

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lesson for 1878.

SUNDAY, November 24th, 1878.—Judaism overthrown.—Luke xxi. 8-21.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 14-19.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it."—Luke xix. 41.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, Luke xxi. 5-33. Tuesday, Matthew xxiv. Wednesday, Mark xiii. Thursday, Matthew x. 16-42. Friday, Acts iv. 1-12. Saturday, Acts vii. 51-60. Sunday, Romans ii.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. False Christs foretold. Vs. 8. II. Universal trouble. Vss. 9-11. III. Predicted persecution. Vss. 12-19. IV. Sign given. Vss. 20, 21.

QUESTIONS.—What two events did our Saviour predict? Matt. xxiv. 2, 30, 31. What information did they seek? Luke xxi. 7.

I. Vs. 8.—Who did Christ say should come in his name? Of what subsequent misdeeds of the Jews have we record? Acts. v. 36, 37.

II. Vss. 9-11.—What things did Jesus say would come to pass before the end? Did they?

III. Vss. 12-18.—To what were the disciples to be delivered? Acts iv. 1-12; v. 18; xii. 4; xvi. 24. Before what rulers were some of the apostles brought? Acts xviii. 12-24; xxvi. 2. On what were the disciples to be settled in heart? When were their adversaries unable to resist them? Acts vi. 10; xxiv. 25; 2 Tim iv. 16, 17. Of the four disciples (Mark xiii. 3) to whom Christ addressed these words, who died a martyr's death? Acts xii. 2; John xxi. 18. What is meant by "not a hair of your head shall perish?" Comp. Matt. x. 28.

IV. Vss. 20, 21.—By what sign were the disciples to know that the overthrow of Jerusalem had come?—When did this overthrow take place? Ans. A. D. 69, 70, under Vespasian and his son Titus. Why was Jerusalem destroyed? Matt. xxiii. 37, 38.

We have come to the Tuesday on the last week of our Saviour's earthly life, three days before his crucifixion. He has repeatedly been up to Jerusalem from Bethany, and as repeatedly returned to Bethany. He is now returning to Bethany for the last time, and is seated on the Mount of Olives, where the city with its temple is spread out before him, and is discoursing to Peter, James, John, and Andrew (Mark xiii. 3) on the secrets of the future. This discourse has been regarded in all time as one of the most difficult passages for explanation in the entire gospel narrative. Well may it be, for it partakes of the nature of unfulfilled prophecy. It is, however, generally held that the prediction is principally upon the destruction of Jerusalem, with its attending tribulations, which are in themselves the germ of a subsequent fulfillment of events of greater magnitude attending the second coming of the Son of man and the end of the world. The earlier catastrophe is the type of the latter. The only question is in what connection the two eras stand to one another. Had Jesus told them of centuries intervening between the two, he would have given up his principle of teaching. John xvi. 12. Where Jesus leaves the first object, therefore, to speak of the second is a matter of great doubt. Let it suffice for us that he has predicted both.

EXPOSITION.—The words of our lesson are a part of Christ's reply to the question of the disciples in vs. 7. "The disciples, as genuine Jews, hitherto ever conceived that the temple would stand eternally, and Jerusalem be the centre whither all the nations should stream together in order to enjoy, with the Jews, the blessings of the Messianic reign; but now they have in the days and hours immediately preceding, heard something by which this conception of theirs has been disturbed. They had believed that the Christ would remain eternally here below, and that the temple would outlast time; but now that the Christ shall die, and the temple become a heap of ruins, how could they, as born Israelites, after this last fact, imagine any further continuance of the earthly economy. And yet they still expect as ever a glorious coming of the Messiah. We ought to study these words of Christ for abiding and universally applicable and applied principles, rather than for mere facts, or matters of what, when, and how. We need less to know times and seasons, than those moral, spiritual causes that

produce times and season. We need rather to know God, than his decrees; the Lord Jesus, than his plans. Christendom in its past history and present condition, bears ample, mournful, solemn emphatic testimony to the folly of the contrary view and course.

Verse 8.—Take heed, etc.—The answer shows, rather, a desire to save the questioners, than to answer their question. As the end of the Jewish dispensation draws nigh, spiritual conflict deepens, and the trial of God's chosen ones become sorer, needing greater watchfulness, earnestness, constancy. Safety, then, lay and always lies in keeping close to Jesus and his words, and refusing to go after those whose claims or doctrine would lead from him. We, too, have need to take such heed.

Verse 9.—But when ye shall hear of wars, etc.—Christ was born King of Peace, and, as such, was at his birth heralded by angels. Wars and commotions come of that world-spirit which is contrary to Christ, and hence their prevalence betokened Christ's absence, and might seem to imply his defeat, and exclusion from the sphere of human events. To a Christian, to the apostles, such a conclusion would be, would have been despair, paralysis. The Lord teaches them that "not yet are all things put under him," or, at least, not by us seen to be thus put, but the power is his, and the end certain. Disturbance in the Roman empire followed the Lord's death. By and by. Immediately. Nearly forty years intervened between the crucifixion and the destruction of the city.

Verses 10, 11.—Scripture always represents nature as God's creation, and, therefore, his servant, used for his own highest ends which are spiritual. It is needless to say that wars, earthquakes, etc., have continued, and do continue, and that we are thus called to use these words of Christ for our caution, clinging in faith to him who, invisible to sight, sits on the throne until "his hour" shall come.

Verse 12.—But before all these, etc.—It was a fiery trial of the faith of the disciples that their Lord was scorned, and was to be crucified. It was scarcely a less, in some respects even a worse, trial that for Christ's sake they had from the very start to suffer. That they did thus suffer, our previous study in the book of Acts has shown by way of sample, while the book of Revelation gives us less detailed but equally vivid and more general evidence. That there has now been a long cessation from such trial in the world at large is no certain evidence that it may not again have place. There is, and will continue to be, need to hear the Divine word which bids us expect persecution for Christ's sake, and be not by it separated from Christ. Phil. i. 19-26. Experience on a large scale is in proof.

Verse 13.—It shall turn, etc.—See Phil. i. 19-26. Experience on a large scale is in proof.

Verse 14, 15.—Settle it, etc.—For such conflict as awaited the apostles in their mission there was need of a settled assurance of success. Such assurance was impossible if they regarded it as a conflict simply between man and man, between themselves and their opponents, but was easily attainable if they could know that it was between God in them, on the one hand, and their persecutors the other. The principle of the promise extended much farther in their case, and extends also to all Christians according to their situation. It does not exclude all practicable care in self defense.

Verse 16, 17.—The deaths of James and Peter, at least, were in literal fulfillment of vs. 16, which also in its import reaches out to all the martyrs, while the history of the first spread of Christianity is little else than an expansion of vs. 17.

Verse 18, 19.—Here we have a promise and an exhortation. The promise is surely not of safety from temporal harm, but from harm to their true life, themselves as sons of God. The exhortation is to hold fast to Christ and his word, in order that even persecution and death might become salvation. "Gain your souls."

Verses 20, 21.—See Matt. xxiv. 15; Dan. ix. 27. The siege of Jerusalem by the Roman army was not to be raised. The disciples did flee beyond the Jordan to Pella, some to Mount Libanus.

(1.) The destruction of Jerusalem predicted and accomplished.—No city that ever fell more richly deserved its dreadful doom. Everything had been done

for it that could be done. The saintliest men that had ever lived, had walked its streets and warned its people. Last of all, God had sent his Son; and he had labored long, and loved it well. But him they had cast out, and cruelly crucified; saying, as they did it, "His blood be on us, and our children." And it was causeless the curse did not come; and it came just at the time, and in the manner, that Christ, forty years before, had so exactly predicted.

The wandering Jew, wherever in any land he rests or roams, is a perpetual reminder of that awful judgment which God's ancient people so recklessly dragged down upon their devoted heads.

(2.) The destruction of the world predicted and sure.—In this very same chapter, Christ sweeps in his description away beyond the overthrow of Jerusalem, and forewarns his disciples of the end of the world. Nothing in the future is more absolutely certain, if our Lord is to be believed.

(3.) The signs and wonders preceding the end.—Though far removed in point of time, as we measure time, were the overthrow of Jerusalem and the end of the world, yet so analogous were they to be, in their general character, and in the portents preceding them, that our Saviour combines them both in the comprehensive description that he gives us in this chapter.

We may look for revolutions in governments, unexampled human distress, and convulsions in the very frame-work of material nature. No doubt, philosophers will be ready to give very plausible explanations of all these phenomena, as arising from causes purely natural; but the thoughtful believer will, nevertheless, remember how the Lord predicted all these things, and will prepare himself to meet him at his coming.

(4.) The trials and triumphs of the Christian Church, in the midst of all these things.—Christ's people were to suffer persecution, imprisonment, torture, and horrible forms of death itself, at the hands of the civil magistrate. All of which came to pass—as we know from the history of the early Church.

Just before the avalanche of ruin fell upon Jerusalem, Christ's people, discerning the sign, of which before he had clearly apprized them, fled with all haste to the mountains of Judea, and so escaped the awful doom that overtook all the rest. Even so, before the storm of God's wrath shall burst upon a guilty world, Christ's people shall be "caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." Behold, he hath said: "It shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold, and see the reward of the wicked."

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, December 1st, 1878.—The Lord's Supper.—Luke xxii. 10-20.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"As oft as ye do eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."—1 Cor. xi. 26.

For the Primary Class Teacher.

Ascertain how much the children themselves know of the city, of Mount Moriah and Mt. Zion, of the Temple, how it looked, who built it, and for what it was used, and the great love which the Jews felt for it. Also let them name some things which have happened in the city.

Supply what you find that they do not know, trying to make them imagine not only the beautiful city, but also the pride with which the Jews viewed it.

Explain how the fall of the city, and destruction of the Temple, was a sign of the end of the law of Moses, for God was no longer to be worshipped only in the Temple, but everywhere. But for the younger ones, simply state that all this was brought on the city as a punishment for their sins.

Tell how Jesus, who sees all our sins, and knows how fearful the punishment will be, grieves over us. Though many troubles will come to you in this world, and perhaps, even, you will be laughed at, or spoken against, even when trying to do right, yet Jesus says, "Fear not." "For there shall not a hair of your head perish." He also says: "Be patient."

If we will only think that Jesus, who sees so much farther on, is taking care of us, and if we are his children, that he is taking the best way to bring us to the New Jerusalem, which is above.

Boys' Department.

"We Want a Grave-board for Ma."

A boy, not over eleven years old, whose pinched face betrayed hunger, and whose clothing could scarcely be called by the name, dropped into a carpenter's shop on Grand River avenue the other day, and after much hesitation explained to the foreman:

"We want to get a grave-board for ma. She died last winter, and the graves are so thick that we can't hardly find her no more. We went up last Sunday, and we come awful near not finding it. We thought we'd git a grave-board so we wouldn't lose the grave. When we thought we'd lost it, Jack he cried, and Bud she cried, and my chin trembled so I could hardly talk!"

"Where is your father?" asked the carpenter.

"Oh, he's home, but he never goes up there with us, and we shan't tell him about the board. I guess he hated ma, for he wasn't home when she died, and he wouldn't buy no coffin or nothing. Sometimes, when we are sittin' on the doorstep talking about her, and Jack and Bud are cryin' and I'm rememberin' how she kissed us all afore she died, he says we'd better quit that, or we'll get what's bad for us. But we sleep upstairs and we talk and cry in the dark all we want to. How much will the board be?"

The carpenter selected something fit for the purpose, and asked:

"Who will put it up at the grave?"

"We'll take it up on our cart," replied the boy, "and I guess the graveyard man will help us put it up."

"You want the name painted on it, don't you?"

"Yes, sir, we want the board white, and then we want you to paint on it that she was our ma, and that she was forty-one years old, and that she died on the 2nd of November, and that she's gone to heaven, and that she was one of the best mothers that ever lived, and that we are going to be good all our lives and go up where she is when we die. How much will it cost, sir?"

"How much have you got?"

"Well," said the boy, as he brought out a little calico bag, and emptied its contents on the bench. "Bud drawd the baby for the woman next door, and earned twenty cents; Jack he weeded in the garden, and earned forty cents, and he found five more in the road; I run of errands, and made kites, and fixed a boy's cart, and helped carry some apples into a store, and earned sixty-five cents. All that makes a hundred and thirty cents, sir, and pa don't know we've got it, 'cause we keep it hid in the ground under a stone."

The carpenter meant to be liberal, but he said:

"A grave-board will cost at least three dollars."

The lad looked from his little store of metals to the carpenter and back, realized how many weary weeks had passed since the first penny was earned and saved, and suddenly wailed out:

"Then we can never, never buy one, and ma's grave will be lost."

But he left the shop with tears of gladness in his eyes, and when he returned yesterday little Bud and Jack were with him, and they had a cart. There was not only a head-board, but one for the foot of the grave as well, and painter and carpenter had done their work with full hearts, and done it well.

"Ain't it awful nice?—nicer than rich folks have!" whispered the children, as the boards were being placed on the cart; "won't the grave look nice, though, and won't ma be awful glad!"

Ere this the mother's grave has been marked, and when night comes the three motherless ones will cuddle close together and whisper their gratitude that it cannot be lost to them, even in the storms and drifts of winter.—Detroit Tribune.

"One half of the world don't know how the other half live!" exclaimed a gossiping woman. "O, well," said her neighbor, "don't worry about it; it isn't your fault if they don't know."

It is reported that Mr. Carlyle, aided by his niece, Miss Mary Carlyle Aitken, has definitely begun his autobiography, which, according to popular belief, he was to make his last work.

When it is safest to run.

"Go the other way! go the other way!" cried Mr. Grace, a thoughtful neighbor, as Samuel Hawkes was about to get over the fence into Mr. Benson's orchard. Sad complaints had been made of the boys for pelting the fruit-trees, and Mr. Grace would have felt ashamed of any Sabbath scholar who would dare to take what belonged to another.

Mr. Grace had a good opinion of Samuel Hawkes, for he was a steady lad; but he thought that the temptation might be too much for him, so he persuaded him to take the other path.

"Samuel," said he, "listen to me. I once saw a man running from the door of a public-house, while two or three other men were hallooing after him. Aye, thought I, this fellow has been drinking, and is running away without paying for his liquor. Presently after, however, I overtook the man, and asked what made him run away so fast from the tavern door.

"Why, sir," said he, "not a very long time ago I was a sad drunkard; my wife and children were in rags, and I was about going to jail, when a good friend stepped forward and agreed to save me from prison, if I would promise never to drink another glass of spirits as long as I lived. Up to this hour the promise I then made has not been broken. Having walked a long way to-day, I called at the door of the public-house yonder for a draught of water; and seeing the landlord pouring out the gin, I fairly took to my heels, for I knew too much of my own heart to trust myself. If I were to pause, and stop to talk in a place of temptation, it would be too strong for me; but so long as I can run away from it I am safe."

"Well, thought I, I must take example from this man, and run away from temptation whenever it approaches me. Now it will be a good thing if you will do just as he did, for a boy is as likely to be tempted by a cherry-checked apple as a man is by a glass of gin."—Zion's Advocate.

For Husbands.

Don't think when you have won a wife that you have won also a slave.

Don't think that your wife has less feeling than your sweetheart. Her relationship to you is simply changed, not her nature.

Don't think that you can dispense with all the little civilities of life toward her on marrying. She appreciates those things quite as much as other women.

Don't be gruff and rude at home. Had you been that sort of a fellow before marriage, the probabilities are that you would be sewing on your own buttons still.

Don't make your wife feel that she is an incumbent on you by giving her grudgingly. What she needs, give as cheerfully as if it were a pleasure so to do. She will feel better, and so will you.

Don't meddle in affairs of the house under her charge. You have no more right to be poking your nose into the kitchen, than she has to walk into your place of business and give directions to your employes.

Don't find fault with her extravagance in ribbons, etc., until you have shut down on cigars, tobacco, whiskey, etc.

Don't leave your wife at home to nurse the children, on the score of economy, while you go out at night to see a show or to spend a dollar on billiards.

Don't bolt your supper and hurry off to spend your evenings lounging around away from your wife. Before marriage you couldn't spend your evenings enough with her.

Don't prowl in the loafing resorts till midnight, wasting your time in culpable idleness, leaving your wife lonely at home to brood over your neglect and her disappointment.

Don't think that the woman you promised to "love, cherish and protect," becomes your servant as her part of the contract.

Don't think that board and clothes are sufficient for all a wife does for you. Don't expect a wife to love and honor you, if you prove a brute, unworthy of love and honor.

Don't caress your wife in public and growl at her in private. This proves you both a hypocrite and a dog.

Don't wonder that your wife is not as cheerful as she used to be, when she labors from early morn till late at night to pander to the comfort and caprice of a selfish pig, who has not soul enough to appreciate her.