

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lesson for 1878.

SUNDAY, October 13th, 1878.—The Gospel Feast.—Luke xiv. 15-24. December, A. D. 29.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 23, 24.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God."—Luke xiv. 15.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, Luke xiv. 1-24. Tuesday, Matthew xxii. 1-14. Wednesday, Romans xxii. Thursday, vs. 18; Genesis iii. 7-13. Friday, vs. 20; 1 Corinthians vii. 29-31. Saturday, Revelation xxii.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Approving exclamation. Vs. 15. II. The parable. Vs. 16-24.

QUESTIONS.—Whose hospitality was our Saviour now enjoying? Vs. 1. What strife appeared among the guests? Vs. 7. What instruction did Jesus give his host on the courtesies of life. Vs. 12; compare Deut. xiv. 29; 2 Sam. vi. 19; Prov. xiv. 31. When is the good man promised a recompense? Matt. xxv. 34-40.

I. Vs. 15.—What is meant, in this verse, by "the kingdom of God"? What by "eating bread" there?

II. Vss. 16-24.—Who, do you think, is referred to by "a certain man"? Matt. iii. 2, 3. What is meant by "a great supper"? What is meant by "bade many"? When were all things ready for the Gospel Feast? Gal. iv. 4. In what sense had the invitations to it been accepted? Rom. ix. 4, 5. What excuses were made for refusing? In what were they all alike? In what different? What verse of Scripture covers each of these cases? 1 John ii. 16. To whom are the servants now bidden to go? Vs. 21. Who are meant by the "maimed, and halt, and blind"? To whom is the servant bidden to go a third time? What does the Lord say of those who were bidden? What is it to be excluded from the kingdom of God? 2 Thess. i. 9.

SETTING OF THE LESSON.—Our Saviour was invited to a feast with one of the chief Pharisees, at which there was a strife among the guests for the first places. Observing which, he reproved them for choosing the highest seats, and also pointed out to his host a truer hospitality than showing favors to rich kindred and neighbors. On hearing these instructions, one of the guests at the feast exclaimed, in an approving and admiring spirit, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." It was upon this peculiar exclamation that Jesus uttered the parable of the Great Supper.

EXPOSITION.—The parable of the Marriage of the King's Son, in Matt. xxii. 1-14, may be compared with this of the Great Feast, but must not be confounded with it. There are striking points of difference, both in the parable itself, and in its teaching.

Verses 15.—One of them that sat at meat.—See vs. 1. This leading Pharisee seems to have invited only his own friends and persons of distinction, probably for the most part Pharisees, like himself. Vss. 12-14; compare vs. 7. *Heard these things.* Christ's words, in vss. 1-14; but especially the statement as to the reward to be given "in the resurrection of the just." Vs. 14. *Blessed is he, etc.* Trench regards this observation as a very natural one for a conscientious, but carnally-minded Pharisee to make just here. This Pharisee seems to have wished to end Christ's rebuke by this courteous assent.Verse 16.—Then said he unto him.—To him specially, as having given occasion for the parable; but to all the company, as needing its lesson, and concerned in its warning. *A great supper.* The word here translated "supper" designated the principal meal of the day, usually taken "late in the afternoon, or early in the evening, after the heat and business of the day were over." The banquet at which the Saviour was sitting made the imagery the more natural, though God's provision for man in salvation is fitly called a feast, as being nourishment for the spiritual life, satisfaction of the spiritual nature, most intimate, sacred fellowship with the Lord of salvation; and with its other recipients, and a provision to which invitation is graciously given, to be joyfully received at the offered opportunity, or never. *Bade many.* This is the invitation proper. The "many" here refers primarily to the Jews, as represented in the religious and more

respectable classes, who, as a whole, did not believe on Christ. Vs. 24.

Verse 17.—Sent his servant at supper-time, etc. "This second invitation, or admonishment rather, is quite according to Eastern manners. (Esther v. 8, vi. 14). The original invitation answers to that given in and through the Old Testament. The "supper-time" is the Christian era; the "servant" sent to announce the readiness of all things is, according to some, Jesus himself, as a public Teacher, and also as represented by all his apostles, and other teachers.

Verse 18.—They all.—All those bidden. See above, on vs. 16. *With one consent.* One spirit animated, and united compactly together the Jews, in hostility to the Lord Jesus. *To make excuse.* To beg off. They disown God's call, without owning to themselves or others that they disown God. They excused themselves. No necessity withheld them.

Verses 18-20.—Three samples of the excusers, and their excuses, are here given. There is a gradation from the less to the more hardened. The first declines with more of hesitation and apology; the last with a flat refusal. The first is preparing for business and settlement in life; the second is prospering in his business; the third is settled down in all the delight that successful business can give—married, with a charming home,—therefore he cannot come. They are all alike in preferring the lawful and good things of this world to God. Is not this principle unchangeable—as true among us now, as among the Jews then?

Verse 21.—Came, and showed his lord these things.—The parable presents the servant as entirely distinct in person from the lord. Jesus, though one with the Father, and Lord of all, was also the servant. See Phil. ii. 6-10. *Being angry.* If God loves the right, he must hate the wrong. If grateful acceptance of his offered mercy pleases him, ungrateful rejection must displease him. We can keep no true conception of God's love, if we will not concede his holy and terrible wrath. *Go out quickly.* "Quickly," because the time for the feast had come, and also as showing that the rejecters were, without remedy, rejected. *Streets and lanes of the city, etc.* God, in his Gospel, exemplifies the principle there enjoined on men.Verse 22.—Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded.—A time is supposed to elapse between the command and the answer sufficient for this gracious work of the invitation and introduction of the classes named. *Yet there is room.* To show that God's heart and purpose was broader, larger than "the city," than the people of Israel. Even if all had been Israel that were of Israel there would still have been room, as the New Testament often enough assures us. Read Romans xi.Verse 23.—The lord said unto his servant, etc.—Here is shadowed in parable that which is literally given in "The Great Commission." Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. *Go out.* Out of the city, out of the limits of the Hebrew nation, and faith, and religion. *Into the highways and hedges.* Vineyards were surrounded by hedge-fences. The universality of the Gospel, as for all men, of all countries and all ranks, is thus strongly set forth. *Compel them to come in.* God is in earnest, and sinners must be made to feel this earnestness of redeeming love. No other compulsion is meant, or is possible.

Verse 24.—For I say, etc.—Finality, solemnly assured finality, breathes in every syllable of this awful, but just verse. If it stood alone, with no prevalent support elsewhere, we might attribute this finality to the parable, rather than to its application. As it is, no such evasion is possible.

The salvation brought in by Christ is indeed of the nature of a feast, satisfying spiritual hunger, and thirst, nourishing spiritual life, and securing spiritual fellowship.

It is "great," both in its nature as spiritual and in its extent as universal, and its preparation was heralded publicly to "many" before Christ's advent.

The rejecter is rejected and privilege passes to others, even to all who will.

SUNDAY, October 20th, 1878.—The Prodigal Son. Luke xv. 11-24.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God."

The Story of the Bible Lesson.

FOR THE PRIMARY CLASS.

The Gospel Feast.

Read carefully the beautiful lesson story, a parable of Jesus of the great supper and the foolish people who would not come. The gospel is like a feast; it is full of good things which make our souls strong and give us eternal life, Jesus is the Bread of Life, the only thing which can feed hungry souls; he is the Water of Life, of which if we drink we shall never need to taste of this world's pleasures. Jesus calls loudly, "Come everybody; all is ready. I have died that you might be saved." Yet it is a very strange, but people make many excuses to stay away. One boy says, "I have so many lessons I can't learn of Jesus now." Another, "I have so much to do I have no time yet." A girl says "Wait until I attend dancing school a while and go to parties till I am tired of it," and another "I must think of how to get pretty dresses. One thinks she is too young, and another too old, and many say, "I don't see but I am as good as those who call themselves Christians." Some are good enough, and some too sinful. Will you make such foolish excuses, and wait until some one else is taken in your place, or will you go now, while yet there is room? If you have not yet accepted this invitation, take a piece of paper and write this question: "Why am I not a Christian?" Then write your reasons under it and see how they look. Will you tell these things to God when you stand before Him?

Boys' Department.

What a little boy did for his Mother.

"The flour's out, ma'am," said Bridget, putting her head into the sitting-room, where Mrs. Helps and Charley were sitting.

"Very well, Bridget," said Mrs. Helps, but when the door was shut she sighed, and though Charley asked her twice what "succor" meant, she gave him no answer.

Charley looked up from his book and saw tears were falling on his mother's hands as she sewed.

"Mama! mama! what's the matter?" "Oh, nothing, child! don't worry. I'm sure it's all right, and I'm glad you little ones have such good appetites."

Charley thought hard for a moment. "O, I know," he said with a wise look, "it's the flour. You were ever so happy till Bridget put her head in. Now, mama, I'll tell you what; you get a whole barrel instead of a bag, and then you won't have to be bothered. I was over at Henry's the other day, and his mother went in the closet, and I saw her take such a lot of flour out of a barrel. Get a barrel, mother!" and Charley put his arms around the dear neck and kissed the face he loved so much.

Mrs. Helps could not but smile at her little boy. "Child, the trouble is, I can't get a barrel. It would cost nine dollars, and I haven't got that. But no matter, my son; you are growing older every day. God is very good, and I know we shall not starve. Now I must go up to my study, and you can run out doors."

Charley put on his hat and ran out. Henry was waiting for him to play, but Charley said, "No, I can't now; I want to go to the village."

"Can I go, too?" "Now Charley would rather Henry had stayed at home, but he was trying to be an unselfish boy; so he said, "Yes; only please, Henry, I can't talk."

The two walked along, and though Charley had said he could not talk, he soon began to tell Henry what was on his mind. "Mother works so hard," he said, "since father died last winter, and she's so worried, now she ought to have a whole barrel of flour, I'm going to see if I can't earn one."

Henry opened his eyes at this. "You earn a barrel of flour! Why, father paid for our barrel the other day, and I saw the bill, ten dollars. How'll you earn that?"

"Mother said nine dollars," said Charley, a little discouraged. "I don't know how, but I've got a plan. I'm going to the grocer's."

"To buy your flour?" said Henry, half laughingly.

They went to a large grocery-store in the village, and a clerk asked the boys

what they wanted. Charlie answered that he would like to see Mr. Dunning.

"He's busy," said the clerk. "I see but I can wait."

In a little while Mr. Dunning came to the boys. "Now, my boys," said he "what can I do for you?" Charlie felt like throwing his arms around the gentleman's neck, he looked and spoke so kindly, telling all his hopes, but he tried to tell as little as possible of his real need. "You know I wasn't begging," he said afterward.

"I want to know, sir, if I can do any work for you, sweeping or cleaning, here or in your house? I can chop wood and light fires, and bring water and peel potatoes, and post letters, and—"

"Stop, stop, my boy!" said Mr. Dunning, "I see you can do a good deal for a little fellow. But can't you do all this at home? Don't they need you there?" "O, I'll do that, too. I can't be here all the time; but please, sir, I'll work very hard, and a very, very long time, if only I can earn ten dollars."

"Ten dollars! Well, that is a large sum to pay a little boy. What do you want it for?"

"Please, sir, mama's writing and sewing and teaching, to earn enough money for us, but she can't get enough, and I do want to get her a barrel of flour. I thought praps if I worked hard and earned part, you'd trust me to work for the rest."

"Why, what's your name?"

"Charley Helps."

"So you're Mrs. Helps' boy! Bless you, child, you shall have work to do, and if you are faithful, your mother shall have the flour. Now, what time can you come here?"

"I dress Johnnie and the baby for mother in the mornings, and then I study; but perhaps mother can hear me some other time. I can chop our wood any time and I can get up early and draw the water before breakfast."

"Well, you come round at ten o'clock every day and stay till four; tell your mother you'll not be in the store, but with my wife. I fancy she'll like to see a boy about again," and Mr. Dunning sighed.

Ah, children! death takes a father from one home and a child from another, and only God can comfort those that are left. Mr. Dunning had lost his boy, a little fellow about Charley's age, a few months before.

Now, I must not make my story too long. Charley worked hard. He peeled potatoes cleaned knives, sorted potatoes and apples (and if you ever tried it you find that it is very hard work), split wood, and even set the table. Charley's mother did not know that he was to be paid for all this, but supposed that he had hired himself out to relieve her of his board, for Charley always ate his dinner at the Dunning's, and the noble boy used to eat as little as possible at home. At last, when he had worked three weeks, Mr. Dunning called him into the store. "Here's a friend of yours, Charley," he said, and there was Charley's Sabbath school teacher, Mr. Kimbell.

"Charley, I want to tell you that I'm going to send your barrel of flour home to-night," said Mr. Dunning, "and as Mr. Kimbell is here he shall see it marked. You've earned more than half the price already, and so you shall give this to your mother, and tell her if she will give you to me for my own boy—my very own—she shall never want for flour or anything else I can furnish her out of my store."

Charley could not answer, and could only smile from ear to ear as Mr. Dunning wrote, "Mrs. Helps, ordered and paid for by Charley Helps," on the top of the barrel. Charley rode home with the man that took the barrel, and his mother came out to see who was there.

"Here's your flour, mama! here's your flour! I earned it. And O, mama, Mr. Dunning will give you everything you want if you'll give me to him. But mama, dear mama! don't give me for I mean to work for you, and I love you so much."

Dear little fellow; the joy and the surprise were too much for him, and he cried in his mother's arms. Mr. Dunning called in the evening, and it was arranged that, though Mrs. Helps could not give Charley, he should live part of the time at the Dunning's.

All this happened years ago, and very few know that Charley Helps, who is Mr. Dunning's right-hand man, earned his barrel of flour from that very store when he was nine years old.—Well-spring.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.
Historical Sketch.

A SKETCH OF THE ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF THE BAPTIST CHURCH AT LOWER ECONOMY AND FIVE ISLANDS.

By Rev. A. E. INGRAM.

(Published by special request of the church.)

The history of our denominational progress in any community is of deep interest to Baptists. We are oftentimes much encouraged in our labors by reading the records of the faithful and self-denying labors of the noble pioneers who planted our standard, and amid many discouragements disseminated the principles of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. All honor to them. They planted, we are reaping the fruits of their labors. Presently the sowers and reapers will rejoice together as they hear their Master pronounce the "Well done good and faithful servant."

Whilst standing beneath the spreading branches of some old majestic oak, unhurt by the storms of centuries, we have thought of that tree in its acorn germ and mentally traced its progressive stages. It is equally pleasant to trace the upward growth of divine truth, whether it be through the instrumentality of some eminent servant of God or through the God blessed efforts of a feeble band of disciples.

With heartfelt gratitude to the Divine Spirit, who ever broods over the object of his regenerating power, we will now take a retrospect of the development of this church from its infancy until now. In the absence of local records of this church, and having been informed that the Rev. C. Tupper, D. D., was the pioneer of the doctrines of primitive Christianity in this locality, we wrote to our venerable father in the ministry for some reminiscences of his labours in this neighbourhood. The following is his reply:

AYLESFORD, August 13th, 1878.

REV. A. E. INGRAM:—

My Dear Brother,—In compliance with your request, I proceed to furnish you with some reminiscences of my early labors at Five Islands and Lower Economy.

On the 2nd of July, 1816, I crossed the Bay of Fundy from Black Rock to Parrsborough. Endeavoring to fulfil the Saviour's command, "As ye go preach," I proceeded from Advocate Harbor, going on east on the north side of the Bay, on bad roads or on the beach, and holding meetings in all the places where I could collect a few people to hear. There was almost entire destitution of ministerial labors in all that region.

On the 12th day of July I arrived at Five Islands. Having made an appointment to preach, I called on a number of families to notify the people. While passing a tavern I heard a man swearing about "The scoundrel coming to Partridge Island" to shew his recommendation. Another affirmed, with a profane oath, that he was there. A third party accosting me, in a subdued tone invited me to come in and drink. While I pitied these ungodly men, their reproachful language did not dishearten me in any degree. It rather indicated to me that Satan was disquieted at the prospect of losing some of his subjects, and was therefore prompting his vassals to revile. Their conduct forcibly reminded me of the words of the Psalmist, "I was the song of the drunkard." So earnest, however, did many appear to hear the word that although in a feeble state of health they prevailed upon me to preach three times on the Sabbath. At Five Islands, and in Lower Economy, where also I held meetings, there were two or three Baptist sisters who had removed hither from other places; these were the first professors of religion of my own denomination with whom I met on the north side of the Bay. From credible testimony it appeared that in all that region, extending over 60 miles east and west, and 50 north to the Gulf Shore in Nova Scotia, with the exception of a small church at Amherst without a pastor, there were very few individuals even attached to Baptist sentiment.

On visiting Five Islands and Lower Economy again, Oct. 31st, 1816, I immediately gave notice of an appointment for preaching that evening. It was ascertained that a number of the females were assembled at a quilting. Two of them, however, a Mrs. Broderic and a Miss Thompson left the company and attended the meeting. Both of these had been religiously impressed at the time of my former visit. Their convictions were pungent and of long continuance; but each obtained at length a good hope "through grace." While on this visit, numbers of the people expressed an earnest desire for me to labour steadily with them a portion of the time. I felt disposed to visit them frequently, but my commission then seemed to be a roving one.