

The Christian Messenger.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1875.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, August 1st, 1875.—The Water of Life.—John iv. 4-15.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." Isaiah xlii. 3.

ANALYSIS.—I. Route through Samaria. Va. 4, 5. II. Jesus at the well. Va. 6. III. The woman of Samaria. Va. 7-9. IV. The water of life. Va. 10-15.

EXPOSITION.—Verse 4.—And he needs go through Samaria. After the Lord's interview with Nicodemus, which was our last subject, he and his disciples remained for a time in Judea, and other disciples were gathered to him and baptized. iii. 23. This was waking partisan feelings, not indeed in John the Baptist, but in his adherents (iii. 23-36), and accordingly Jesus returned to Galilee. iv. 1-3. Palestine consisted at this time of the three provinces—Judea in the south, Galilee in the north, and between them, Samaria. The direct road for Christ was thus through Samaria, though he could have crossed to the east of Jordan, and gone around through Perea. The necessity mentioned in this verse may refer to his own purpose, or God's purpose as fulfilled by him. The choice of this way rather than the other has given to us, and to the world, this precious chapter to us. 42.

Verse 5.—Then [accordingly] cometh he to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar. "The great northern road to Samaria and Galilee, which the Saviour sometimes followed in his journeys from one province to another, led along the water-shed of hills which fill up the country between the Mediterranean on the west, and the valley of the Jordan on the east." Shechem or Sychar is thirty-four miles north of Jerusalem. The name Shechem means shoulder, but Sychar means liar, or perhaps drunkard; and it is supposed the change of name was designedly made by the Jews in contempt. Near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. On its purchase see Gen. xxxiii. 18-20. The "tomb of Joseph" is a "little to the right of the traveler's ordinary path."

Verse 6.—Now Jacob's well was there. Says Dr. Hackett: "I have no doubt whatever of the identification of this well. . . . The well is near the western edge of the plain, just in front of the opening between the hills where Nablus, the site of Shechem, is situated. . . . I threw a stone into the mouth of it, and could hear it rumbling away in the distance, as it bounded from side to side, until it sank at last, in the water at the bottom. It has been ascertained to be at least seventy-five feet deep, bored through the solid rock." Jesus therefore, being weary with his journey, sat thus, etc. It was noon [the sixth hour], the brims [of the wells] are furnished with a curb, or low wall of stone, bearing marks of high antiquity in the furrows worn by the ropes used in drawing out the water." Jesus sat "on the well," that is, on this curb.

Verse 7.—There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Drawing water was, according to the custom, the business of women. Give me to drink. Jesus was thirsty as well as weary. He asked for that which he needed; and yet in asking he was more bent on giving than on getting.

Verse 8.—Had gone away into the city to buy meat. A mile or so to west, in the valley opening between Gerizim and Ebal. "Meat," is here, as usually in Scripture, food, or provisions. Jesus did not purpose himself to visit the city.

Verse 9.—How is it that thou being a Jew, etc. About 720 B. C., the Israelites of Samaria were vanquished, and largely carried captive to Babylon, and soon after a mixed foreign population were transported from the East, and with them the vacated cities were filled. See 2 Kings xvii. 21-24; comp. xxi. 13. They were of course, at first, idolaters; but early received some instruction in the religion of Israel. This, however, served only to modify their worship, and make it a mongrel affair. 2 Kings xviii. 25-34, 40, 41. Subsequently, on the return of the Jews from captivity, the Samaritans treated them with treachery and bitter hostility. Ezra iv; Nehemiah ii-iv. The Jews, of course, despised the Samaritans for their heathen origin, and all the more as the latter came more and more to adopt Jewish forms of worship, and to claim to belong to the true Israel; and especially after they built their rival tem-

ple on Gerizim, B. C. 409. The hatred was mutual and intense. The two peoples had "no dealing with" each other, save to vex and annoy. Possibly something of this spirit prompted the woman rather to ask the question, than to give the drink, though this is not apparent. Compare Luke x. 33; xvii. 16-18.

Verse 10.—If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is, etc. "The gift of God" here refers to the salvation which he has come to bring, and so to himself as the one who brings it. Luke iii. 16. He, as the Son of Man, has shown a freedom from all Jewish narrowness in asking her for what he needs. If she had known that as the Son of God, and the Son of man, he, and only he, had that which she most of all needed, her Samaritan narrowness would have given way in a petition to him. Jesus was not simply a Jew, he was a man—equally near to those of all nations, of all times, and of all conditions. Thou wouldst have asked. It is doubtless true that in this woman's heart was a certain readiness for the truth, a certain longing for spiritual blessings, which, perceived by the Saviour, led him thus to converse with her. He would have given thee living water. Life-giving water. Christ declares that he gives this to those rightly asking.

Verse 11.—Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with. She seems not to suspect that he is referring to spiritual things. She, not Christ, was in position to give "the living water" of the well. The well is deep. Seventy-five feet. See on verse 6. From whence then hast thou that living water? No water was more celebrated than that of this well.

Verse 12.—Art thou greater than our father Jacob, etc. The Samaritans claimed to belong to the true Israel, and of course claimed the patriarchs as their fathers.

Verse 13.—Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again. The Saviour will draw a contrast between earthly and heavenly good. "Shall thirst again." So does all temporal good give but temporary satisfaction. But the water that I shall give him, etc. Here he more clearly indicates the contrast between his gift and hers, between what he asks and what he gives.

Verse 15.—Give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come thither to draw. Her words, "Give me this water," fitly express the want of a soul thirsting for righteousness. She may have meant more than she seemed.

QUESTIONS.—Vs. 4. Why "must needs"? Where is Samaria?

Vs. 5. Where is Sychar situated? What is it called in the Old Testament? What patriarchal names are associated with it? What celebrated mountains are near it?

Vs. 6. What do you know of this well? Its depths? Does it exist to-day?

Vs. 7. Why a woman, and not a man? Ans. A woman, and not a man, does hard work in the East. Has Christianity relieved the toil of woman?

Vs. 8. What is meant by "meat"?

Vs. 9. Who were the Samaritans? Did Jesus justify national prejudice? What parable is designed to crush it out? Luke x. 25-37. What miracle shows that Christ had none of it? Mark vii. 24-40.

Vs. 10. What is meant by "the gift of God"? What by "living water"?

Vs. 13. Of what is thirst a symbol? Compare Jeremiah ii. 13. Would the possession of all the world satisfy a soul?

Vs. 14. What is meant by "never thirst"? What by "well of water"? What by "everlasting life"?

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, August 8th, 1875.—Jesus at Bethesda.—John v. 5-15.

KINKS.

A kink is a spontaneous twist in a thread, and a constitutional whimsicality in a man. A thread kink has all the effect of a knot in a thread, interfering with the work of the seamstress. A man-kink so twistifies him, and knots him up, that the pastor can't use him, the church can't manage him, and society don't know what to do with him. A thread-kink is a great annoyance when it occurs too often. A man-kink, a whim, a crotchet, annoys a pastor, wears and disgusts a church, and interferes with her work. A kinky church member never agrees with his brother members, always has a word of advice for his pastor, is always trying to carry a point, is happy only when he can gratify a notion, give his "views," or force a disagreeable alternative upon his "dear brethren," and all for the "glory of God." Brethren, pray to be delivered from kinks.

Our pride is of service to all but ourselves.

Youths' Department.

LITTLE ROMP.

I'm tired to death of keeping still,
And being good all day;
I guess my mamma's company
Forgot to go away.
I've wished and wished they'd think of it,
But they must talk forever first,
They almost always do.

I heard Tom calling to me once,
He's launched his boat, I know;
I wanted to go out and help,—
But mamma's eyes said no.
The ladies talk such stuff to me,
It makes me sick to hear—
"How beautiful your hair curls!" or,
"How red your cheeks are, dear!"

I'd ten times rather run a race,
Than play my tunes and things;
I wouldn't swap my dogs and balls
For forty diamond rings,
I've got no "finement, aunty says,
I 'spect she knows the best;
I don't need much to climb a tree
Or hunt a squirrel's nest.

"Girls are like berries," papa says,
"Sweeter for running wild,"
But Aunt Melissa shakes her head,
And calls me "horrid child!"
I'll always be a romp, she knows—
But sure my name is Sadie,
I'll fool 'em all some dreadful day,
By growing up a lady.

—Schoolday Magazine.

STORY OF AN ELEPHANT.

Elephants have a decided liking for military life. Various regiments whilst serving in the East have had such an animal, which often rendered good service to corps to which he might be attached. The King's Rangers at one time were in possession of a fine male of enormous size which for many years was never once absent from parade. As soon as the bugle sounded, he would walk majestically to the place of muster, and take up his position at the right of the column. If the mahout or driver presented himself, the elephant would lift him on to his shoulders by means of his trunk, and evidently without the slightest effort to himself; but, if left to his own unaided intelligence, he obeyed the ordinary words of command without ever making a mistake, such as "Right face," "March," "Mark time," "Halt." He insisted at all times on giving help to the men whenever they were engaged in loading or unloading baggage, and was evidently pleased to be allowed to make himself generally useful. When the wagons were impeded on the march, as it not unfrequently happened, Jock was duly sensible of his own importance, for by his enormous strength he would push a heavy load up a steep declivity, which six or eight oxen failed to do without his assistance.

It happened that the Rangers were suddenly ordered to embark for China, and there was no accommodation for taking Jock on ship-board. To the great disappointment of the men, the authorities decided that he should be left in India. He was, however, permitted to accompany the regiment as far as the quay, to watch the troops as they went on board, many of whom had a parting word of kindness for their old comrade. "Good-bye, old man!"—"Poor old Jock!"—were repeated, with many variations, both by officers and men. Meanwhile the animal watched the proceedings with great apparent interest, as if wondering when his own turn would come to go on board. But when the vessel steamed off and left him ashore, he became frantic with rage and disappointment. It had been proposed that he should be transferred to another corps, but he most persistently refused to have anything to do with it. Neither the coaxing nor the threats of his mahout were of any avail. Though he had previously manifested the gentlest disposition, he now threateningly withstood all kindly advances on the part of his would-be comrades, and at length so savage did he become that it was deemed expedient to place him in confinement. Even the mahout himself was several times placed in a very awkward predicament, and on one occasion barely escaped with his life. No means could be found to assuage the grief or to calm the anger of this faithful creature, who so constantly mourned the loss of his friends.

But in little less than two years the Rangers came back to their old quarters, and were informed of the melancholy change which had come over their old comrade. "No go near—no touche, sahib; he strike hard," said the mahout; "he kill." "Why, Jock, my boy," said a young officer, formerly one of his special friends, "why, what's the matter?"

The animal pricked up his ears, and instantly recognized the voice, which was proved by his manifesting unmistakable signs and sounds of joy. It was quite affecting to see, when once more he was permitted freely to repair to the parade-ground, with what kindly recognition he embraced many of his companions, placing his trunk tenderly on their neck and shoulders. I need hardly say he was at once reinstated in his old regimental post, the duties of which he recommenced to discharge as if no interruption had taken place.—Chamber's Journal.

PRAYING AND WATCHING.

Is it not a sad thing that we should think it wonderful for God to hear prayer? Much better faith was that of a little boy in one of the schools in Edinburgh, who had attended a prayer-meeting and at the last said to his teacher, who conducted it:

"Teacher, I wish my sister could be got to read the Bible; she never reads it."

"Why, Johnny, should your sister read the Bible?"

"Because if she once read it, I am sure it would do her good, and she would be converted and saved."

"Do you think so Johnny?"

"Yes, I do, sir; and I wish the next time there is a prayer-meeting you would ask the people to pray for my sister, that she may begin to read the Bible."

"Well, well; it shall be done, John."

So the teacher gave out that a little boy was anxious that prayer should be offered, that his sister might read her Bible. John was observed to get up and go out. The teacher thought it very rude of the boy to disturb the people in a crowded room, and so the next day, when the lad came, he said:

"John, I thought it very rude of you to get up in the prayer-meeting, and go out. You ought not to have done so."

"O, sir," said the boy, "I did not mean to be rude, but I thought I should like to go home and see my sister reading her Bible for the first time."

Thus we ought to watch with expectation for answers to our prayers. Do not say, "Lord, turn my darkness into light," and then go out with your candle, as though you expected to find it dark.—Spurgeon.

THE BROWN TOWEL.

"They must be very poor who have nothing to give," said Mrs. Jarvis, as she deposited a pair of beautiful English blankets in a box that was being filled by the ladies of the church to be sent to the poor.

"And now, ladies, as you are nearly through, I would like to tell you an incident in my history; I was once very poor."

"You once very poor?" said a lady.

"Yes; I was once very poor. There came to our village a missionary to deliver a lecture. I felt very desirous to go; but having no decent apparel to wear I was often deprived of going to church, although I was a member."

"I waited until it was late, and then slipped in, and took a seat behind the door."

"I listened with streaming eyes to the missionary's account of the destitution and darkness in the heathen lands. Poor as I was, I felt it to be a great privilege to live in a Christian land, and to be able to read the Bible."

"It was proposed by our pastor that the congregation should fill a box and send it out with the missionary on his return."

"Oh! thought I, how I would like to send something. When I returned home my poor children were still sleeping soundly, and my disconsolate husband waiting my return; for he had been out of employment for some time. After he had gone to bed I went to looking over my clothes, but I could find nothing that was suitable that I could possibly spare; then I began looking over the children's things, but could find nothing that the poor dears could be deprived of; so I went to bed with a heavy heart, and lay a long time thinking of the destitution of the poor heathen, and how much better off I was."

"I got to thinking over my little stock again. There was nothing I could put into the box except one brown towel."

Next day I got my towels, picked out the best one, and when it was almost dark, put on my bonnet, went to the church, slipped my towel into the box, and came away thinking that the Lord knew that I had done what I could."

"And now, ladies, let me tell you it was not long after that till my husband got into a good situation, and prosperity has followed us ever since. So I date back my

prosperity to this incident of the brown towel."

Her story was done, and as the carriage was waiting at the door she took her departure, leaving us all mute with surprise that one so rich and generous had been trained to give amid poverty.—Christian Woman.

CHILD CHRISTIANS.

There is little danger of attaching too much importance to the religious culture of the children, and the following suggestions have great force:

It is not so rare a thing as once it was to see children among the ranks of God's people, but not yet do we realize the possibility and the full blessedness of this relation. We pray for the conversion of our little ones, but we do not really expect it. Mr. Beecher once said that "a converted child was to many parents like an apple that had ripened before its time,—they were afraid it was unsound at the core." So we are fearful that they "do not fully understand," we are afraid that "the change is not genuine," we "think they had better wait awhile," forgetting that He who is able to keep them unto the end set a little child in the midst for our example. They are fresher from the hand of God than we are, it is easier to kindle the light of heaven when it has scarce faded, and the child-nature turns as sweetly towards Christ as it did eighteen centuries ago. We clothe this simple "coming to Christ," in mystical phrases, we tell them of a change which they cannot understand, and, waiting for it, many a child lives a life of Christian duty without its joy, while many another passes through the giddy years of youth, when the brain fairly whirls with the new wine of life, almost prayerless, because they are afraid to ask for it, and dare ask for nothing less.

An old bachelor geologist was boasting that every rock was as familiar to him as the alphabet. A lady declared that she knew of a rock of which he was ignorant. "Name it, madam," said he. "It is rock the cradle, sir," replied the lady.

"Are these soaps all one scent?" inquired a lady of a juvenile salesman. "No, madam, they're all ten cents," replied the innocent youngster.—N. Y. Com. Adv.

"None are so busy as those who do nothing." And some men are never so idle as when they are trying to do something.

It is a strange fact that when people indulge in high words they use low language.

Temperance.

A BARGAIN WITH THE PUMP.

It is a queer place to make a bargain, truly; but there's many a harder customer for a thirsty man to deal with than our honest friend, the pump, as the following story will show:

A hard-working weaver had saved a guinea for the express purpose of having what he called a week's fuddle. He began on Monday, spending three shillings per day for seven days. On the morning of the eighth day he was burning with thirst, but his money was gone. He went to the back-door of the beer-shop where he had spent every farthing of his guinea, to beg a pint on trust. The landlady was mopping the passage; he stood looking at her, with his cracked lips, parched tongue and blood-shot eyes, expecting her to ask him to take just a drop; but she did not, and he requested her to trust him for only one pint.

With an indignant look, she replied,— "Trust you! Set a step in this house, and I will dash this mop in your face."

The poor man hung down his head in shame. He was leaning against the pump and, after a little study, began to talk to it.

"Well, Pump," he said, "I have not spent a guinea with thee; wilt thou trust me a drop?"

He lifted up the handle, put his burning mouth to the spout, and drank; this done, he again said to the pump:

Thank thee, Pump; and now hear me, Pump. By God's help, I will not enter a public-house again for the next seven years; and, Pump, thou art a witness."

The bargain was kept, and this man afterward became a respectable manufacturer, and often said it was a grand thing for him that the landlady threatened to dash the mop in his face.

Are there not many poor fellows who would do well to stop trading at the bar and try a bargain with the pump?—The Morning.