

The Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, N.S., SEPTEMBER 16, 1874.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1874.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, September 20th, 1874. The Syrophenician Mother.—Mark vii. 24-30.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Matthew xv. 28.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 25-29.

SUMMARY.—In every nation he that fears God and works righteousness is accepted with him.

ANALYSIS.—I Faith's Discovery. Vs. 24, 25. II Faith's plea. Vs. 26-28. III Faith's conquest. Vs. 29, 30.

EXPOSITION.—Introductory.—After Jesus had fed the five thousand on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee, he dismissed the multitude, and caused the apostles to take ship to cross the upper end of the sea to its northwest coast. On their way a fearful storm arose, and in the height and fury of the storm Jesus, to the disciples' terror, appeared walking on the mad waters. It was then that Peter's faith made its venture and met its failure. In the synagogue at Capernaum, on his arrival, the Saviour preached that wondrous sermon whose text was the miracle wrought the day before, and which in its outline and substance is preserved for us in John vi. The account of the incident now to be studied is given only by Matthew (xv. 21-28) and Mark.

Verse 24.—From thence. From Capernaum, without doubt, vi. 56; John vi. 17. Into the borders of Tyre and Sidon. Into the region bordering on Phoenicia, within which provinces were the two maritime cities here mentioned. Anciently they had been mighty through wealth acquired in commerce. They were captured by Alexander the Great, B. C. 332, and subsequently came under the Roman power, which in Christ's time still ruled them. "Tyre was not much more than thirty miles distant from Nazareth, where Christ mainly lived as a carpenter's son during the greater part of his life. We may readily conceive that he may have often gone to Tyre while yet unknown to the world." Sidon was some twenty-three miles north of Tyre, both on the Mediterranean. And entered into a house. Christ may have had some loving disciple living here with whom he was to stay. Matthew (xv. 22) says nothing of the visit to the house, but writes as though the woman followed Jesus on the way. This may well have been either before entering or after leaving the house. Neither writer undertakes to give a complete account of the event: "Would have no man know it, but could not he hid. The terrible tax on the physical strength, and on the patience of Christ, which came with his incessant public labors, we cannot fully understand. And every man in public life, compelled to keep right on for weeks and months at exhausting labor in the full view of the many, comes to long for retirement and rest.

Verse 25.—A certain woman. Better, and correctly, simply "a woman." As nothing is said of her husband and the child's father, it is natural to think of her as a widow, and this daughter as perhaps her only child had an unclean spirit. The meaning of this phrase we have learned—possessed by a wicked and lost spirit. Heard of him. Christ had done so many miracles in Galilee, and had been conspicuous so long, that his fame must have travelled far beyond Galilee's limits into the bordering Gentile nations. Came. She did not wait till Jesus reached her home. She went out to meet him.

Verse 26.—The woman was a Greek. This phrase is the hinge of our lesson. The original word translated "Greek" means properly, "one who speaks Greek"; but in the New Testament it designates a foreign Jew, in distinction from a home Jew. The original word translated "Greek" is, in the New Testament, either "Greek by race, as in Acts xvi. 1-3, or more frequently a Gentile, as opposed to a Jew, Romans ii. 9, 10." So here the woman was a Greek in the latter sense, that is, a Gentile, not a Jew. But by race she was a native Phoenician. Jesus was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, not to the Gentiles. How then shall he meet and treat a Gentile? This was a question of profound interest, especially to the Jews. It had already been answered by him once and again: Matthew viii. 5-13. Besought

him. Lying prostrate in the attitude of prayer. Vs. 25 There was here a full recognition of Christ's power to heal—his authority over demons. The devil. It should be translated, the demon; that is, that one of the demons which possessed her daughter. It appears from this that the doctrine of demoniacal possession was held not only by Christ and his disciples and the Jews generally, but also by some, at least, of these neighboring heathen.

Verse 27.—Let the children first be filled. It seems from Matthew that Christ for a time declined to notice her, at length the twelve, wearied out and annoyed by her persistence, came to Christ and begged him to rid himself of the impertinent pleader. They said, "Send her away." Matthew xv. 23. "The children," of course, were the Jewish nation. God had been pleased to call Israel his son, and to treat the nation as children. For it is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it unto the dogs. By dogs are here meant the Gentiles as the woman at once perceives. There was thus a seeming denial, and in terms which strike us as harsh. Dr. Ripley says: "This expression did not have that harshness as used by our Saviour, which it would have in our times. That his answer carried in itself encouragement the woman was quick to see, and happily availed herself of this in pressing her plea.

Verse 28.—Yes, Lord. She does not in anger resent the comparison. She owns its truth. She knew that Israel was the especially favored people. Hence she says "yes," and adds with keen womanly wit, made still keener by an alert faith: The dogs under the table eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table. The Gentiles of Phoenicia, and like border regions, were so near to the Jews, and to the proper sphere of Christ's blessed ministry of teaching and healing as to justify their comparison to house dogs under the table. She had very likely marked well the many instances of this overflow of divine grace in the Old Testament history, and heard with trembling, joyful hope of instances of Christ's mercy to individuals not of Israel. This, at any rate, would help to explain the quick, happy, confident, persistent plea which she extracted from Christ's apparent denial.

Verse 29.—For this saying. He saw in it that which made of Abraham the father of believers, and which distinguishes a genuine from a counterfeit Israelite. It was the humble spirit of a true seeker, coming empty-handed to God in conscious beggary and helplessness, and asking the favor needed. "For this saying," not for that of the twelve, Christ said: Go thy way; the devil [demon] is gone out of thy daughter. She seems to have had the strong faith of the centurion, or military captain, who did not deem himself worthy to have Christ enter his house, but who just as little deemed it necessary for Christ to see or touch the one whom he would have healed. "Speak the word only."

Verse 30.—When she was come to her house. In Phoenicia, whence she had "come out." She found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed. The Lord's word had given peace, rest, quiet, had stilled the storm and ended the strife. Oh, word of power which still speaks peace to the souls of men.

QUESTIONS.—Where did our last lesson leave Christ? To what place did he next go? vi. 45-53.

Vs. 24. What can you tell of Tyre and Sidon? Joshua xix. 29; 1 Kings vii. 13, 14; Isaiah, xxxii; Ezekiel xvii; Genesis x. 15-19; Matthew xi. 21, 22. What is here meant by their "borders"? Why did Christ make this journey? Why did he wish to be hid? Why could he not be hid?

Vs. 25. Who came to him? Does Matthew speak of her as coming into a house? xv. 23. What was her trouble? Why did she fall at Christ's feet?

Vs. 26. Into what two classes did the Jews sometimes divide mankind? Romans ii. 9, 10. What does Mark say the woman was by race? What does Matthew? xv. 22. How do you explain the difference? What took place before the woman came thus and urged her case? Matthew xv. 23, 24.

Vs. 27. What answer did Jesus now make? Who are meant by "children"? Who by "dogs"? Why these names? Was this a refusal to do the thing required? The meaning of this answer? Why given?

Vs. 28. How was it taken? What was the woman's thought? What is the meaning and spirit of this reply?

Vs. 29. Christ's reply now? Why was he pleased?

Vs. 30. What did the woman then do? The result?

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, September 27th, 1874.—Review of Lessons for the Quarter.

Youths' Department.

TRY THE KISS BEFORE THE BLOW.

BY MRS. M. A. KIDDER.

Little ones are oft in error, So are we, my hasty friend— Proud, rebellious, hot in temper, Thus we may be to the end. By the tender love you bear them, Let your anger kindle slow; Oh, be patient with the children— Try the kiss before the blow.

Look at yonder little fellow, Full of happiness and glee; Suddenly he breaks, unthinking, Some one's precept, it may be. You are angry; he is sorry— See his bright head hanging low; Every gesture begs forgiveness— Try the kiss before the blow.

Even though the child be reckless, Disobedient, given to wrong, Thoughtful care and tender training Will bear goodly fruit ere long. Still the fretful, wayward spirit, Loving counsel then bestow; Oh, be patient with the culprit— Try the kiss before the blow.

We, 'as proud, rebellious children Ever need a Father's care; Ever need his loving mercy, That the just rod he may spare. And this same dear, loving Father To his children here below, Though so wayward and so sinful, Gives the kiss without the blow.

OUR TRIFLES.

"Oh, dear!" said Caroline, as we sat together tugging away at the same piece of work. We are both women, but we had found very little to say for an hour or two at least. "How dull it all is!"

"It! Well, I suppose the pronoun stands for some particular substantive in your thought."

"It stands for everything, just now, the whole concern that we call life. I'm tired of myself, and of what I have to do—these little nothings that one has to use so much time upon! I wish I could take hold of something that hadn't the word trifle written all over it. Don't you sometimes feel so?"

"Of course I have all the common foolish feelings of the common sort of people."

"I wish I could be one of the uncommon sort for a while, just for a change."

"Take care; it's dangerous asking to be what you were not made for. We may always suppose that those who have unusual histories and remarkable circumstances have duties and trials to match."

"But I do get so tired of my littleness and the littleness of what I have to do."

"And what the world calls greatness gets dreadfully tired too. I verily believe we would make nothing in satisfaction by exchanging what seems so small to us here for what appears grand in the distance. Your life and mine, Caroline, is each a drop of the mighty ocean, a stone of the vast temple, and neither would be complete without our measure of littleness. We are important enough in our place, what we do is of some consequence in our little sphere. Just how large a fire so small a spark as you or I may be permitted to kindle we never shall know. Because, you see, God's gauge of greatness is not like ours. What we call trifles may have the reach of infinity, for aught we know. Perhaps we hadn't better worry about what we are set to do; it may look larger to God than it does to our own eyes."

"I declare, Emily, I'm disappointed. I've expected these two minutes that you would preach me a sermon upon ambition. I supposed you'd be telling me the next thing it's a wicked pride that wants to do bigger work than is appointed to me, a pride more despicably little than the trifles that occupy my time. And I was just going to take it home with all meekness. But yet I don't believe it is all ambition that longs for more largeness of life, that makes me wish I could have an influence with the world."

"I dare say that it is very much what we all experience—a good deal of nothing more than a simple human restlessness that needs to be toned and quieted by a broader faith in God; by a love that comes very close up to his heart. When we are most intimate with God, the littleness of our place or our work doesn't trouble us much, does it? When we commit our trifles to God, we are apt to dispose of the vexation of living in them."

"I came upon a sentiment the other day in my readings to this effect: 'Most men overrate their talents, and underrate their

influence.' Do you think that is quite so, Emily?"

"I should think it might be so. There is seldom much danger of a man's undervaluing his endowments, but I presume few of us realize what an amount of influence for good or ill goes out from us every day of our lives. It is probable that with all our talk of doing in one way and another, we actually do more with our unconscious influence than all the rest amounts to. Our lives all around are colored and toned by each other, whether we are aware of it or not."

"I believe, Emily, it would be a great comfort to find out that some possible good in me had been followed by somebody else."

"Some day you will wake up and discover that your kind, patient ways have been a staff for some poor soul to lean upon; and your generous impulses have lifted up somebody that was cast down, and your closet prayers have been sweetening one who was neither sweet nor strong, and the cup of water you held to famishing lips so revived a fainting spirit that he went on his way and accomplished what the Lord gave him to do—what you never could have done, and yet it was set down to your account. It always seems to me very kind of God to permit a trifling act of good to lead on to a good that is not a trifle, yet that is what he is constantly doing in some manner. There were once two young women pursuing their studies at the same seminary, and to a considerable extent with the same end in view. One was a bright, successful scholar; the other was slow to learn, and easily disheartened. It happened one day that some one gave Sarah Lake a peach, just as she was going to the recitation-room. She broke it open to eat by the way, but suddenly recollecting the hour, she thought there wouldn't be time, after all. Trusting one-half of the luscious fruit into the poor scholar's hand, she said in her genial way, 'Oh, you eat that for me!' Such a little thing it was, no wonder it passed at once from Sarah's mind. Ellen Hill had been very sad that day. The lessons were hard, her health was slight, and she had come to the bitter conclusion that she must give up the effort to keep on with her class. That one pleasant word saved her. She felt that some one did care a little for her; she would try once more to maintain her standing. And so she plucked up courage for another effort, and went on until her studies were honorably completed, and she was prepared for a useful life. Long afterwards she told Sarah this, and said 'I should have given up and gone home if it had not been for you!' I heard of another pleasant thing not long since. You know old Mrs. Gage, and what a sad, hard life she has lived these many years. She was talking of her comforts the last time I saw her; the happy thoughts and sweet recollections of God's goodness that came to her mind. She spoke of a man whom she sometimes met when she was a child. He was a very fine singer, and he used his beautiful gift to praise God in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. 'I used to sit and listen,' said Mrs. Gage, 'until I knew the hymns by heart, and I wanted to be a Christian and praise God too. And now that I am old and full of trouble, I often think of the good man, and the sweet singing comes back to me in the night and when I am alone, just as if I were singing myself. God comforts me, though it's more than fifty years since, with the very same songs.'

"And yet, Caroline, I presume the singer scarcely knew of the presence of that little girl. He was simply singing out of his heart, he didn't dream how far the song could echo. If we sing out of our hearts, or speak or act, because our love for Christ prompts us, we don't know what little echo may go whispering down the years in some other heart."

Our bit of work was by this time finished, and as we folded it away we looked into each other's faces and smiled, just as tired people do when they say, "Well, we'll be patient with our little things a while longer."

"And our little selves."

"And our faith, until it shall have grown so bright and strong that we have lost the sense or need of patience.—Emily Ellet in Advocate and Guardian."

GIVING.

Give as the morning that flows out of heaven, Give as the waves, when their channel is risen, Give as the free air and sun-shine are given, Lavishly, utterly, joyously, give.

Not the waste drops of thy cup overflowing, Not the faint sparks from thy hearth ever glowing, Not a pale bud from thy June roses blowing, Give as He gave thee, who gave thee to live.

WHO ARE THE RICH.

BY AMELIA V. PETIT.

While passing by a princely door I heard the whisper, "she is poor."

They judged it from my faded shawl, They saw the outside—that was all.

My heart replied, "Have you not love For all on earth and Him above?"

In air, and sky, and all around Have you not joy and comfort found? Does any own more than do you The flower's fragrance, and its hue?"

To whom if not to you belong The wild-bird and its glad-some song? And whom can its free music fill With any purer, deeper thrill?"

Are truth and honor, peace and rest Deared to any human breast? Does not your heart feel deep delight In all that's beautiful and bright?"

Then you're not poor. Of all the store That men may gain of golden ore, They own but just that little part With which they cheered some human heart.

Beyond the gates, gold has no boast, And they're rich, who love the most."

A BRAVE DOG

At one of the Newfoundland fisheries a boat and crew trying to enter a small harbor found themselves outside a long line of breakers, in great peril. The wind and weather had changed since the boat went out in morning, and getting back safely seemed doubtful. The people on shore saw the danger. Among the crowd was a large dog, which seemed fully alive to the peril of the boat and anxiety of those on shore. He watched the boat, surmounted the breakers, and appeared to think as earnestly as anybody. "What can he do?"

At last he boldly plunged into the angry waters and swam to the boat. The crew thought he wanted to join them, and tried to take him aboard. No he would not go within their reach, but swam around, diving his head and snuffing, as in search of something.

"Give him the end of the rope," cried one of the sailors, divining what was in the poor dog's brain; "that's what he wants."

A rope was thrown out; the dog seized the end in an instant, turned around, and made straight for the shore, where not long after—thanks to the intelligence and sagacity of Tiger—the boat and crew were landed safe and sound.

COURAGE IN EVERY-DAY LIFE.

"Moral Courage" was printed in large letters and put as the caption of the following items, and placed on a conspicuous place on the door of a systematic merchant in New York for a constant reference:

Have the courage to discharge a debt while you have the money in your pocket. Have the courage to speak your mind when it is necessary that you should do so, and hold your tongue when it is prudent that you should do so.

Have the courage to speak to a friend in a "seedy" coat, even though you are in company with a rich one and richly attired.

Have the courage to own you are poor, and thus disarm poverty of its sharpest sting.

Have the courage to tell a man why you refuse to credit him.

Have the courage to tell a man why you will not lend him your money.

Have the courage to cut the most agreeable acquaintance you have when you are convinced that he lacks principle; a friend should bear with a friend's infirmities, but not with his vices.

Have the courage to show your respect for honesty, in whatever guise it appears, and your contempt for dishonesty and duplicity by whomsoever exhibited.

Have the courage to wear your old clothes until you can pay for new ones.

Have the courage to prefer comfort and propriety to fashion, in all things.

Have the courage to acknowledge your ignorance, rather than to seek for knowledge under false pretenses.

Have the courage, in providing an entertainment for your friends, not to exceed your means.

Have the courage to insure the property in your possession, and thereby pay your debts in full.

Have the courage to obey your Maker at the risk of being ridiculed by man.

A distinguished Irishman laid it down as an axiom, that "an historian never undertook to whitewash one person's character, but he blackened another's reputation with the same brush!"

CORP

HOR

The recent undersigned, accommodated Seminary such measure enlargement day before this term, all or engaged have since huge where places for The frier Seminary on nodation on It has 1 make some department provided with a cheaper present; the a class of yo in maintain tutions, or v from atten means.

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D. M J. F. ISAIA Wolfbill They hav a Ritualist London.