

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lesson for 1878.

SUNDAY, October 27th, 1878.—The Rich Man and Lazarus.—Luke xvi. 19-31.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 22-25.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death.”—Prov. xiv. 32.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, Luke xvi. 1-31. Tuesday, Ecclesiastes v. 13-16. Wednesday, Psalm ix. Thursday, Mark ix. 43-50. Friday, Ezekiel xviii. 19-32. Saturday, Deuteronomy xxx. 15-20. Sunday, 2 Corinthians v. 1-16.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Contrasted earthly condition, Vss. 19-21. II. Contrasted eternal condition, Vss. 22, 23. III. Colloquy, Vss. 24-31.

QUESTIONS.—I. Vss. 19-21.—What two characters are we to study about to-day? State minutely the differences in the earthly condition of these two?

II. Vss. 22, 23.—What became of these men after death? What do we know of the ministry of angels? Heb. i. 14. What is meant by being carried to Abraham's bosom? How was the rich man buried? How the poor man? Describe the condition of the rich man after death. What is meant by the word “hell”? What by “torments”?

III. Vss. 24-31.—Lazarus was once a beggar; who is the beggar now? Lazarus asked for a crumb; what does the rich man now request? Comp. Mark ix. 44. Rev. xxii. 11. Ps. ix. 17. Ezek. xviii. 31, 32. Did the Pharisees believe in Jesus after he had called Lazarus from the grave? John xi. 47. What do men need more than miracles? Ps. ii. 1. “This parable is pointless, if it does not teach—I. that there is a hell; II. that those in hell are conscious of their condition.”

EXPOSITION.—The parable in verses 1-13, taught and enforced the right use of money, and in general of the things of this world, in relation to the world to come. The influence upon some of Christ's covetous hearers was to excite wrath and contempt. Vs. 14. This occasioned the present parable on the bearing upon life to come of a wrong use of money, and that which it can purchase. There is, indeed another interpretation of the parable, which makes it refer to the Jews and the Gentiles, in their relation to the Gospel Dispensation. According to this, the Jews, as the elect nation, are the Rich Man; the Gentiles, Lazarus; the Gospel, “Abraham's bosom”; and “the torments,” in which was the rich man, the state of the Jews since their rejection of Christ, and God's consequent rejection of them. In so far as the principles of retribution hold alike of God's dealing with individuals and nations, we may concede this application of the parable; but the common view, as to its primary and immediate reference, is by far the most natural and reasonable.

Verses 19.—A certain rich man. Not intended to fix attention upon any particular man. Was clothed. Habitually wore as his ordinary apparel, as the Greek indicates. Purple and fine linen. Both kinds of cloth were of great cost. The purple was the royal color, as the fine linen, when white, was used for priest's garments. Com. Rev. xviii. 12; Esther viii. 15; John xix. 2, 5. Fared sumptuously every day. The original has the word which, in xv. 23, 24, 29, is translated “made merry,” and another word meaning splendidly; and thus expresses the idea of a daily round of intense festal gaiety and jollity.

Verses 20.—A certain beggar.—One utterly destitute. Lazarus. Christ has a name for this one, as he has not for the other; because though the other, not this one, had “a name among men,” this one, and not the other, has his name in God's “Book of Life.” Was laid. “Had been cast,” that is, by some one who chose to do this rather than have him starve. Full of sores. Those sores present him indeed as loathsome, yet incidentally give a reason why he, though a good man, was nevertheless a beggar. He was not an “able-bodied tramp.”

Verses 21.—Desiring.—Craving, through hunger, and at the same time willing to accept this, as the only provision which his Heavenly Father had, for the present, made for him. Which fell. Habitually, that is, were wont to fall. If given, it was not from the rich man's regard for the beggar, but by favor of the servants. Moreover. Better, nay, even;

introducing by climax a new evidence of his misery. The very dogs of the street—the loathsome scavengers of Eastern cities—gathered the filth from his body, even as from the dust and the gutters. Perhaps it was soothing to “the poor creature,” and so a touch of God's pity where man pitied not.

Verses 22.—Come to pass.—A phrase here marking a change of scene. The beggar died. No wonder. And, startling fact! so, too, must each poor wretch whom our eyes see, soon die, somewhere, somehow. Carried by angels. He was before a citizen of heaven (Phil. iii. 20), and his fellow-citizens were now his escort home from an alien land (Heb. i. 14). Of his body, no word. It had nothing better than a dog's burial. Abraham's bosom. As a true child of Abraham, to be with him in Paradise. There is here meant by the phrase, close fellowship (John i. 18). Some say proximity (hence honor) at a feast. (John xiii. 23.) The rich man also died. Yes, he also; for herein rich and poor are alike. One event happeneth to them both. Was buried. Entombed, sepulchred; no doubt a splendid funeral—“first-class.” He had been a citizen of this world; and only the ministry of this world's citizens is therefore mentioned. The one has honor from God, the other from man. We are next to see the respective worth of these two kinds of honor.

Verses 23.—In hell.—The word hades, here translated “hell,” and sometimes “grave,” is, in the New Testament, used only in an unfavorable sense, where there is to be conveyed some idea of evil and penalty. It is thus even in Acts ii. 31, which is a quotation from the Old Testament; and more clearly in Rev. i. 18. It thus passed into a designation of the place or state (or, perhaps better, place and state) of the impenitent between death and the final judgment, when hades is to be succeeded by gehenna. In torments. The word translated “torments,” means first a touchstone, then a trial or test, then the tortures by which witnesses or supposed criminals were wont to be tried, in order to extort a confession of the truth; and finally, as here, any kind of torture or extreme pain. These torments are not here represented as consequent on the rich man's sight of Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, and his own exclusion, but rather as antecedent, and belonging of necessity to him in his situation. The woe of the lost man is primarily in being lost; not in knowing himself to be lost.

Verses 24.—Father Abraham.—The rich man was conceived of as a Jew, or Israelite, whose whole religious confidence had been just the fact that he was an Israelite; that is, a child of Abraham after the flesh. And so to Abraham, not to God, he is represented as calling. Have mercy, etc. Now he is the beggar. His mention of Lazarus does not indicate, as some assert, that even now he retains the feeling of superiority, as though he would order and use him as an inferior; but rather depicts his extreme wretchedness, as willing to have help even from one once despised, with perhaps an intimation of a false hope, grounded on such help as Lazarus had once had from him, as though it were a merit to be rewarded. That this old hope is faint enough, however, appears in the fact that he ventures to ask for so little—only the slight relief that could come from the single drop falling from the tip of the finger upon that tongue, which, once the great instrument of pleasure in feasting, is now, by contrast, mentioned as the chief seat of torture. There is thus strikingly indicated, that wicked pleasure brings penal woe, by the fixed law that as we sow we reap; that the connection of the reaping with the sowing is extremely close.

Verses 25.—Son, remember, etc.—The relationship, as to blood, is allowed; but this being the sole and whole relationship, it is of no avail. John i. 13. To all the other torment is added that of a memory, which is also a foresight; and the two together bring despair. The answer does not intend to teach that the good things and the evil things of this life were, or are, in themselves respectively to be balanced by evil and good hereafter.

Verses 26.—Besides all this, etc.—This cuts off all hope of relief. The “gulf” or chasm is “great”—impassable and fixed.

Verses 27-31.—These verses show that natural affection is not identical with true holiness, and may exist without it;

that man's disposition to excuse his sin on the ground of too little light, is quite at fault; that the spirit which is unjust in the least, and discards the light it has, is unjust in much, and will reject the fuller light; and that men are to be judged by God's righteous judgment, every one of them according to the light given him.

COURSE OF THOUGHT.—I. In this Life.—(1.) Great wealth, princely style, and festal pleasure. (2.) Sickness, helplessness, loathsomeness, and consequent beggary.

II. In Death.—(1.) The beggar is unnoticed of men, but not of angels who welcome him to Paradise. (2.) The rich man “is buried,” with pomp of worldly honor.

III. After Death.—(1.) The beggar a son of God, in the place and state of God's sons, satisfied with spiritual and eternal good. (2.) The rich man “in torments,” present relief refused; future relief declared impossible; desires for earthly friends forbidden; the imputation on God's mercy denied.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, November 3rd, 1878.—The Ten Lepers.—Luke xvii. 11-19.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?”—Luke xvii. 17.

The Story of the Bible Lesson.

FOR THE PRIMARY CLASS.

The Rich Man and Lazarus.

There was a rich man whose dress was the finest and most costly, and who feasted on the daintiest of food each day; and there was also a poor beggar, named Lazarus, who was covered with sores. He laid at the rich man's gate; for perhaps some one might pity and help him, or he might get some of the crumbs to eat that fell from the table of the rich man. Even the dogs seemed better off than he and showed their pity by coming to lick his sores. The beggar died, and now he who had no friends to care for him in life has angels to wait on him. They carried him to heaven, where he lay, not on the ground, as before, but in Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died, and was buried. No angels carried him, but he found himself in hell in great agony. He could see Abraham afar off, with him who had been the poor beggar Lazarus lying in his bosom. The poor rich man called to them and begged for just a drop of water to cool his tongue, for he was in such torment in the flames. But Abraham told him that he must remember that he had his good things in his lifetime, while Lazarus had had only bad things, but now both were changed; and besides he could not help him, for there was a great gulf between them that no one could pass over.

Boys' Department.

How Dick went to the Pic-Nic.

“Where in the world is that boy!” Mrs. Frye took her hands from the suds, and went to the barn. “Dick, what are you doing?” “Making a box for the cat. Going to sell her, and get money to go to the pic-nic Friday.” Thankful that he was not in worse mischief, his mother went back to her washing, and sighed to think how poor they were. Dick kept busy at his work, making his box like the cattle cars he had seen on the freight trains, open at the sides and on top, with only narrow bars nailed across. Part of an old barrel hoop served for a handle, and it was with no little satisfaction that he held it up to view. “There, Tabitha Maria, how do you like your new quarters? Not much room to turn around, is there? But you've plenty of good air—needn't be afraid of smothering. Oh, ho!” he continued, as a head with a pair of frightened eyes was thrust through the bars, “this'll never do. You're not such a beauty that your looks will help me any.” Down went the box, while another bit of shingle was added to pussy's prison. “Le' me see,” he mused, crowding back poor Tabitha's head, “you're worth about a quarter; then, if those hens will lay a little extra this week, I'm all right.” Dick sallied forth into the July sun

shine, but found that cats were a drug in the market; everybody owned one; so he came home tired and discouraged, and let pussy out.

Mrs. Frye was washing the dinner dishes.

“I say, mother, I'm going fishing.”

“Well, don't tumble overboard,” she said, anxiously.

For more than an hour Dick sat on the end of the wharf, patiently watching his line, but the fishes seemed to be taking an afternoon nap.

“I don't blame 'em,” he muttered. “I'm 'most melted here in the sun—My! here comes the parson.”

“Fishing, Richard?” Mr. King never called him Dick.

“Yes, sir; but they don't bite.”

“Ah! Simon Peter had that same trouble once. Out all night and caught nothing.”

The minister had the queerest way of talking about men in the Bible, just as if he were acquainted with them.

“It was a little strange,” he continued, “that Christ should ask him to push out into deep water; the last place to find fish, isn't it?”

“Yes, sir; they keep in near the shore, most always.”

“It wasn't a favorable time, either. If ever you go to the Sea of Galilee, I advise you not to try fishing in the forenoon. By the way, I suppose you will go to the pic-nic?”

“If I can earn the money. That's what I want these fish for—to sell.”

“Peter found some money in a fish's mouth once.”

Dick opened his eyes. “I never heard of that.”

“Didn't you? Read the seventeenth chapter of Matthew when you go home. And if I were in your place, I would ask Jesus to help me in this matter.”

“Ask him how to earn money!” said Dick, agast.

“Certainly, why not? You don't see the way clear yourself, and he is the Light. Just the time to go to the Lord, when we need him, and men cannot help us. Do you want a ticket given you, Richard? You know the superintendent has a few for those who cannot afford to buy.”

No, sir,” replied Dick, with emphasis.

“Boys who help themselves always make the smartest men,” said Mr. King. “But, Richard, don't let yourself out to Satan's service. I dare say he has plenty of odd jobs to be done this week, waiting for just such boys as you; but don't be fooled by him. If you feel afraid that the Lord cannot furnish you with the right kind of work, think of Peter. Good-bye, my boy.”

“Hi!” thought Dick, “wish I was your boy.”

“Mother, I'm going blackberrying. Where can I find a pail? Quick, the boys are waiting!”

Dick rushed into the room where his mother stood ironing, flew to the little cupboard, and began rummaging among the dishes.

“Joe Shaw says they are thicker than hops. Hurrah for the pic-nic!” and he was off again, swinging the pail above his head. When they reached the spot, there were only a few stunted bushes by the roadside. The other boys began clambering over a stone wall, but Dick stopped short.

“Where are you going?” he asked.

“Over here is a place. Come on.”

“But isn't this Squire Dean's place?”

“Of course, you greeny. What of that? We sha'n't get caught, for the folks are away this afternoon.”

“But it's stealing just the same if we don't get found out.”

“How long since you turned deacon?” sneered Joe Shaw, at which the others began to laugh.

“Nice little boy, so he was! Goes to Sabbath school!” mocked the boys.

Dick was so busy thinking he scarcely noticed them. “A Satan's job, as sure's I'm alive,” he said to himself, wheeling about and running swiftly down the hill, beyond the sound of his tormentors. Heated and panting he threw himself under a tree. “There, old fellow, you didn't catch me this time!” and he shook his fist at the invisible foe. Thursday evening came, and Dick had earned thirty-five cents selling eggs and running on errands, but fifteen more were needed before he could go to the pic-nic. It did seem too bad. That talk Monday afternoon down on the wharf had given him some new ideas.

He wondered if Jesus really did think about him except on Sundays. Somehow he had felt differently since beginning to pray every day instead of once a week.

“Do you s'pose I should have stolen those berries if I hadn't asked him that morning to keep me from doing wicked things?” he queried. “I'd like to see Mr. King again. Guess I'll walk up that way, maybe I'll meet him.” A distant whistle announced the coming of a train. Dick always made it a point to be at the depot at such times, for people often wanted a boy to carry bundles. A lady stepped from the cars laden with a travelling bag, shawl, umbrella, and numerous packages.

“Ah!” cried Dick, following her into the ladies' room, “here's a first-class job,” and he chuckled with delight.

“Have a carriage, ma'am?” he asked, politely.

“Yes, is there one here?”

“No, ma'am, there never is at this station. But I'll take your things up for you. Cheap, too,” he added, seeing she hesitated.

The lady smiled. “I wasn't thinking of that. I was wondering if I could walk as far as my brother's. I am very tired. Do you know where Mr. King lives?”

“What! the minister? Guess I do—it's only up there,” pointing to the house.

“Oh, well, if you will take my baggage, I'll go then.”

“Two—four—five—yes, that's right,” she remarked, as Dick placed the bundles on the hall table. “How much is it?”

“Ten cents, if you please.”

“There's twenty-five, just half what a hackman would have charged me.”

Dick's face was radiant.

“Does that make you enough, Richard?” inquired Mr. King, who was standing near.

“More, sir.” Something in his throat made it difficult to say much.

“Ah! yes. Bible pay—good measure—pressed down—running over. You've found him a good Master this week. Better take him for life, my boy.”

Dick thought he would like to, and resolved to ask his teacher about it the next Sabbath. Friday dawned clear and beautiful, and there was no happier boy at the pic-nic than Richard Frye, because he had tried to help himself in the right way.

“Big I and Little u.”

A remark about “sensitiveness” in a late issue of the Fireside reminds us of one of Mr. Ralph Wells' weekly blackboard illustrations before the Normal Sunday School last winter. He inquired one day of the audience:

“What is pride? What does it mean?”

No answer from the thousand listening Sunday School teachers. He had to give both question and answer himself. said he.

“Big I and little u;” and turning quickly he wrote in his unique style on the blackboard just those two letters,

I, u,  
The effect was “telling,” and awakened a lively consciousness that we all need to profit from such a text. When our feelings are so easily “hurt,” when we complain openly (or otherwise) that we are “not the right man in the right place,” is not the root of the trouble that we too feel “big I and little u”? Is there not a weakness in us somewhere? Does it not occur to us that we very often “hurt” the feelings of others? or that if we were placed in a higher sphere we might possibly be found unequal to it. The following lines are suggested from dwelling on Mr. Wells' definition of Pride:

Great big I to little u,  
“Clear the track—shoo, shoo, shoo,  
When I appear in all my pride,  
Let little u just step one side.”

The letter I is tall and true,  
And far below sits vowel u;  
And I is straight—look where you will,  
But crook-ed u is crook-ed still.

—S. Gould.  
At Red City, Mich., a she-bear which had been robbed of her whelps adopted a three-year old child in their stead, and gave it back most unwillingly to the neighbours who had had a twenty-four hours' search after it.