

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lesson for 1878.

SUNDAY, November 10th, 1878.—Whom the Lord receives.—Luke xviii. 9-17.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 13-16.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.”—Luke xviii. 17.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, Luke xviii. 1-43 Tuesday, Matt. xv. 1-20. Wednesday, Matt. vi. 1-8. Thursday, Psalm xxxii. Friday, Matt. v. 1-12. Saturday, Romans iii. 20-28. Sunday, Matt. xviii. 1-10.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Reason for parable. Vs. 9. II. Subjects of parable. Vs. 10. III. The Pharisee described. Vs. 11, 12. IV. The publican described, and commended. Vs. 13, 14. V. Little children blessed. Vs. 15, 17.

QUESTIONS.—I. Vs. 9.—To whom did Jesus utter the parable of our lesson?

II. Vs. 10.—Who are the subjects of the parable? What were Pharisees as a class? Matt. xv. 3, 7-9. What were publicans? Luke iii. 12, 13.

III. Vs. 11, 12.—In what spirit did the Pharisee pray? In what respects did he claim to be better than other men? Whom in particular did he claim to be unlike? What religious acts did he say he had performed? What instruction has the Pharisee violated? Prov. xxvii. 2.

IV. Vs. 13, 14.—Why did the publican stand “afar off”? What was his prayer? What moral does Jesus add to his parable? Vs. 14.

V. What is meant by “receiving the kingdom of God as a little child”? What two things, therefore, must every child of God have? Ans. Humility of heart and a childlike spirit.

Points to Talk About.—How much Phariseism there is still in human lives! In man or child, humility alone is sure of winning heaven. Isa. lvii. 15. Matt. v. 3.

While yet on the way to Jerusalem through Perea, Jesus uttered two beautiful parables illustrating the nature of successful prayer; in the first encouraging the utmost importunity (xviii. 1-8), in the second the deepest sense of unworthiness. With this second parable, and an added instruction on childlike temperament, we are to-day engaged.

EXPOSITION.—Verse 9.—This parable.—The word here translated “parable” means a comparison, or similitude in general, and not merely that one kind of comparison which we call a parable. Unquestionably Jesus and his hearers had often seen in the temple, men who, in greater or less measure, correspond to the description of this Pharisee, and sometimes, also, such an one as this publican. *Unto certain.* To them, and also concerning them. No doubt some offensive exhibition of the self-righteous spirit had just occurred to call out the rebuke. *Trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others.* The two sides or aspects of the case—the first positive, the second negative; the first absolute, the second relative; the first what they were; the second what others were not. These two aspects of self-righteousness are probably inseparable, neither found without the other.

Verse 10.—*Went up.*—The temple was on a summit, and this elevation symbolized God’s spiritual exaltation. *Into the temple to pray.* The Saviour presents these two men so as to show the very essence of their lives spiritually. *Pharisee. Publican.* Both Jews, but, as usual, the former representing the highest, the latter the lowest in the nation.

Verse 11.—*Stood.*—It implies that the position taken was prominent, near the holy place, and so in front, and in full view of any and all other worshippers who might be in or come into the court. As at the feasts, so in the temple, this class of men loved the most conspicuous and honorable places. *Prayed with himself.* While God was nominally the Being addressed self, after all, was at once the centre, the circumference, and whole sphere of the thoughts. *God, I thank thee.* We often mistake gladness for gratitude, and say, “I thank,” when we should say, “I am glad.” This man was not thankful for what God had made him, but proud of what he had made himself. In form he prays; in fact he brags. *I am, not as other men.* More exactly, “as the other men,” the rest of mankind. *Extortioners, etc.* As though the life of all out of his class consisted of vices. *Or even as this pub-*

lican. If the two had happened to enter the temple together (vs. 10) the Pharisee would have the publican in mind, and we need not, therefore, suppose him to have him now in sight. The presence of this publican in the temple showed in him a religious spirit, and so set him apart from the more grossly irreligious; but even this publican was a publican, and not a Pharisee, and his religion, therefore, very worthless compared with a Pharisee’s.

Verse 12.—*I fast twice in the week.*—“The law (Lev. xvi. 29 31; Num. xxix. 7) had only prescribed an annual fast day; but he, in addition keeps twice a week a private fast, according to the custom of that time—Monday and Tuesday.” He not only fulfilled, but overflowed the law. He was even better than it required men to be. *I give tithes of all that I possess.* Or, of all my income. This, too, seems to transcend the literal requirements of the Mosaic law. Lev. xvii. 30; Numbers xviii. 21; Deut. xiv. 22. The virtue of which he boasts is ceremonial observance only, not inward spirit, nor outward conduct as expressing inward spirit.

Verse 13.—*And the publican.*—The tax-gatherer—hated as well for his office, which was the constant reminder of Jewish subjection to Roman authority, as for the general reputation of these officers, who were noted for extortion and rapacity. *Standing afar off.* Not probably, “far off” from the Pharisee, but from the temple proper, feeling unworthy to approach so near the Holy Place, God’s dwelling-place. *Would not lift up, etc.* Comp. 1 Tim. ii. 8; Psalm cxxiii, 1, 2. These passages indicate not only a custom, but a proper custom, a suitable attitude. But the attitude of uplifted hands and eyes is rather that of assured faith, while the spirit of trembling anxiety in the sense of sin before God more naturally expresses itself in the publican’s attitude. *God be merciful to me a [the] sinner.* This is at once confession and petition. Both are heartfelt. The very life of the man is in this cry. One woe, one want. Oh, when God lets us, nay, makes us, see ourselves as he sees us, see ourselves as we are apart from his saving, redeeming grace, he extorts from us this cry.

Verse 14.—*Justified.*—The Pharisee justified himself, God justified the publican. Not that God’s judgment was that the publican was not a sinner as truly as the Pharisee, but that he was a penitent, and hence a forgiven sinner. God accepted him because he gave up self, and accepted God.

Verses 15-17.—This lesson concerning infancy, and from infancy repeats and confirms the lesson of the previous verses.

WHOM THE LORD RECEIVES.—(1.) *He does not receive the self-righteous.*—Of this class, the Pharisee in the parable was a notable representative. He was a religious man; for he went through all the outward forms of service. Under the guise of thanksgiving, he lauds himself as superior to other men; and especially “this publican.”

Two things he particularly prides himself upon: First, that he was guilty of no open immorality; secondly, that he observed certain external religious objects. This style of man is very common still.

(2.) *He does receive the truly penitent.*—The whole spirit and speech of the Publican, are indicative of the profoundest humility and contrition. He does not presumptuously draw near, but stands “afar off,” with downcast eyes, and smiting upon a breast in which was a heart more downcast still.

He does not pray “with himself,” but to God. He does not recount his meritorious deeds, but confess himself a sinner. He is not thinking of other people, and estimating himself by the poor, imperfect standard of their lives. He is concerned about his own wicked heart and life; and so he prays, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner.”

This man felt his sins; he confessed his sins; he asked for mercy.

(3.) *The Lord receives little children.*—He receives them when, believingly, they come to him. The essentials of salvation are so simple, that even a little child can understand them; and the conditions of salvation are so easy, that a little child can comply with them.

It has been supposed by Pedobaptists that this passage furnishes a warrant for infant baptism; and yet, there is not a word here about baptism at all.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

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

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

The Story of the Bible Lesson.

FOR THE PRIMARY CLASS.

Whom the Lord Receiveth.

Jesus told the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican who went to the temple to pray. The Pharisees used a great many forms, and prayed often where they would be seen; they pretended to a great deal of religion, but it was all outside show. The Publicans gathered the public taxes; they often were wicked men who forced others to pay more than was just. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed a proud prayer, thanking God that he was not a sinner like other men, or even like this Publican, and boasting of what he did; while the Publican stood afar off with his eyes cast down, as if afraid to look toward heaven, where a holy God was. He did not try to hide his guilt, but cried out, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” And he struck himself on his breast, to show his grief for his sins. Which of these two do you think the Lord would receive—the one who thought himself great or the humble one? Jesus taught the same lesson in still another way. Some little children were brought to Jesus that he should put his hands on them and pray. But when they came the disciples were disputing about who should be the great one, and they scolded the mothers and would have sent them away. But Jesus was much displeased with his disciples for speaking so unkindly, and he said, “Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God.” Then he took the little ones in his arms and blessed them, and said that whoever did not become as little children, could not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Youths’ Department.

The Ten Little Grasshoppers.

A LITTLE STORY FOR LITTLE PEOPLE.

Ten little grasshoppers  
Sitting on a vine,  
One ate too much green corn—  
Then there were nine.

Nine little grasshoppers,  
Just the size for bait,  
A little boy went fishing—  
Then there were eight,

Eight little grasshoppers  
Stayed out after eleven,  
A white frost nipped one—  
Then there were seven.

Seven little grasshoppers  
Lived between two bricks,  
There came a hurricane—  
Then there were six.

Six little grasshoppers  
Found an old bee hive;  
One found a bumble bee—  
Then there were five.

Five little grasshoppers  
Hopping on the floor;  
Pussy took one for a mouse—  
Then there were four.

Four little grasshoppers  
Found a green pea,  
Had a fight about it—  
Then they were three.

Three little grasshoppers  
Sighed for pastures new,  
Tried to cross the river—  
Then they were two.

Two little grasshoppers  
Sitting on a stone,  
A turkey gobbler passed that way—  
Then there were one.

One little grasshopper  
Chirped good-bye at the door,  
Said he’d come next summer,  
With nine millions more.

The Foolish Traveller.

“I should like very much to hear a story,” said a youth to his teacher. “I hate serious instruction; I can not bear preaching.”

“Listen, then,” said the teacher. “A wanderer filled his traveling pouch with savory meats and fruits, as his way would lead him across a wild desert. During the first few days he journeyed through the smiling, fertile fields. Instead of plucking the fruits which nature here offered for the refreshment of the traveler, he found it more conven-

ient to eat of the provisions which he carried with him. He soon reached the desert. After journeying onward for a few days his whole store of food was exhausted. He now began to wail and lament, for nowhere sprouted a blade of grass, everything was covered with burning sand. After suffering for two days in torments of hunger and thirst, he expired.”

“It was foolish in him,” said the youth, “to forget that he had to cross the desert.”

“Do you act more wisely?” asked the teacher, in an earnest tone. “You are setting forth on the journey of life, a journey that leads to eternity. Now is the time when you should seek after knowledge and collect the treasures of wisdom; but the labor affrights you, and you prefer to trifle away the spring-time of your years amid useless and childish pleasures. Continue to act thus and you will yet, upon the journey of life, when wisdom and virtue fail you fare like that hapless wanderer.”

Do you act more wisely? This is the meaning of the parable to the reader.

Sermon by an old Cornish Cobbler.

“He first findeth his own brother Simon.” Now, I am sure that ‘tis a good plan to go looking after one soul. Every soul in the world do belong to our Lord. He made ‘em, every one, and he bought ‘em, every one, with his own precious blood. They’re his every way; and the devil is a thief. I’ve often thought what a poor master the devil’s servants have got. Why, when he came up to tempt our mother Eve in Paradise, he hadn’t got any bit o’ a thing to bribe her with, an’ all he could do was to tempt her to steal her Master’s apples. He haven’t got anything at all of his own.

Andrew dinn’t say, ‘I’ll try to do all the good I can,’ and then do nothing because he couldn’t find any to do; but he says, ‘There’s Simon, I’ll go and catch him,’ That’s the way, pick out one soul and set your heart ‘pon it; begin to pray for that one, and go on tryin’ till you’ve got it; and then try for another. We might do a great deal o’ good in the world, if we didn’t try to do so much. I’ve heard folks a singin’, and meaning it, too—

“Where the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small,”  
An’ because the realm of nature wasn’t theirs, they didn’t give anything at all.”  
—Daniel Quorn.

Mercury and the Woodman.

A FABLE AFTER ÆSOP.

A man felling a tree on the bank of a river, by chance let his axe slip from his hand. It dropped into the water and sank to the bottom. In great distress at the loss of his tool, he sat down on the bank and grieved bitterly. Mercury appeared, and asked him what was the matter. Having heard the man’s story, he dived to the bottom of the river, and bringing up a golden axe, he offered it to him. The woodman refused to take it, saying it was not his. Mercury then dived a second time and brought up a silver one. This also the man refused, saying that that, too, was none of his. He dived a third time and brought up the axe that the man had lost. This the poor man took with his great joy and thankfulness. Mercury was so pleased with his honesty that he gave him the other two into the bargain. The woodman told this adventure to his mates, and one of them set off for the river, and let his axe fall in on purpose. He then began to lament his loss with a loud voice. Mercury appeared as before, and demanded the cause of his grief. After hearing the man’s account, he dived and brought up a golden axe, and asked him if that was his. Transported by the thought of the precious metal, he eagerly answered that it was, and greedily attempted to snatch it. The god, detecting his falsehood and impudence, not only declined to give it to him, but refused to let him have his own again. Thus it is seen that greed punishes itself.—*Christian Weekly.*

Gough gives this illustration to show the difference there is between nourishment and stimulants:—“They tell us Alcohol is food, that is not true. There is no food in it. Suppose a man should sit down on a hornet’s nest; it would stimulate him, sure; but it would not nourish him much.”

Miscellaneous.

The equality of the sexes has been officially recognized at Paris in the composition of a jury which will decide on the merits of the mustard of various nations. The Mustard Congress consisted of twelve gentlemen and twelve ladies, the suggestion having been made that men’s palates are vitiated by smoking, and that women are likely to have a nicer appreciation of condiments. The trial was to be made on a large piece of boiled beef, followed by boiled pork, to be served to the twenty-four experts.

A very distressing case of sudden death occurred recently, at the military barracks, Limerick, Ireland. Several men gathered in the barrack square to witness a presentation to Sergeant Johnson, of the M battery of the royal artillery, a medal and a £5 note for good conduct and long service, he having been 20 years in the service. Major Maunsell complimented Johnson upon his conduct and when the major was about to pin the medal to Johnston’s breast, the recipient fell down dead in the barrack square. His wife and children were present.

The marriage service is being performed after a new style in East Ham, Essex, England, by the Rev. S. H. Reynolds, the vicar, who has ordered that in future weddings are to be celebrated in the middle of the devins service. His parishioners object to the innovation as inconvenient and unnecessary.

Mr. Sankey is visiting England with the intention of “singing the gospel” from one part of the land to the other. The accompanying preacher is this time not to be an American; but Englishmen are asked to take verbal part in a musical service.

The Russian Baptists who have been three years in prison at Odessa, for promulgating their faith, have been recently tried and acquitted, to the great joy of the spectators at the trial. The Attorney-General had demanded their exile for three years to the mines of Siberia.

It is not every man who can say a thing without appearing to say it. Mr. Spurgeon has this knack. It having been recently asserted that he had said: “Three-fourths of the Christians in the world live in such a way as to dishonor their Redeemer,” he denied that he had done so. “But,” he added, “if I had said as much, I would not take it back.”

An amusing scene was witnessed at a Glasgow police court the other day. A woman gave into custody a man whom she believed to be her husband, and who had deserted her and married another woman. The man, it seems, resembled her “Tom” very much, and it was only after a great deal of hot discussion and trouble on the part of the supposed bigamist that the irate woman could be convinced of her mistake.

A pulpit made of Caen stone, erected from a design of the late Sir Gilbert Scott, has been placed in Bangor Cathedral as a memorial of the late Rev. Morris Williams, rector of Llanrhyddlad. The panels illustrate the preaching of John the Baptist and other Scriptural subjects and have been executed by Miss Bonham, a lady amateur.

Messrs. Thomas Cook and Son have received a report from their special representative, dated Alexandria, Aug. 26, which commenced by stating that the medical gentleman who went under their instructions to inquire as to the health of Cyprus was at the time his remarks were written seriously ill with fever. The document is of such a nature that Messrs. Thomas Cook and Son have decided that it is not advisable to attempt to conduct a party of tourists through the island before the spring, when it is possible that it may be worthy of a visit, either in returning from Egypt, or en route to or from Palestine.

A correspondent writes:—“On Saturday a gentleman visiting Borth Church saw a large snake of a brownish colour on the floor at the foot of the reading-desk. He ran for assistance, and Enoch Carter, a villager, returned with him, and found the reptile still there. Carter commenced operations for its capture, but the snake, not to be had, slipped down a hole. The difficulty was how to get at it. Carter suggested that the harmonium should be tried as a ‘charm.’ The gentleman first named was asked to play. He did so, and the music brought out the snake, when Carter slipped a noose over its head and conveyed it alive into the vill age of Borth, where it was suspended to a waterpipe in the public street.”

One of Queen Victoria’s grand-children has recently appeared in print as an author, or, at least translator. Princess Victoria, eldest daughter of the Grand Duchess of Hesse, has published a translation in German of a sermon to children, preached in Westminster Abbey, by the Rev. T. Teignmouth Shore, Honorable Chaplain to the Queen. The work, which is published in Darmstadt for a charitable object, does great credit to the youthful translator.

Canon Farrar says: “Those who defend drunkenness from Timothy are the sworn brothers of those who defend slavery out of Philemon.”

When a loafer enters the sanctum of a busy editor, and the editor says, “Glad to see you’re back,” what does he mean?