

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1877.

SUNDAY, Sept. 16th, 1877.—Power of the Word.—Acts xix. 17-28.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Vss. 17-20.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thought and intents of the heart.”—Hebrews iv. 12.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, Acts xix. 13-41. Tuesday, vs. 16, 17; Galatians v. 17-26. Wednesday, vs. 19; 1 Kings xviii. Thursday, vs. 21; 1 Corinthians xvi. 5-24. Friday, vs. 21; Romans xv. 20-33. Saturday, vs. 27; Matthew vi. 19-34. Sunday, 1 Corinthians xvi.

ANALYSIS.—I. Burning of magical books. Vss. 17-19. II. Growth of the word. Vs. 20. III. Paul's future plans. Vs. 21. IV. Still in Asia "for a season." V. An uproar raised by Demetrius. Vss. 23-28.

QUESTIONS.—Where was Diana's temple built? How did the Ephesians subsequently embellish their temple? Why was the making of models of the temple and image of Diana a lucrative employment? How far were they borne?

Vs. 17. To what divine judgment does this verse allude? Why should men behold both "the goodness and the severity" of God?

Vs. 18. What evidence have we in this verse of a genuine faith?

Vs. 19. Who besides believers were influenced by Paul's preaching? What were these books that they burned?—How valuable were they?

Vs. 21. What further missionary journeys does Paul now plan? What great city does he intend finally to reach?

Vs. 22. Whom does he send before him? Why does he stay in Ephesus? What Epistles does he write here?

Vs. 23. What remarkable event is now to be told?

Vs. 24. What was the employment of Demetrius? What were these shrines?

Vs. 25. What meeting does Demetrius call? For what god does he first plead?

Vs. 26. To what Ephesian fanaticism does he now appeal? How far are his charges true? How far not true?

Vs. 28. What was the effect of the speech of Demetrius? Where do the multitude rush? With whom? Vs. 29. What was Paul's first impulse? Vs. 30, 31. Who finally appeased the people? Vs. 35. By what wise words? Vs. 35-41.

The temple of Diana, at the head of the harbor of Ephesus, was said to be the most magnificent work of man that the sun in its course shone upon. Its age dated from a remote antiquity.—Crosus, the wealthy king of Lydia (b.c. 560-546), contributed to its erection; so did all the Greek cities. The fanatic Herostratus set fire to it on the night when Alexander was born (b.c. 356).—This was one of the coincidences of ancient history. The temple was at once rebuilt with sumptuous magnificence. The ladies of Ephesus contributed jewelry to its restoration. The Ephesians embellished it from age to age, adding to it new decorations, statues, and pictures of the most famous artists. It was Oriental in architecture; hence it did not mount high in the air, like St. Peter's in Rome or St. Paul's in London, but was broadly extensive, horizontal entablatures resting on vertical columns, each 60 feet in height and in number 127, making a total ground extent of 425 feet by 220 in breadth. Its glory, therefore, consisted in its colonnades surrounding the shrine of the Ephesian goddess. It was also the treasury building—"the Bank of England"—to Western Asia. The wooden image of Diana, enshrined in the temple, was not the "tall huntress" afterward chosen by the Greeks to represent their mountain-goddess, but was more like the idols of the far East, an emblematic form of head and neck and many breasts above, terminating in a shapeless block below. In the ceremonies attending the worship of Diana little portable images, miniature resemblances, models, so to speak, of the larger shrines and idols, were carried in processions; and often set up as household gods. A lucrative trade, therefore, naturally sprung up in Ephesus in the manufacture and sale of these shrines. Few would be apt to visit Ephesus without bearing away with them a memorial of her goddess and a model of her temple. These works of idolatrous art were borne all over the shores of the Mediterranean, and far into Asia. The worship of Diana was recognized all over the world. Acts xix. 27.

EXPOSITION.—“The power of the word” preached by Paul at Ephesus, is presented in to-day's lesson as appearing (1) in obedience to it, (vss. 17-20); (2) in planning for it (vs. 21-22); (3) in resistance to it (vss. 23-28).

I. The Obedience. Verses 17-20. The "fear" of vs. 17 is not mentioned as an immediate effect of Paul's preaching and a consequent evidence of its power, but rather of the words and deeds of a demoniac under immediate inspiration of a demon. Vss. 13-16. But such was the connection of that affair with both the miracles and the preaching of the apostle, as to show vividly that God was present in mighty power, compelling even demons to attest the gospel as being of God.

In vs. 18 the power of the word as attested is presented, as seen in five particulars. (1) Belief, or faith, involving the acceptance of Jesus Christ in love as Lord, Saviour, Redeemer; (2) the great number of believers ("many"); (3) their voluntary coming from their own old associates to the apostle and his fellow laborers; (4) their "confession" or, rather complete confession, for such is the import of the original; (5) their complete revelation (showed) of their works, especially of Satanic deception under the pretence of supernatural divination. The event of vss. 13-16 was calculated to influence especially the class involved in that business, and did, as the next verses show.

The class of persons in vs. 19 are not spoken of as believers, nor is the act attributed to them necessarily an act of Christian faith. The "books" contained their mysteries; that is, magical signs, formulas of incantation, nostrums, and the like. The "piece of silver" is understood to be the Roman denarius or "penny" of the gospels, worth about fifteen cents, the whole sum being thus \$7,500 in our currency—a large sum; but "books" were then not printed but written, and hence comparatively rare and dear, while such books would naturally have been rated peculiarly high, because of their nature and use.

The twentieth verse presents the effects of which vs. 19 is an instance as a permanent continuous process—was growing (not "grew") was prevailing. It is naturally connected with Paul's words in 1 Cor. xvi. 8, 9.

II. The Plan. Verses 21, 22. In nothing is the power of God's word more clearly seen than in its effect upon Paul's own mind. From 1 Cor. xvi. 8, 9, it seems that this increase of labor, and the rising of opposition with it carrying the prospect of resistance, induced Paul to stand longer by his post, while yet his love for absent churches and Christians was so great that he at the same time planned and wrote for them, and even robbed himself of his very best helpers (vs. 22). His purpose to visit Rome and brave the perils of that centre of worldly empire and heathen power, was heroic (compare Rom. i. 10-15); but was accomplished otherwise than he anticipated, xxvii, xxviii. He intended to carry the word even to Spain. Rom. xv. 23, 24. It is to be added to the two years and three months already noticed (vss. 8, 10), to make up the three years of xx. 31. As to Timothy see xviii. 5; 1 Cor. iv. 17-19. On Erastus, 2 Tim. iv. 20 (not Rom. xvi. 23).

III. The Resistance. Verses 23-28. It is very similar to that at Philippi. Lesson VII. xvi. 22-34. As there, it came not from Jewish but from Gentile influence—was instigated by one man from a selfish motive, and was carried out by fanatical zeal, fraudulently excited and directed. That which is new in this case relates rather to the incidental than to the essential.

The instigator, Demetrius, was clearly an influential man, and doubtless an extensive manufacturer and dealer in the shrines. The artisans [craftsmen] and "workmen" of all kinds connected with and dependent upon the business, were called together and made to see that Paul's business and theirs were not mutually helpful. As his prospered, theirs declined.

Paul's success Demetrius may have somewhat exaggerated for effect (vs. 26) but his words agree well with vs. 21-23, and would have failed of effect unless he had been known to be substantially true. The speech of Paul at Athens will enable us to understand the last words of the 26th verse; but to bring out its force as spoken by Demetrius, it should be translated which are being made by hands.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, September 23rd, 1877.—Paul at Miletus.—Acts xx. 17-32.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.”—2 Cor. iv. 5.

The Story of the Lesson.

FOR THE PRIMARY CLASS.

The people of Ephesus saw that what Paul told them of Jesus was true. Many came and told Paul how they had wickedly pretended to charm away disease: and they brought their books about magic and burned them before all the people. The people now listened to the word of God, which grew more and more powerful. A silversmith, named Demetrius, tried to hinder Paul. He made little silver houses, like the great temple of Diana, of which many were sold. He called all the workmen of his trade together, and told them that Paul had persuaded so many people that images made with hands were not gods, that there was danger of their business coming to an end, and even that worship in the great temple of Diana would be stopped. They were very angry, and cried out, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." The whole city was quickly filled with confusion; every one rushed to the theatre, which held at least thirty thousand people, though the greater part of them knew not what the matter was. They caught two of Paul's companions; but when Paul would have gone in and spoken to the people, the disciples would not let him, and the ten chief men sent to beg him not to go. For two hours the crowd shouted. "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." But at last the town-clerk made himself heard, and quieted them.

Select Serial.

From The Day of Rest. DORA'S BOY.

BY MRS. ELLEN ROSS.

(To be Continued.)

CHAP. XXXVII.—A STREET ACCIDENT.

To Matthew's great amusement Dorothy Sharp began about this time to be very troublesome on Hugh's behalf. She was persistent in enquiring what he was going to do with the boy. It was high time, she thought, that he had a business put in his fingers, or was set in the way of earning money somehow.

'You're uncommon concerned about a boy, that has got nothin' to do with you, Mrs. Sarah,' observed Matthew, with a merry twinkle in his eye. 'Now I should ha thought you might have observed since you've bin about this place, that I cares enough for him to see to it that he's provided for in the futur', without anybody puttin' in a spoke for him. Eh?'

Dorothy looked rather uncomfortable as she replied, 'Well, men don't always think of these things as they ought to. You may think it's time enough yet, but I don't. S'pose anything happened to you before you got him settled for life what 'ud become of the boy as you seem to like so much?'

'Why, he'd have to look out for his granny, I s'pose,' answered Matthew promptly; 'and like enough she'd be glad to look about and get him set up for life.'

'Oh, Ah!' exclaimed Dorothy crossly, for Mathew's smiling indifference annoyed her sorely. 'I guess he'd have to look about for his granny and provide for her instead of she for him, and very right, too. A pretty thing for old folks to have to work for young ones as are strong and able!'

'Well, that's what I'm doing, and I take a pleasure in it,' answered Matthew. 'But don't you be too concerned, Mrs. Sarah, about what don't concern ye. There's the bird-busness for my little chap if he likes to take to it; and if he don't he shall do what he likes better. I wish I knowed more about what he takes most delight in, and that is drawing,—cos I think money might be made out o' that when a chap's so clever at it, if only I knowed how to put him in the way of it.'

'What does he draw?' asked Dorothy, trying to appear indifferent.

'Oh, pretty nigh everything he takes a fancy to,' replied Matthew. 'He'll be quiet at the counter a bit sometimes with his pencil and paper, and when I

goes to look, blest if he haven't hit off my old parrot or one o' the small fry as neat as a whistle, and as like life as if a lookin'-glass was put afore'em. And he can draw flowers and trees, or anything you may please to mention. He began quite of himself, but lately they've bin givin' him lessons at school, and he's mighty pleased about it.'

'Oh, I don't s'pose he'll make money at that,' said Dorothy impatiently. 'A honest, straightforward business is the thing, so that he'll be earning certain and regular money.'

'Well, we shall see,' replied Matthew complacently. 'I hope Providence'll guide me to do do what's wise for the boy. At present I'm thankful to say it ain't urgent as he should be earnin' money; and when he needs to, I guess we shall be showed which is the best way to do it.'

Matthew was not concerned at all about Hugh's future: he seemed to think that things were always going as smoothly and evenly with him as they had done for years past. No anticipation of disaster or change disturbed him; and he was in no hurry to take Hugh from school and put him to business, being loth to move in the direction which might possibly tend to separate them,—which must inevitably separate them, he thought, if Hugh did not take to the bird-busness. As yet the day was far, far distant but Matthew could not contemplate it even in the far-off future without shrinking. However, he might have spared himself all anxious considerations and forebodings on the boy's behalf; for his course was to be shaped by circumstances over which they had no control. One day in December Matthew had an errand again to Mr. Barnett's house at the West-end. It was drawing near to the Christmas holidays, and Hugh was so busy at school, that no mention was made of his accompanying him this time. Matthew started out directly after dinner, at the same time that his boy started for school; and locking the door and putting the key in his pocket, he told Hugh that he should be back before his school was out, and away they went in different directions.

It was an intensely frosty day. The sky was clear, and the sunshine was enlivening, though it did not perceptibly warm anything that it shone upon, nor disperse the slight, bluish mists that hung about distant objects. There had been a thaw the day before, which at night was frozen, so that now the roads and pathways were as slippery as glass, and excepting where earth and sand had been strewn about walking for man and beast was both difficult and dangerous. Math. was comfortably attired in a long great-coat with a woolen comforter round his neck, and away he went on the top of a bus through the roaring city, and on to Grosvenor Square.

Having performed his errand to Mr. Barnett, he returned by the same route homewards. Remembering that he had to call at a shop in Cornhill he got down off the bus at the Royal Exchange. The sun had gone down, leaving the horizon to the south-west crimson and purple. Gas-lamps were glimmering palely in the beautiful light; and the shops were rapidly becoming brilliant with gas-jets. Early contingents of city men were getting home, and the roads were densely crowded with cabs and heavily laden busses.

Matthew had safely swung himself down off the bus, and was making for the further pavement with more speed than caution, when his foot slipped, and he fell heavily to the ground, unnoticed by a lorryman who suspected something wrong when his empty lorry jerked over some obstruction, and a shout rose above the clamour of the traffic, 'Heave-ho! there's a man under!'

It was a very common accident; and the on-lookers thought but little of it when they saw that, far from being killed, Matthew got up, and with nothing amiss but his right arm hanging helplessly, with blood dripping from the coat-sleeve, a face white as death with agony, and mouth firmly set, he made his way to the pavement, and went and stood for a moment beside one of the shops, leaning heavily against the wall.

A small knot of sympathizing persons gathered round him, and one and another eagerly directed him to the nearest hospital. At the mention of the word a shudder passed over him, as if they had mentioned the workhouse. He grew

faint with pain, and with sudden apprehension of dark days of suffering to come; and he felt a sense of relief when he saw a gentleman step out of a brougham, and come up to enquire what was the matter. It was a doctor; and after gently feeling the injured limb, and causing Matthew unimagined agony, he said it was more than a broken arm, and he should go at once to the hospital.

'No; I'll go home, if anybody'll call me a cab; and if you'll please to come after me, doctor, and set me to rights,' said Matthew, in a low but determined voice. 'I've got a little chap there as I can't leave,' he added, 'so home must be my hospital.'

'I will drive you in my brogram: how far is it?' said the humane doctor. Matthew gladly accepted this offer, and gave his address. And kind, unknown hands helped him into the carriage, which, however, he would not enter until he had got out his large red cotton handkerchief and covered it over his hand and coat-sleeve to prevent the blood dropping about.

'How long d'ye think I'll be laid up sir?' he enquired anxiously of the doctor as they drove along.

'I cannot say until I know the extent of your injuries,' replied the doctor. 'In matters like this we must always hope for the best, you know.'

At a few minutes past four Hugh went bounding home from school, keeping his feet on the frozen ground where more cautious people were slipping about perilously. Finding, when he got to the shop, that Matthew had not returned, he went up and down the street for some time, whistling lightheartedly, and keeping time with his feet to the tune he was whistling. Happy at home, happy at school where he did his work enthusiastically, with not a care on his mind, but a heart full of contentment and thankfulness, how little he thought that the cloud was already spreading over his sky which was to change golden brightness into grey! But so it was: things were to be no more with him as they had been; his pleasant school-days ended that afternoon; his happy, careless boyhood, free from anxiety and sorrow, ended also that day. Many a month and year would have to roll by before he would again whistle just as lightheartedly as he was now doing, waiting about for Matthew.

(To be continued.)

The two Bills.

A FABLE.

Two bills were waiting in the bank for their turn to go out into the world. One was a little bill, only one dollar; the other was a big bill, a thousand dollar bill.

While lying there side by side, they fell a-talking about their usefulness. The dollar bill murmured out:

'Ah, if I were as big as you, what good I would do! I could move in such high places, and people would be so careful of me wherever I should go! Everybody would admire me, and want to take me home with them; but small as I am, what good can I do? Nobody cares much for me. I am too little to be of any use.'

'Ah, yes! that is so,' said the thousand dollar bill; and it haughtily gathered up its well-trimmed edges that were lying next the little bill, in conscious superiority. 'That is so,' it repeated. 'If you were as great as I am, a thousand times bigger than you are, then you might hope to do some good in the world! And its face smiled a wrinkle of contempt for the little dollar bill.'

Just then the cashier comes, takes the little, murmuring bill, and kindly gives it to a poor widow.

'God bless you!' she cries, as with a smiling face she receives it. 'My dear hungry children can now have some bread.'

A thrill of joy ran through the little bill as it was folded up in the widow's hand, and it whispered, 'I may do some good, if I am small.' And when it saw the bright faces of her fatherless children, it was very glad that it could do a little good.

Then the little dollar bill began its journey of usefulness. It went first to the baker's for bread, then to the miller's, then to the farmer's then to the laborer's, then to the doctor's, then to the minister's, and then to the printer's; and wherever it went it gave pleasure, adding something to their comfort and joy.

At last, after a long, long pilgrimage of usefulness among every sort of people, it came back to the bank again, crumpled, defaced, ragged, softened by its daily use. Seeing the thousand-dollar bill lying there, with scarcely a wrinkle or finger-mark upon it, it exclaimed:

'Pray, sir, and what has been your mission of usefulness?'

The big bill sadly replied: 'I have been from safe to safe among the rich where few could see me, and they were afraid to let me go out far, lest I should be lost. Few indeed are they whom I have made happy by my mission.' The little dollar bill said: 'It is better to be small and go among the multitudes doing good than to be so great as to be imprisoned in the safes of the few.' And it rested satisfied with its lot.

MORAL.—The doing well of little every day duties makes one the most useful and happy.—Well Spring.