

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lesson for 1878.

SUNDAY, November 17th, 1878.—Zacchæus, The Publican.—Luke xix. 1-10.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 3-6.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”—Luke xix. 10.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, Luke xix. 1-10. Tuesday, Luke iii. 14. Wednesday, Matt. ix. 10-13. Thursday, Eccl. ix. 10. Friday, Exodus xxii. Saturday, Gal. iii. 1-29. Sunday, Ezek. xxxiii. 1-16.

LESSONS OUTLINE.—I. Zacchæus seeking Jesus. Vss. 1-4. II. Jesus seeking Zacchæus. Vss. 5, 6. III. Unsympathetic murmurs. Vs. 7. IV. Zacchæus saved. Vss. 8-10.

QUESTIONS.—Where was Jericho?

I. Vss. 1-4.—What rich man is mentioned as being in Jericho? Was he a Gentile or a Jew? What was it to be chief among the publicans? What did he wish to do? What prevented him from seeing Jesus? To what expedient did he resort?

II. Vss. 5, 6.—How does Jesus seek Zacchæus? What command does he utter? To whose house does he invite himself? Was there anything censurable in this freedom? What was the response of Zacchæus?

III. Vs. 7.—What complaint do the Jews now make? Why did they regard Zacchæus as a sinner?

IV. Vss. 8-10.—What was the demand of the Jewish law in restitution? Ex. xxii. 4, 9. What did Jesus say to him: What did Jesus say he had come to do? Who are meant by “the lost.”

Jesus, being asked by a rich ruler what he must do to inherit eternal life, replies, and delivers a discourse upon riches. Luke xviii. 18-36. Then, for the third time, he announces to his disciples his sufferings, death and resurrection. Luke xviii. 31-34. In approaching Jericho from Perea, two blind men (Luke records but one) met him, who, being restored to sight, follow their Benefactor. On entering and passing through Jericho, however, Zacchæus (Zacchar'us) the publican seeks to see him, to whose house he goes, and passes the night.

EXPOSITION.—Vs. 1.—Passed through. More exactly, “was passing through;” that is, the incident occurred while passing. This verse refers back to xviii. 35, which has often been thought to contradict Matt. xx. 29, and Mark x. 56. As a natural way of harmonizing them, I would suggest that Jesus may have first halted, and perhaps lodged, on the Jordan side of the town, and the next day passed into it, and through its heart. Matthew and Mark have in mind that halt, as their dividing point. Hence, moving from that place was, for them, going from Jericho to Jerusalem. Luke, however, has prominently in mind the miracle of healing the blind with reference to it, and this miracle was as with Matthew, after the halt, and after starting thence for Jerusalem; but, with reference to the heart of Jericho, it was while entering into it, before meeting Zacchæus. It is certain that this allows to all the writers a perfectly natural method of narrating correctly the same facts, according to their different points of view.

Verse 2.—Chief among the publicans, and he was rich.—The Roman Government's tax upon its subject provinces was farmed. Some wealthy Roman citizen (or corporation) paid for a province into the treasury a stipulated sum, and then collected from that province the taxes, making what they could in the operation, having all that was received above the amount paid in to the government. Zacchæus was either one of the sub-contractors, or possibly a still lower officer, having taken of the sub-contractor a contract for Jericho and its vicinity. No wonder that, with such a system of collecting taxes, infamous abuses were the rule, and the tax-gatherers a hated class. That Zacchæus had become rich by this business, was doubtless a matter of course; especially as Jericho was “the centre of the balsam-trade.” And so he, like nearly all in his business, had defrauded. (See his own words, in vs. 8).

Verse 3.—And he sought to see Jesus, who he was.—That is, he was making attempts as the multitudes were moving—fruitless attempts. It may seem strange that he had not before sought

and gained an interview with Christ, when the crowds were not thus about him. For the press. The crowd, or multitude; of whom most were pilgrims on the way to the great festival of the Passover at Jerusalem. Little of stature. He was too short to see over the crowd, and the crowd was too great and compact for him easily to make his way through it to Jesus, who was not only the centre of attraction, but the centre of the caravan.

Verse 4.—He ran before.—In haste, because in earnest. He thought less of his dignity, than of his purpose. Climbed up into a sycamore tree, to see him. Jericho was “the city of palm-trees”; but sycamore-trees, so common in Palestine, would also not be wanting. “The sycamore, or fig-mulberry, is frequently planted by the way-sides.” To keep away from Christ, through fear of ridicule because of the methods which it may be necessary to use in finding him, is to prove ourselves unworthy to be owned of him.

Verse 5.—When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and saw him. He knew the heart of Zacchæus, without outward testimony, he also knew of his location and his name. Compare John i. 48, 52. Jesus looked at him, not by accident, but by design; with a look of loving recognition, in answer to the publican's look of earnest, penitent longing. And said unto him, Zacchæus, etc. Christ adds to his answering look his assuring word. Zacchæus went, not to be seen, but adoringly to see. Christ bids him haste, in token of his hearty welcome, and not alone that he might not detain the throng. He says, “To-day I must abide at thy house.” Zacchæus had humbled himself, and the Lord exalts him. Thus we have here exemplified again the principle of our last lesson, xviii. 14.

Verse 6.—And he made haste, etc.—A prompt response to the Lord's word, showing a loving and grateful heart. Received him joyfully. “Received him” to his house as his guest. All the more “joyfully,” because so unexpectedly. That blessing is doubly blessed which is a surprise. But Jesus is the guest, not a surprise of the rich Zacchæus, but of every soul that will bid him welcome. He “comes in and sup” with such.

Verse 7.—But when they saw it, etc.—“They,” the murmurers, were principally the Pharisees, who would be the most prominent part of the throng. It has well been suggested that, as Jericho was “a city of priests,” the presence of Zacchæus to any one of them, was doubly offensive. We may keep company with sinners who are converted, and we may also keep company with sinners in order to convert them.

Verse 8.—Zacchæus stood, etc.—This was after the arrival at his own home. It is commonly, and with the better reason, thought that Zacchæus here states, not what had been his custom to do, but what it is now his purpose to do; and, perhaps, what of late, since conversion, he had been doing. His words, if not his wealth, testify that he had extorted. Four-fold. Hence more than required by the law. See Ex. xxii. 4, 9.

Verse 9, 10.—This day, etc.—Here was given the assurance which the penitent publican needed, and every penitent man needs. The Saviour went as Saviour; and hence, in his coming, “salvation came.”

TOPICS.—Zacchæus, the Publican.—(1.) A very unlikely subject of grace.—Zacchæus was a man whose salvation was hardly to be looked for. There are vocations in life that stand greatly in the way of a man's becoming a Christian. Zacchæus was a rich man. A considerable proportion of his riches had been acquired by dishonorable means, as his own confession, subsequently, gives us plainly to understand. And yet this man was presently saved. Need any “hard cases” in the world be despaired of?

(2.) A sinner seeking to see the Saviour.—Zacchæus “sought to see Jesus, who he was.” He had evidently heard of Jesus, and was interested in him. He had substantially the same spirit as those Greeks who had come up to Jerusalem, and who said to one of the disciples, “Sir, we would see Jesus.”

(3.) The Saviour seeking the sinner.—It was not by chance that Jesus passed that way. “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” He was there in search of Zacchæus.

His object was his salvation—his destination was his house.

(4.) A genuine conversion.—It is recorded of Zacchæus that he received Christ joyfully; but there is more substantial evidence of change than a spasm of happy feeling. He triumphs at the point where the rich young ruler, who came to Jesus, so signally failed.

Half he reserved; which was none too much, seeing that out of it he proposed to make restitution to any he had robbed.

Here was one of the best of all proofs of the reality of the change he had experienced.

“If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” A covetous Christian is a contradiction in terms, and a monstrous absurdity.—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

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

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

For the Primary Class Teacher.

Do you remember where the man, who fell among thieves, was going? To Jericho.

Having interested the class in the place, read the story of the man who lived in Jericho, and wanted to see Jesus, questioning it all back out of the class. Let them count up how many things they know about Zacchæus. Where he lived, that he was a Publican, rich, little, wanted to see Jesus. Always refer to previous lessons where they can be brought in. Now recall what they learned last week of the business of the Publican, and the fact that they often made a man pay more than he owed; perhaps this was the way that Zacchæus got? Rich.

How many here want to see Jesus? We can't see Jesus with our eyes, till after we die and go to heaven, how then can we see him now?

I suppose that Zacchæus thought that he was hid from sight up in that tree, but Jesus —? Saw him. And Jesus sees each of us just as plainly. What did Jesus do when he saw Zacchæus? Called him by name. And what did Zacchæus do? Where did Jesus go? How did Zacchæus receive him? Would you be glad to have Jesus go home with you.

Zacchæus did something at once to show how sorry he was for the wrong things he had done, and how he intended to do better after this.

What kind of a child does Jesus love? Good children. Yes, but he loves bad children too. You wonder at that. Well, so did the neighbors of Zacchæus when Jesus went to see him; but you see what a change came over Zacchæus, and if bad children will only let Jesus come into their hearts, they will be changed also. Whom does the text say he came to save? Question on all lessons which have taught this truth, such as the Prodigal Son, the ten lepers. Encourage the children to invite Jesus at once to come in and stay with them, and save them from being lost.

Boys' Department.

The Horse's Name.

One day my brother was out driving in the country, when a stranger stopped him by exclaiming, “Halloo! that used to be my horse!”

“Guess not,” replied my brother; “I bought her at a livery stable and they told me she came from Boston.”

“H'm!” said the man, “What do you call her?”

My brother answered that the horse was sold to him under the name of “Pink.”

“Ho!” said the man; “that isn't her name.”

Suddenly he cried out sharply, “Nelly!”

Quick as a flash, the horse pricked up her ears and looked around.

“Nelly,” said the man, stepping in front of her, “shake hands!”

Up came the horse's right hoof for the man to take.

“Now give us the other hand, Nelly,” and she raised her left forefoot.

“There!” said the smiling man; “d'ye suppose that wasn't my horse?”—Youth's Companion.

Human Nature.

A TRUE INCIDENT.

Two little children five years old, Marie the gentle, Charlie the bold; Sweet and bright and quaintly wise, Angels both in their mother's eyes.

But you, if you follow my verse shall see That they were as human as human can be, And had not learned the maturer art Of hiding the “self” of the finite heart.

One day they found in their romps and play Two little rabbits soft and gray— Soft and gray, and just of a size, As like each other as your two eyes.

All day long the children made love To the deer little pets—their treasure trove; They kissed and hugged them until the night Brought to the conies a glad respite.

Two much fondling doesn't agree With the rabbit nature, as we shall see, For ere the light of another day Had chased the shadows of night away,

One little pet had gone to the shades, Or, let us hope, to perennial glades, Brighter and softer than any below— A heaven where good little rabbits go.

The living and dead lay side by side, And still alike as before one died; And it chanced that the children came singly to view The pets they had dreamed of all the night through.

First came Charlie, and with sad surprise, Beheld the dead with streaming eyes; Howe'er, consolingly, he said, “Poor little Marie—her rabbit's dead!”

Later came Marie, and stood aghast; She kissed and caressed it, but at last Found voice to say, while her young heart bled, “I'm so sorry for Charlie—his rabbit's dead!”—Harper's Magazine.

A funeral in Georgia.

I dropped into a church for a few moments to listen to the funeral discourse of a colored preacher. He was telling the story of the five foolish virgins. “Now, my brethren,” he said in tones one would think would wake the dead, “dis good brudder lyn' yere wa'n't no foolish virgin. He had his oil all ready, and good oil too. He ain't a crying out for oil about dis time. Ye see dem foolish virgins, dey went to sleep, and when dey woke up dar were de lamps, de wich war dar; dey had matches all ready, ebberthing was complete, but dey didn't hab no oil. Dar war a heap trouble den, I tell you. Dey jus' went cryin' and screamin'—(how the preacher screamed!)—for oil. It warn't no use, do. I spec like Richard, dey cried out, ‘My kingdom for a horse,’ do in dis yer case it warn't no horse, only a drop of oil just nuff to make a flicker. Dis good brudder's lamp war running over; he was a wise virgin,” and the congregation swayed and moaned and cried aloud. I followed the funeral procession to the grave under the pines—the moaning pines, the music of which is so like that of our Newport beach—and stood, the only white person among them, and watched them lower the coffin into its resting place. This they did with the rope rein which they unhitched from the horse in the wagon which served as a hearse. Never shall I forget that scene—all those black faces turned toward the setting sun, the weird music of the funeral chant, the moans and strange cries of the whole assembly as the red clay was thrown in on the colored “brudder” whose lamp burned brightly. “Don't cry no mo’; but sing ‘Home, sweet home,’ (a negro hymn) as sweetly as de departed is a singin' it wid de angels is minnit,” And I came away, the music of their hymn growing fainter and fainter as I came up through the rose-scented town, till they were far behind me, but I shall never cease to hear that song.—J. N., Boston Transcript.

Danbury has the champion patient boy. He comes from a chronically borowin family. The other day he went to a neighbor's for a cup of sour milk. “I haven't got anything but sweetmilk,” said the woman, pettishly. “I'll wait till it sours,” said the patient youth, sinking into a chair.

A very good and indeed conclusive reply has been given to Mr. Mollook's clever aticles in the Nineteenth Century entitled “Is Life Worth living?” The answer is: “It depends on the liver.”

Temperance.

Womna and Wine.

Pop! went the gay cork flying, Sparkled the gay champagne, By the light of the day that was dying, He filled up the goblets again. Let the last best toast be womna, “Womna, dear womna,” said he, “Empty your glass, my darling, When you drink to your sex with me.”

But she caught his strong brown fingers, And held them tight as in fear, And through the gathering twilight Her loud voice fell on his ear; “Nay, ere you drink, I implore you By all that you hold divine, Pledge a womna in her tear-drops, Rather by far than by wine.”

“By the woes of the drunkard's mother, By the children that beg for bread, By the face of her whose beloved one, Looks on the wine when 'tis red, By the kisses changed to curses, By the tears more bitter than brine, By many a fond heart broken, Pledge no womna in wine.”

“What has wine brought to womna? Nothing but tears and pain, It has torn from her heart her lover, And proved the prayer in vain, And her household goods all scattered, Lie tangled up in the vine; O! I prithee pledge no womna In the curse of so many—wine.”

THE COST OF DRINK.—It is gratifying to learn that in England the temperance cause is making considerable strides, not only amongst the clergy and laity, but also among the men and officers belonging to the army and navy; on the other hand, it is very serious and grave to reflect that no less than \$2,900,000,000 has been spent in intoxicating liquors during the past four years in the United Kingdom, of which amount \$700,000,000 was the proportion squandered in 1877. The more lamentable is it to know that the homes of many of the people are devoid of the common comforts of life, the children in many instances barely clad and the houses bare of furniture. For what? Drink. If we had time and space to dive into the subject, we believe that we could in some measure trace the source of the present unprecedented stagnation in trade which exists to such an alarming extent throughout the home country, but especially in the manufacturing districts, to the curse of mankind, in this 19th century; for the simply reason—and we believe that the many will concur with us—that a country saddled with such an enormous drink bill could scarcely expect anything else than commercial stagnation, which alone can be removed by a universal strike—and strikes are the order of the day now in England—but this should be for the abolition of drinking, as well as against the drinking traffic.

Speaking of the hard times in England as indicated by the revenue returns, a paper says: “A startling circumstance indicated in these returns is that the people are giving up their drinking habits. The gin-shop begins to feel that trade is dull. Some of your readers may think it is because they are becoming more moral. It is simply because they have no longer the money to spend. Hence the revenue from exercise falls off largely, and the dram drinking has ceased to contribute so largely, as it used to do, towards paying the expenses of the country. This means increasing poverty among the people. And how can it be otherwise, seeing that work is hard to get, and that thousands of hands are idle all over England, especially in the manufacturing districts?”

WHAT SMOKING DOES FOR BOYS.—A certain doctor, struck with the large number of boys under fifteen years of age whom he observed smoking, was led to enquire into the effect the habit had upon their general health. He took for this purpose thirty-eight boys, aged from nine to fifteen years, and carefully examined them; and in twenty-seven of them he discovered injurious traces of the habit. In twenty-two there were various disorders of the circulation and digestion, palpitation of the heart, and more or less marked taste for strong drink. In twelve there was frequent bleeding of the nose; ten had disturbed sleep, and twelve had slight ulceration of the mucous membrane of the mouth, which disappeared on ceasing from the use of tobacco for some days. Medical treatment was of little use till the smoking was discontinued, when health and strength were soon restored. This is no “old wife's talk.” The facts are given under the authority of the British Medical Journal.