

## The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1877.

STUDIES ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.

SUNDAY, July 8th, 1877.—Paul at Antioch.—Acts xiii. 26-41.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Vss. 38-41.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And we declare unto you glad tidings."—Acts xiii. 32.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, Acts xiii. 14-41. Tuesday, vs. 26; Romans i. 1-17. Wednesday, vs. 29; John xix. 23-37. Thursday, vs. 31; 1 Corinthians xv. 1-11. Friday, vs. 33; Psalm ii. 16. Saturday, vs. 38; Luke xxiv. 36-53. Sunday, vs. 39; Galatians iii. 8-29.

ANALYSIS.—I. Christ proved to be the Messiah. Vss. 26-37. (a) By his rejection by the Jews. Vss. 26-27. (b) By his resurrection. Vs. 31. (c) So explaining the promises. Vss. 32-37. II. An offer of salvation. Vss. 38, 39. III. A warning to despisers. Vss. 40, 41.

QUESTIONS.—What was the probable reason why Paul left Perga for Antioch? In what direction and how far was this inland? On what great thoroughfare? What was the danger incurred in going up to the Pisidian highlands? How does Paul possibly refer to it? By whom was it at this time inhabited? To what place does Paul at once go for public worship after reaching Antioch? Where did the women sit in the synagogue? Where was the desk placed? What portions of the Scriptures were read? Where was the manuscript kept? After the usual services what courtesy did the rulers of the synagogue extend to strangers? How did Paul accept of it? Upon what history does his address dwell? How does he seek to conciliate his hearers?

Vs. 26. By what words does Paul address the Jews? By what the Gentiles? Why does he include Gentiles with Jews in his appeal? What is meant by "the word of this salvation"?

Vs. 27. To what sad event does Paul now refer? Upon whom does he charge the blame of the crucifixion? What is meant by "they knew him not"? Acts ii. 23, 36, 37; 1 Cor. ii. 8. What is meant by "voices of the prophets"? Why were the Jews blamable for their ignorance?

Vs. 28. What is meant by "no cause of death"? On what ground did the Jews desire Pilate to put Christ to death? Luke xxii. 70, 71; xxiii. 1, 2.

Vs. 29. Who took Jesus down from the cross? John xix. 38, 39.

Vs. 30. Man has done all he can do against Christ; what now does God do for him?

Vs. 31. For how many days was Jesus seen after his resurrection? Can you name some of his appearances to his disciples? 1 Cor. xv. 5-9. What were these disciples after the resurrection qualified to be? Is the blessing of Christianity confined to those who saw Christ in the flesh? John 20: 29; 1 Peter i. 8.

Vs. 32. How does Paul describe the gospel? What promises were fulfilled in Jesus? How old is Christianity?

Vs. 34. How was Christ's resurrection different from that of Lazarus?

Vs. 36. What is meant "fell on sleep"? What by "laid unto his fathers"? Does not this recognize the existence of a soul in a future state?

Vs. 38. In passing from history to doctrine, what blessed truth does Paul now teach?

Vs. 39. There were some sins, such as idolatry, murder, which the Jewish code could not pardon; what sins will not Jesus forgive? Will the gospel save us if we have no faith in it? What three truths have we in these verses?

Vs. 40. What is Paul's caution in his closing words? Against what should we all be on our guard?

ANTIOCH IN PISIDIA.—Why Paul so soon left Perga is not known. It may have been because the warm season in the lowlands between the coast and the highlands was at this very time unendurable—so much so that he found the inhabitants of Perga flocking to northern resorts. Striking, then, north-easterly, Paul came to the Pisidian highlands. These were thousands of feet above the level of the sea, forming the lofty table-land of Asia Minor. The ascent to these highlands from the coast is often through narrow passes with frowning cliffs, fit haunts for marauding mountaineers and robbers. Here, too, the rivers have an uncertain flow, now almost dry, now swollen as in an hour or day. Here Paul was quite likely to encounter the very trials he afterward wrote about—"perils of rivers and perils of robbers."—2 Cor. xi. 26. Antioch in Pisidia, was northeast from Perga in Pamphylia about a hundred miles, situated midway on the great road between the Egean Sea and Cilicia and Syria. It was inhabited by Greeks; largely,

however, by Romans, and by some Jews, added to native Pisidians. The Jews were not numerous, however, as they appear to have had but one synagogue; still, they were an influential body. Full liberty of worship according to their faith was given to them, as, indeed, to all Jews throughout the Roman empire. They went, therefore, on the Sabbath day into their modest synagogue, the women having a separate gallery behind a partition of lattice-work. The desk was in the centre, from which the reader read the Book of the Law distinctly, and gave the sense. The eyes of all, sitting on seats placed around the room, were fastened on the reader or speaker. The ruler or rulers of the synagogue sat on "chief seats" that faced the congregation. After the Manuscript was read and expounded, it was returned to the Ark, that was placed on the side nearest to Jerusalem, and kept carefully closed. Then followed a pause, during which strangers or learned men who had any words of consolation or exhortation rose and addressed the meeting. To such a meeting Paul and Barnabas went, wearing the *Talith*, or badge of an Israelite, and sat down with the rest. The prayers were recited, the Law and the Prophets were read, the Book, or Manuscript, was returned to the Ark, and then the rulers of the synagogue asked the strangers to speak to their fellow-Israelites. Paul answered the invitation gladly and promptly. He rose, and with the animated and emphatic gesture which he used on other occasions, "beckoned with his hand." Vs. 16. Luke gives us the substance of his address. He dwells upon the previous history of the Jewish people, as Stephen had done before him. He seeks to conciliate his hearers by proving to them that the Messiah they longed for was the Messiah he preached, and he founds upon the whole an offer of salvation and a warning against despising the gospel. Our lesson is upon the latter portion of his address.

EXPOSITION.—Verse 26.—*Men and brethren.* Omit "and." "Men" expresses honor; "brethren," friendly relationship; and the two are used of all present, and not of the two classes, respectively, namely, Jews and proselytes. *Children,* etc. More exactly, and pertinently, "sons," etc., the Israelites by birth. *Whosoever among you,* etc. The proselytes, or "Hellenists," converts to Judaism. Paul would conciliate, though he does not flatter.

Verse 27.—*Knew him not,* etc. Peter speaking to these Jerusalemites said, "Ye denied the Holy One." The denial brings out the guilt of which Peter would convict them. The ignorance is at once an explanation and palliation of the guilt, and is mentioned here because Paul does not wish to stir up wrath against Christ's crucifiers, but only to show the fulfillment of prophecy. *Read every Sabbath day.* In their synagogues. The frequency of the reading makes more strange the blindness.

Verse 28.—*No cause of death.* No just cause, nothing which could stand as legal evidence. Matt. xxvi. 56-68. *Desired they Pilate,* etc. See Matthew xxvii. 19-28.

Verse 29.—*Fulfilled all that was written of him.* All things [plural] written concerning him, especially such predictions as the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. *They took him down,* etc. No emphasis in the Greek is here put on the actors, but all on the acts; and hence it is not hinted, though it is elsewhere taught, that loving hands took Jesus to the tomb. Matt. xxvii. 57-60.

Verse 30.—*But God raised him from the dead.* Here is a sharp contrast between God and Christ's crucifiers, between his judgment and theirs, between his power and act, and theirs.

Verse 31.—*Many days.* Forty. i. 3. *Of them which came up,* etc. Christ's disciples who attended him on his last visit to Jerusalem, men and women. Matt. xxviii. 16; 1 Cor. xv. 5, etc. *Who are [now] his witnesses,* etc. Nothing in the Bible is more striking than its thoroughly and strictly historical character, from its beginning to its close.

Verse 32.—*And we declare unto you,* etc. "We" is emphatic here because on the one hand looking back to "witnesses," of vs. 31, and associating the missionaries with them as men of like information and their fellow-witnesses, and on the other looking forward to

"you" to contrast the speakers with the hearers, the bearers with the recipients of the good news. We know what you need to know. *Glad tidings.* This is the meaning of the word *gospel.* *The promise,* etc. As already stated by Paul in the first part of his speech. Vss. 22, 23. Comp. Romans iv. 13. It was very necessary to make the Jews see that Christ was the fulfillment of God's promises to the fathers, for the Jews rested in those promises. They were their sure and abiding foundation.

Verse 33.—*Hath fulfilled,* etc. There is nothing more clear, wonderful and precious than the unity of revelation, and also its completeness. The Bible is a perpetual miracle ever before our eyes, as much a miracle as the raising of Lazarus, and far grander. It is the product of a long series of miracles, which came to "fulfillment" in the resurrection. *Raised up Jesus again.* From the dead, as in vs. 30. *Second psalm.* The better reading is "the first psalm." Our first psalm was regarded as introductory, and hence not numbered. "Thou art my Son," etc. The resurrection anticipating the ascension is the "day." God then placed Jesus on the mediatorial throne as his Son.

Verse 34.—*The sure mercies of David.* Dr. Hackett translates the holy [inviolable] promises of David [that is, made to him], the sure. See 2 Sam. vii. 13-16, and Isa. lv. 3.

Verse 35.—*He saith.* God saith, because David wrote by plenary inspiration. See Psalm xvi. 10. *Thou shalt not suffer,* etc. ii. 31. The prediction respected Christ's body; but the rising of the body betokened that in the person of Jesus was indestructible and divine life, and thus that he was the resurrection. John v. 26; xi. 25. He was not simply killed and raised, but of himself he laid down his life, and again took it. He had in himself this power. John x. 18. Because of this we are "complete in him."

Verse 36.—This verse is to show that the promises must have referred to Christ, and not to the psalmist. Much as in Christ's question in Matt. xxii. 43, 44. *Having served,* etc. *Fell on sleep.* Or simply, "slept," a sweet Christian name for death. *Was laid unto,* etc. More exactly and forcibly, "was added to his fathers," being one more to join them in their home beyond the grave. *Saw corruption.* His body saw it; that is, experienced it.

Verse 37.—The experience of Christ contrasted. The fifth mention of the resurrection in this passage.

Verses 38, 39.—(1) It is this Jesus who brings forgiveness ("by this man," or, rather, "this one"). (2) He brings a complete forgiveness of all sin ("justified from all things"). (3) He brings it to all who will accept it ("all that believe").

Verses 40, 41.—The terrors of Calvary are as much greater than the terrors of Sinai, as the mercies of Sinai are less than the mercies of Calvary. "The prophets" here is the name of a division of the Old Testament.

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

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And in his name shall the Gentiles trust."—Matt. xii. 21.

## The Story of the Lesson.

FOR THE PRIMARY CLASS.

From Perga, Paul and Barnabas came to another Antioch. This was in the province of Pisidia. There they went into the Synagogue on the Sabbath day. They were invited to speak to the people. Then Paul stood up and beckoned with his hand for them to pay attention. He first reminded his hearers of the promise of a Saviour, which they had often heard from the very books of the law they had been reading. *This Saviour* he declared was Jesus. Though the Jews who lived in Jerusalem had heard these promises read from their prophets every Sabbath, yet they did not know him when he came, and had themselves helped to make the words of the prophets come true by putting Jesus to death. He was also raised from the dead, just as David had said the Saviour should be. And he was seen for forty days by those who knew him well, for they had come with him all the way from Galilee to Jerusalem. And now, said Paul, "We declare unto you the same

glad tidings of the promise which God made our fathers, and has kept to us." Then Paul showed them what the glad news really was, "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins."

## Select Serial.

From *The Day of Rest.*

DORA'S BOY.

BY MRS. ELLEN ROSS.

CHAP. XXIV.—LISA'S BURDEN.

Two or three weeks passed by, which were to little Hugh a time of such comfort and peace and profound content that he began to think life was going to be too good. Now he was never cold and hungry, never over-tired, never anxious about the morrow; and all this was such a contrast to his sad experience of the last two or three years, that he seemed to have entered upon an altogether new existence.

Then Matthew was so kind and genial, and of such unvarying good temper towards him, that Hugh could not see one flaw in his character: in his eyes he was perfect. For although at the first he had somewhat doubted him in that matter of speaking scornfully of the Bible, yet now that doubt had gradually melted away since Matthew had never uttered another word against it, had seemed pleased to see him read it, and on one or two occasions permitted him to read aloud. Then, on Sunday mornings, he sent him off to church in good time, and when Hugh asked him if he was not going too, Matthew smiled kindly and said, "Never mind me, little chap; I don't go to the same sort o' church as you do." So the boy went off quite contentedly alone.

During those three weeks they had not once seen Lisa Maurice, and they both rather wondered at it. "Like enough the poor starved critter's dead," said Matthew, pityingly. "I wouldn't give much for the life of a dog, even, exposed to such cold and starvation as that little lass have bin. She must be as tough as leather to stand it; but like enough she haven't stood it, since that day she was here last. That spell o' weather was enough to nip up her bit o' life."

"Don't you know where she lives, sir?" asked Hughie, feeling the deepest pity for her.

"No, I don't know nothin' no more about her than ye do yourself," answered Matthew. "To my knowledge I've never seen her but them three times as you knows of."

Day after day Hughie thought of the little girl, and often looked out up and down the street in the hope of seeing her. But as the days passed by without her making her appearance, he began to fear that her un-childlike wish was realized, and that she had, indeed, gone away from the cold and hunger of this life.

However, one day early in the new year, when he had almost given up the hope of seeing her again, he went to the door to look out, and there she was standing looking in at the birds, and humming to herself, just as if only a day had elapsed since she was there before.

"Why, Lisa Maurice! where ever have you been all this long time?" exclaimed Hughie, stepping outside, and speaking quite eagerly.

She turned her back to the window, resting her hands on the sill; and putting her feet together on the pavement, she stared down at her red-toes, saying indifferently, "On! I've bin about."

"Well, we haven't seen anything of you."

"But I've seen you many-a-time: I've been by at gas-time, and seen you and old Matthew sometimes in the shop, and sometimes in your fine kitchen."

"And why didn't you come in day-time? Mr. Pedder was thinking you were dead."

"No; I wasn't dead," Lisa slowly replied: "I don't think folks very often gets what they wishes for in this world; do you?"

"I don't know; but if you wish to die, why, you oughtn't to," Lisa Maurice. Mother used to say it's very wrong; and she never said she'd like to die, though she had such a lot of trouble;

and used to be cold and hungry and ill, and dreadful tired of everything."

"No," said Lisa, thoughtfully; "I s'pose it ain't right, neither. But if you was me, I dessay you couldn't help wishin' some queer things sometimes. But you've got a very comf'able place now haven't ye? And if Matthew's as good to ye as he seemed that day as I rode in the grand carriage with him, why, then you needn't be much afraid of him. But I like to keep out of his way; and if I can help it, he won't ketch me in his shop again, Hughie."

"Why ever not?" exclaimed Hughie. "I'm sure he was very kind to you last time you were there: didn't he give you a good dinner to carry home?"

"Yes," said Lisa, shifting her position a little, and reddening as she spoke. "But that's jest what I don't like him to do; and I shouldn't ha' took it that day, only I was so dreadful hungry. I never tells folks as I know that I'm hungry, cos they always goes on about dad; and I don't like it, that's what I don't! Didn't you hear as Matthew spoke savage-like about him that day? Well, I can't abear to hear it from anybody. It isn't the likes of him as ought to be savage with my dad: it's me, and I keeps it in, cos I don't know whether he can help it."

"Help what?" asked Hugh.

"Help being what he is," answered Lisa, shortly, with her face averted. Hughie was silent for a few moments, in doubt whether he ought to enquire further. But a desire to comfort the little forlorn girl, rather than to satisfy vulgar curiosity, prompted him at length to ask timidly, "What is he, Lisa?"

"Oh, I don't s'pose you know much about it," answered Lisa, without looking at him. "Old Matthew's teetotal, ain't he?"

"Yes."

"Well, my father ain't, by a long way, so that's all about it!" said Lisa, rousing herself at those words, and turning round to look in the window again. As Hugh did not respond, she went on, "If he was, I guess things 'ud be different; and if there wasn't no places to tempt him, I guess he would be like Matthew. For he's always declarin' he will be, and promis'n' over and over again, and then off he goes meanin' to be good, and home he comes as bad can be!"

"Isn't it a dreadful pity!" quietly exclaimed Hughie, with the greatest sympathy.

"Yes, and a great deal worse than a pity: it's a shame! I'd like to see all them drink-places burnt down, that's what I should, and then dad and me 'ud be as happy together as you and Matthew is; and nobody 'ud have to ask me if I was hungry. And I, shouldn't have to be about like this, neither."

"Couldn't you get a place to go to?" asked Hugh.

"No, I couldn't. I've got to be about to keep a look-out for father, else I don't know what 'ud happen to him. He ain't no more fit to be left than a baby. I've prayed and prayed for him, and the Lord don't answer, and that jest wretches me worse than anything. I can't think what the Lord is goin' to do with him. I sits and looks at him of nights by the hour, I do; and I can't tell what's goin' to come of him. If you was to see him, I guess you'd say the same. Why, I'd take ye this minute to see him if you'd go, and if it wasn't daylight, and then you'd know what I mean. Why, the folks in our court 'ud think them spanky clothes a deal too good for ye, if you was to venture down there for them to see 'em, and I guess you wouldn't carry 'em back home again!"

"Are there thieves about there then?" asked Hugh, with interest.

"Ay; there are them as ketches all they can, anyhow too. But, ye know, the poor souls don't know as the eighth commandment was ever writ; so I don't know what the Lord's goin' to do about 'em." She paused a few moments, then went on: "Well, Hughie, I never tells anybody my trouble, nor lets 'em come 'nights my dad; but I've told you, and I'd like ye to see him some day, so as you may know as I can't help hangin' about like this to look after him. Will you come some evenin'?" and I'll show ye the school as I go to."

"I dare say I can, and I should like to," answered Hugh.

"Very well, I'll call for ye some time; and so I must be goin'. Good-bye, Hughie."