o' trouble jest like we? Sometimes when I see tidy, warm little girls about as big as me, what have got kind fathers and mothers, and plenty to eat, and nice places to live in, I axes myself why does the Lord let me be so different? But then He knows what's best, thinks I; and p'raps He'll mend things for me by-and-by; and if He don't, why it'll be all right in heaven at last; and now I've bin learn't as He loves me, I can get along well enough here till He calls me like He did mother."

"I hope things will mend for you by-and-by, poor Lisa," said Hugh, in a sympathising tone which brought tears to her eyes. "If your father was all right you'd be more comfortable, I dare say."

"Why, I should be as comfortable as anybody in London," exclaimed Lisa. "But he ain't all right, and sometimes I think he ain't ever goin' to be, though I prays for him as hard as I can. But what can I do 'cept be kind to him, and pray for him, and try to keep him at home? All the rest is the Lord's business, and He've promised to answer our prayers, so I s'pose He'll make it all right somehow by-and-by. Only last Sunday our teacher was tellin' us as we ought to cast all our care upon God; so thinks I to myself I'll jest cast this werrit about dad upon the Lord, and try to give over fearin' as He ain't a-goin' to answer me. And I've felt more lighter in my heart like this week, though dad haven't bin a bit better."

"But I hope he soon will be, Lisa," said Hugh, feeling that he scarcely knew what to say to this little girl with her many soul-experiences about which he knew so little. He was far more of a child than Lisa, although he was nearly a year older; for her hard, sad life had developed thought and feeling in her to an extent that made her far older than her years.

After a slight pause she said, "You ought jest to see my teacher! It's the happiest thing I've got all the week to go and meet her of Sundays; and she's quite a lady. Oh, you don't know what a long way she comes from her beautiful house to our school! I went, home with her one Sunday for a little book as she forgot to bring for me; and oh my! haven't she got a beautiful house? And she's so kind and gentle, and learns me the loveliest things. Her name's Miss Marner; and I jest wish you could see her. They ain't all real ladies as teaches at our school, but she's one; and the super'tendent told us one day as she comes jest cos she loves the Lord Jesus, and think we's His children; so she comes to learn us."

"It's very good of her," remarked Hugh.

"But only what she ought to do if she's a Christian," promptly replied