

The Christian Messenger.

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BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1874.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES. SUNDAY, October 11th, 1874. The Evil Spirit Cast Out. Mark ix 17-29.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And straightway the father of the child cried out and said, with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." Mark ix: 24.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 23-27.

SUMMARY.—Jesus saves in cases too hard for the faith even of apostles.

ANALYSIS.—I. The case presented. Vs. 17-24. II. The request granted. Vs. 25-27. III. The disciples instructed. Vs. 28, 29.

EXPOSITION.—Introduction.—Our last miracle was a cure of natural disease; this is to be a cure of demoniacal disorder. Both are the restoration of the power of hearing and of speech; both, like all Christ's miracles, deeds of mercy through this of to-day has also its aspect of retribution toward demons, and its prophecy of retribution to those who, through sin, permanently ally themselves with demons.

Verse 17.—"One of the multitude answered. Answered the question which Jesus just asked the Scribes: 'What question ye with them?' Vs. 16 We have in this question of Christ what was very uncommon with him—an attack on his enemies. He came down with the three just in the heat and height of the contention to Christ's question, not the Scribes to whom it was put, but the mute's father replied, 'I have brought unto thee my son. An only son. Luke ix. 38. Brought from his home, not into Christ's presence from the place where the apostles tried their hands on him, as appears from verse 18. He would have Christ understand that even at the first he intended to have asked him, Christ, to work the cure, and that it was only the accident of his absence that led to the application to the nine apostles. A dumb spirit. Also 'deaf.' Vs. 25. A demon which makes my son's dumbness the occasion of his malign work; or which, by his malign work, makes dumb my son; or which, because of my son's dumbness, does not reveal his wickedness in words; or perhaps all these reasons are to be combined. May we also suppose that the demon, as such, was himself dumb? If the demon was sole cause of the youth's deafness and consequent dumbness, there may have been some cause within that demon's own nature for his preference of this kind of working. The phrase is the father's, but was doubtless accurate enough.

Verse 18.—This is a vivid description of the symptoms of an epileptic fit. These fits were intermittent, though the demoniacal possession was continuous. See further details in verse 22, and in Matt. xvii. 15, where he is called lunatic. Pineth away. Either referring to the permanent effect of these fits, or possibly to some appearance of the victim just after the fit, as of weakness, and a general collapse. They could not. There was the very pivot of the whole trouble, as it is of the practical lesson of the miracle. How pitiful the condition of this father! Says MacDonald: "Whoever has held in his arms his child in delirium, calling to his father for aid as if he were distant far, and beating the air in wild and aimless defence, will be able to enter a little into the trouble of this man's soul. To have the child, and yet see him

tormented in some region inaccessible; to hold him to the heart, and yet be unable to reach the thick-coming fancies which distract him; to find himself with a great abyss between him and his child, across which the cry of the child comes, but back across which no answering voice can reach the consciousness of the sufferer, is terror and misery indeed. What was there in that child to love? Everything. The human was there, else whence the torture of that which was not human? Whence the paths of those eyes, hardly up to the dog's in intelligence, yet omnipotent over the father's heart? God was there. The misery was that the devil was there too.

Verse 19.—O faithless generation. Matthew and Luke write, "faithless and perverse"; or, more exactly, perverted. Who are meant? Some say the child's father; others, the nine apostles; others, the Scribes; others, the whole multitude, including the Scribes. How long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? Bring him unto me. Conscious power here speaks with authority. Unbelief has so far triumphed. Now the Master speaks, and prepares to act. "Bring him to me." Jesus, Master, to thee we would carry ourselves, our children, our loved-ones of the family all, our scholars. Then, obeying, we shall get relief, and scoffing, taunting unbelief shall be confounded.

Verse 20.—So did the father promptly, openly act; for faith was kindling in his soul, and burning out the gathered fears. When he saw him. When Jesus saw the child. Straightway the spirit tare [convulsed] him. Here, as in the case of the Gadarene demoniacs, the demon knew his Master and Avenger, and in his own writhing under the all-searching glance, threw into paroxysms his helpless victim also. How vivid, yet pitiable, the description. Wallowed. Rolled.

Verse 21.—How long, etc. Asked, at least in part, to bring out in the hearing of the opposers the permanent, obstinate, difficult character of the trouble. We can in this case hardly regard it as for his own information. It was also partly for the father. See verse 22. The reply, "Of a child," implies that it was not from birth.

Verse 22.—If thou canst do anything. Showing his doubt whether it were really possible even for Jesus to work the cure. The failure of the disciples, taken with the obstinate, settled nature of the disease, occasions the doubt as to Christ's power. He seems not to doubt his willingness. Help us. Us, the child and me. Perhaps by this plural he takes in unconsciously other anxious members of the family.

Verse 23.—If thou canst believe. This is introduced as a quotation of the father's words, and the meaning is that Christ's power depends on his [the father's] belief. All things are possible to him that believeth. Faith brings one into harmony with God, effects a real union of man with God, and thus, when perfect, secures the realization of the divine will in and through and for the human.

Verse 24.—Mark the humility, the earnestness, the love. Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. He had had faith all along. Christ had been helping to its increase. The man now confesses to Jesus all, and looks to him for all.

Verse 25.—We here notice the excitement of the people, and the authority and finality of the Lord's words to the demon.

Verses 26, 27.—The demon could not but obey; but he did it with an ill grace. The prostration following such convulsions was natural.

Vs. 23, 24. Can you explain these words of Christ? Are they still true of men? What prayer did this call out from the man? Is it yours? Vs. 25-27. Christ's command? The effect? What followed? Vs. 28, 29. Why could not the apostles work the miracle? The lesson for us? Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, October 18th, 1874.—The Mind of Christ.—Mark ix 33-42

Youths' Department.

A PLACE FOR EVERY MAN AND EVERY MAN IN HIS PLACE.

The Brewers should to Malta go, The Loggerheads to Sicily; The Quakers to the Friendly Isles, The Farriers all to Chili.

From Spithead cooks go o'er to Greece; And while the Miser waits His passage to the Guinea coast, Spendthrifts are in the Straits.

Spinners should to the Needles go, Wine-bibbers to Burgundy; Gourmands should lurch at Sandwich Isles, Wags in the Bay of Fundy.

Musicians! hasten to the Sound— The surplised Priest to Rome; While still the race of Hypocrites At Canton are at home.

Lovers should hasten to Good Hope— To some Cape Horn is pain; Debtors should go to O-h-o, And Sailors to the Maine.

His Bachelors, to the United States! Maids to the Isle of Man; Let Gardeners all to Botany go, And Shoeblocks to Japan.

Thus emigrants and misplaced men Will no longer vex us; And all that aren't provided for Had better go "to Texas"

THE WIDOW'S MITE.

BY MRS. BRADLEY.

I always knew the story of the widow's mite, ever since I knew anything, almost. I had read it in my New Testament a hundred times at least, and I had heard sermons preached about it, and all that. But the real meaning of it came home to me one day, and made me ashamed of myself. There was a special collection taken up in our Sunday-school, to help rebuild a mission chapel that had been burned down. Our teacher told us that she wished us all to bring as much as we could; for there is a crowd of children," she said, "who are turned into the streets now on Sundays. They were gathered in, and taught, and taken care of there; and there was great hope of saving many from ruin. But they will soon drift back into the old evil ways if something is not done quickly; and you children who have happy homes, and everything to make you good, should be glad to lend a helping hand."

Well, we were all quite enthusiastic about it, and we said we could ask our fathers and mothers, and try to bring a good deal the next Sunday. And we did make up quite a handsome collection. Ella Ridgwood brought five dollars, and so did Annie Lester; Maud Leigh brought four dollars and a half, and the rest of us gave from two to three, each. No one offered anything as small as a dollar even, excepting one girl, and that was Flora Kirby. We all looked at each other with surprise when we saw her drop into the plate—in a kind of hesitating way as if she was ashamed of it, and yet too proud to hide it—one silver quarter!

Flora Kirby was a girl that was always dressed well. She had handsomer hats and dresses than most of us, and I used to envy her pretty little kid gloves and French boots. She certainly wasn't poor, and there was no excuse, we said amongst ourselves, for her making such a pitiful donation as that. One silver quarter to help build a mission chapel!

"I don't wear silk frocks and velvet jackets," I whispered to Maud Leigh, "but I'm glad I can afford more than twenty-five cents for a special collection." Flora Kirby heard me; I'm not sure that I didn't intend her to—and her face flushed up to her forehead. Then it grew very pale, and she shrunk into a corner of the bench as if she couldn't bear for anyone to see her. Maud Leigh felt sorry for her. "Hush!" she said. "She heard you. She's ashamed."

"So she ought to be," I answered—little Pharisee as I was! and I did not pity her in the least. But I was the one to be ashamed before long. I was in the park that afternoon—it was a private park—and my father used to let me sit there and read sometimes on warm

Sundays. I thought I was all alone, till some one touched my shoulder, and I looked up and saw Flora Kirby. She looked as if she had been crying, and her voice sounded like it.

"I heard what you whispered to Maud," she began, "and it was not very kind of you, May."

"Why not?" I asked, tossing my head. "Well, I'll tell you," she said. "Because that quarter I gave to-day was the only money I had in the world. You think because I have nice clothes—that I can get what I want; but it isn't so. My aunt only gives me what she chooses, and when I asked her for money for the mission, she said no, she was sick of so much Sunday-school begging. So I had the old silver quarter—my mother gave it to me before she died—and I put it in the plate because I couldn't bear not to give anything. You can guess if I wasn't ashamed when I heard that! Flora had given the real 'widow's mite,'" the gift our Lord himself counted as worth all the rest, and I had despised her for it! Well, she forgave me, but it was not so easy to forgive myself. I learned a useful lesson, however, which I have tried not to forget. Read in the New Testament the long verse about charity, and you will know what the lesson was.—Young Reaper.

POST-MORTEM LOVE.

Why is it that so many people keep all their pleasant thoughts and kind words about a man bottled and sealed up until he is dead, when they come and break the bottle over his coffin and bathe his shroud in fragrance? Many a man goes through life with scarcely one bright, cheering, encouraging, helpful word. He toils hard and in lowly obscurity. He gives out his life freely and unstintedly for others. I remember such a man. He was not brilliant; he was not great; but he was faithful. He had many things to discourage him. Troubles thickened about his life. He was misrepresented and misunderstood. Everybody believed he was a good man, but no one ever said a kindly or pleasant thing to him. He never heard a compliment, scarcely ever a good wish. No one ever took pains to encourage him, to strengthen his feeble knees, to lighten his burdens, or to lift up his heart by a gentle deed of love, or by a cheerful word. He was neglected. Unkind things were often said of him.

I stood by his coffin, and then there were many tongues to speak his praise. There was not a breath of aspersions in the air. Men spoke of his self-denials, of his work among the poor, of his good qualities, of his quietness, his modesty, his humility, his pureness of heart, his faith, and prayer. There were many who spoke indignantly of the charges that falsehood had forged against him in the past years, and of the treatment he had received. There were enough kind things said during the two or three days that he lay in the coffin, and while the company stood around his open grave, to have blessed him and made him happy all his fifty years, and to have thrown sweetest joy about his soul during all his painful and weary journey. But his ears were closed then, and could not hear a word that was spoken. His heart was still then, and could not be thrilled by the grateful sounds. He cared nothing then for the sweet flowers that were piled upon his coffin. The love blossomed out too late. The kindness came when the life could not receive its blessing.

And I said then that I would not keep all my kind words, and all my pleasant thoughts and feelings about my neighbor looked up in my breast till he is dead. They will do him no good then. His dead hand cannot feel the warm pressure. Gentle words will not make his pale, cold face glow. It will be too late, when he lies in the coffin, to seek to make him happy, to lift the shadow off his life, or to brighten his path.

It costs but little to give men a great deal of joy and help. One brought a bunch of flowers to my table, and for a whole week they filled my rooms with fragrance. One wrote me a cheering letter, breathing a spirit of gratitude and love. It came when I was weary and depressed, and was like the meal prepared by the angel for the old prophet. I went on its blessed strength for many days. One met me on the street and spoke an encouraging word and grasped me warmly by the hand; and for hours I felt that warm grasp and heard that word echoing through my soul. A little child may brighten scores of lives every day. There is not one of us

who may not gladden and strengthen many a heart between every rising and setting sun. Why should we not live to bless the living, to cheer the disheartened, to sweeten cups that are bitter, to hold up the hands that hang down, to comfort those that mourn, to bear joy into joyless homes? Kind words will not spoil a man. If a sermon helps you it will not harm you to tell him so. If the editor writes an article that does you good, he can write a still better one if you send him a word of thanks. If a book blesses you, do you not owe it to the author to write a grateful acknowledgement? If you know a weary or neglected one, would it not be Christ-like work, to seek every opportunity to brighten and bless that life? Do not wait till the eyes are closed, the ears deaf, and the heart stilled. Do it now. Post-mortem kindnesses do not cheer. Flowers on the coffin cast no fragrance backward over the weary days.—Rev. J. Miller.

Oh, wouldn't it be better For every little fretter To banish from his forehead all its gloom, And while the torrent pours, And 'tis dreary out of doors, To make a little sunlight in his room? —Children's Hour.

What is the use to get the blues, And hang the head and comfort refuse, Because we can't always have all that we choose? What does it pay to pout all day Because the sunshine wouldn't stay, Because the cloud won't go away?

QUERIES.

BY AUNT JENNIE.

ABOUT GEES.—"Mother, mother!" cried a young crow, returning hurriedly from its first flight, "I'm so frightened! I've seen such a sight!" "What sight, my son?" asked the crow. "Oh! white creatures, screaming and running, straining their necks, and holding their heads ever so high. 'See, mother, there they go!' 'Gee-e, my son; merely geese,'" calmly replied the wise parent bird. "Through life, child, observe that when you meet anybody who makes a great fuss about himself, and tries to lift his head higher than the rest of the world, you may set him down at once to be a goose."

WOMAN'S RIGHTS.—A Montreal paper says: "The ladies of this city will be gratified to learn that the woman's rights movement is advancing with giant strides; a Papineau Road brickmaker employs women in his manufactory. Several women could be seen recently in his yard piling bricks; the happy, contented expression visible on their sunburnt features showed plainly that they enjoyed their work. Their hands moved nimbly, and they can throw eight bricks in the time a man takes to throw four."

Little masteries achieved, Little wants with care relieved, Little words in love expressed, Little wrongs at once confessed, Little graces meekly worn, Little slights with patience borne; These are treasures that shall rise Far beyond the smiling skies.

CHICKENS AND DUCKS.—Rev. Walter Dunlop was much distressed by a schism in his flock, occasioned by an agitation being raised in Dumfries on the subject of adult baptism. One day, in the course of his sermon on the words, "How often would I have gathered thee, as a hen gathereth her chickens," his feeling on the subject broke forth, and with tears he said, "Oh, ma freens, ye ken hoo I've striven tae gie ye the words o' wisdom; ye ken hoo I've kept ye year after year, as a hen covers her chickens, but I doot after a' there's some deucks among ye; sae many are ga-in aff tae the water!"

As a general rule it is better to take little notice of foolish, or even of malignant gossip. Let it alone. By-and-by those who go about retelling such stuff will grow weary, if not ashamed; perhaps they will feel disgust at their own baseness. If they are not noticed, they will sink out of sight.

The New York Observer says: "Of the 8,000 liquor sellers in this city, 4,000 have no license; every one of them is known to the Excise Board, and yet indictments against them are never brought to trial. One is often tempted to ask, What is the use of having a government, when nobody cares to have law enforced?"

There are people who expect to escape hell because of the crowd going there.

The following... Of the Centenary Aid Convention... The Centenary year which while no great yet we have movements to know that are becoming importance... stand place that each addition to usually every have its W every woman recorded as good are great, and The Soci... A Central past year, t but we trust may be the In Septe our sisters who left us... It is their safe a that they future work the country... Miss De... in Boston, regret that permit her tion with hopes at still looks work as sou Six new during the number for received fr from June by donati Schools and education with intere amounting... It is pie sisters have the Centra working in our missi say, that t for years. tionally, Foreign M cases have matter may encourage ready to fi of the Mi look upon Great Cap our efforts success in Sec. Halifax. Of the Centenary Aid Convention... Since last been added while we several had not been scribes. A num and four l a gentle precision Our fur year to \$8 remitted to We ha during the in Tavoy and Miss and Mrs. the langu Miss D ing her h be restore resume he Miss N have the appreciat ties of the making h Two siste themselves but the B t) accept thank out ing on pa press on t the respu send furth make an bread of Before with thar W. Cran during the increased churches formed, of increa Having ings sin Convent expressi succeed furnish, and stin