

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1879.

SUNDAY, August 31st, 1879.—Practical Religion.—Colossians iii. 16-25.

COMMIT TO MEMORY.—Verses 16-20.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men."—Colossians iii. 23.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, Colossians i. Tuesday, Colossians ii. Wednesday, Colossians iii. Thursday, Colossians iv. Friday, Genesis iii. Saturday, Eph. v. 15-33; vi. 1-9. Sunday, Philemon i.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. General counsel. Vss. 16, 17, 23-25. II. Special counsels. Vss. 18-22. III. Concluding advice. Vss. 23-25.

QUESTIONS.—Where was Colosse? Who founded the church in it?

I. Vss. 16, 17.—With what should we all be well endowed? How may Christians teach and warn each other?

II. Vss. 18-22.—In what sense should wives be subordinate to their husbands? In what are they fully their equals? What injunction does Paul lay upon husbands? What upon children? What upon fathers? What upon servants?

III. Vss. 23-25.—Is there anything in these verses indicating degrees of inheritance in heaven?

Colosse, a chief city of Phrygia, was about seventy miles east of Ephesus. The church here was probably not founded by Paul, but possibly by some Phrygian Jews who were at Jerusalem at Pentecost (Acts ii. 10), or by Ephras, who appears to have been its chief teacher. Col. i. 7. The Epistle of Paul to it was probably written from Rome, and was designed as an exhortation to steadfastness in the faith in spite of Judaistic teachers, and to the maintenance of a spirit and course of life becoming the followers of a risen and glorified Saviour. That portion of it particularly covered by our own lesson is a valuable group of exhortations on practical religion.

EXPOSITION.—We would suggest the following Analysis:—I. Public Worship.—Vss. 16, 17. II. Home Life.—Vss. 18-22. III. Business Relations.—Vss. 23-25.

I. Verses 16, 17.—Verse 16.—The word of Christ.—The doctrine concerning Christ, as taught the Colossians by the Apostle himself. i. 25-28. This included the Old Testament as explained and supplemented in Apostolic teaching as fulfilled in Christ. 2 Cor. iii. 15, 16. Compare John v. 39. Luke xxiv. 27-32-45. Acts xvii. 2-11, etc. Dwell in you, To house in or in-house. "The word of Christ" is thus thought of as a person making each Christian heart its house and home, as its permanent abode. This is hardly a mere personification, for "the word" is a living power and presence by virtue of the Holy Spirit, who ever lives and reigns in us to make the word a word of life, and make the Christ of the word a very present friend and help, according to Heb. iv. 12. One lets the word dwell in him (1) by learning it; (2) by retaining it; (3) by complying with it. It is no true in-dweller, if it is only in the memory and understanding. It must be the shaper of the whole life. Richly, in all wisdom. Intimate knowledge of the truth, and thorough application of it to all activity. The gospel is to rule, and when it thus rules, it makes all our acts wise and right. Teaching and admonishing one another. In the public meetings of the church, God's was then, as now, to be taught, though, perhaps, now there are more facilities than then to supplement public by private instruction. The early Christian assemblies had more of free, mutual participation in the services than is now usual. In psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing. The church would freely use the Old Testament Psalms, and originate others to suit their special wants. The Christian spirit is joyous, and the Christian service has always and everywhere been largely "a service of song." With grace in your hearts to the Lord. To God's ear the chief charm in music is not its art, but its heart.

Verse 17.—Whatsoever, everything ye do in word or in deed [work.] This is to be taken without limit. Man is to count himself as Christ's in body, soul, and spirit. He is to do nothing either contrary to Christ's will, or in disregard of that will. In the name of the Lord

Jesus. "In the name" is in the one named. The Christian is a Christian only so far as he is "in Christ." Giving thanks to God and the Father [better, to God the Father] by him [that is, Christ.] In Christian service there is no slavishness, but the gladdest, most joyous freedom; and the more complete and intense the service, the freer, gladder, more joyous. We thank the Father, because the Son is his gift. John iii. 16.

II. Verses 18-21.—Verse 18.—Wives submit yourselves, etc.—See the fuller and richer development and application of this precept in Eph. v. 22, 23. The Apostle's conception of the due submission is far removed from that of slavish subjection. The difference in nature is the ground for a difference in relation, such that to man belongs a certain priority and leadership in the constitution of the family. See Titus ii. 5. 1 Pet. iii. 1. This is the doctrine of all Scripture so far as our equality in Christ (Galatians iii. 28) from annulling distinctions in our nature and consequent mutual relationship, that our union with him rather gives emphasis and sanction to all such distinctions, and new reasons for their maintenance.

Verse 19.—Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.—Man's headship in the family is that of loving, cherishing, sympathetic, self-devoting, self-sacrificing protection and support. A family is likely to be the closest earthly type either of heaven or of hell. Paul, who, even though not himself a husband, had a very clear, keen eye, and sound judgment as to what sort of a man constituted a good husband, and what sort of a monster a bad husband constituted.

Verse 20.—Children, obey your parents in all things.—The relation of husband to wife reflects that of Christ to his church. The relation of children to parents, that of Christians to God—"his sons," his "children"—"heirs of God." The submission of children to parents has both different grounds and a different character from that of the wife to her husband, and the difference is here marked by the use of the word "obey." By the clause "all things," the Spirit does not, of course, intend to teach that there never could be a command given by a parent which a child within the family would not be bound to disobey in loyalty to Christ. This precept is, like most, framed with reference to the usual and almost universal circumstances. For this is well-pleasing unto the Lord. See Ephesians vi. 1-4.

Verse 21.—Fathers, provoke not, etc.—God gives to parents children, that they may be brought up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord"—trained for holy life on earth and a blissful immortality. Parental authority can be maintained with the very utmost of Christian sweetness and beauty, just as God reigns not so much over, as in, his children.

III. Verses 22-25.—The family is the unit of society, but the society is essential to the existence and development of this unit.

Verse 22.—Obey in all things.—Render to each his due, and the whole of his due. Not with eye service, etc. Not because you must, in a self-seeking, time-serving spirit, but for conscience sake.

Verse 23.—Do it heartily, etc.—The slave would seem to have little to stimulate and make hearty his service, and so it is with us in much of the service that God calls us to render to each other. But if we can think of it as given to him, that will give us heart and enthusiasm.

Verse 24.—Knowing, etc.—This adds to the stimulus of love to God, the stimulus of hope from God.

Verse 25.—But he that doeth wrong, etc.—The master of the slave was to read this, as well as the slave of the master. God is "no respecter of persons," and hence will see to it that wrong done to the slave shall be not less avenged than wrong done by him. Hear this, ye employers and employed, and, hearing, heed.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, September 7th, 1879.—The Coming of the Lord.—1 Thess. iv. 13-18.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And so shall we ever be with the Lord."—1 Thess. iv. 17.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

Speak of aim. Aim is not only shooting with a bow and arrow, gun, or pop-gun, it is whatever we undertake to do.

These lessons have been teaching us to aim at bearing the fruit of the

Spirit; to be good soldiers; growing like Jesus.

Whether we sing, play, study, work, eat, etc., whatsoever we do. Teach how they can sing, as to the Lord. Heartily, gladly, thankful that God has given them a voice; thinking of the meaning of the words, not shouting them glibly, but with hearts full of love.

Play in the name of Jesus. Do not cheat in a game. Make it your aim, when you play, to play like a Christian.

Whether we work. How will you work, if you do it for Jesus? Faithfully; not slight it because another is not looking.

Whether we study. "Do the very best you can in all studies."

Whether we eat. Show how we can glorify God. By thanking him for food by proper table behavior, etc.

Children who aim to do all in the name of Jesus, will obey their parents, whether they see them or not. Remember your heavenly Father always sees you. Your Master is always in.

Answer to Scripture Enigma.

- No. 34. "MY REDEEMER LIVETH."—Job xix. 25. 1. Merchant man. Matt. xiii. 45. 2. Yarn. Kings x. 28. 3. Ramah. 1 Sam. xxv. 1. 4. E lad. Num. xi. 26, 27. 5. D esert-place. Mark vi. 35. 6. E lah. 1 Sam. xxi. 9. 7. E nmity. Gen. iii. 15. 8. M arket-place. Matt. xx. 3-7. 9. E yes. Judges xvi. 28. 10. R ansom. Job xxxiii. 24. 11. L etters. 1 Kings xxi. 8-10. 12. I vory. 1 Kings x. 18-20. 13. V alley of dry bones. Ez. xxxvii. 1-10. 14. E xperience. Romans v. 4. 15. T hreshold. 1 Sam. v. 4, 5. 16. H ewers of wood. Josh. ix. 21.

Scripture Enigma.

- No. 35. The initials give one of the virtues ascribed to the church of Thyatira, and which is necessary to the runners in the Christian race. 1. A convert, to the church in whose "House" St. Paul sent greeting. 2. The elder brother of Solomon who assumed the royal state before his father's death. 3. The birthplace of Lydia. 4. The "Evangelical Prophet." 5. The grandson of Noah who peopled Persia, and from whom that country was anciently named. 6. The righteous Israelite who refused to break the law of Moses at the command of his king. 7. The seaport of Corinth. 8. The opponent of St. Paul at Cyprus.

Youths' Department.

[From Sunday Afternoon.] Cris-Cross.

Miss Lydia Crane was an old maid, there could be no mistake about that; not in virtue of her age merely, for she was only thirty-five when Mr. Sylvester came to Lyndon to preach, and many a woman has become wife and mother after that age; but Miss Lydia was a born old maid. Her parents died during her early childhood, and she passed into the care of three maiden ladies, daughters of old Parson Beach, whose place Mr. Sylvester afterward filled in Lyndon church; and the three trained her in true spinster fashion, her inextinguishable nature falling readily into their ways.

She had a little money of her own, and a small house with a garden and orchard pertaining to it; and as all three of her guardians died before she came of age, when that period arrived she gave notice to her tenant that she wanted that house herself. And then what a reign of expurgation began within the four walls! All that soap, sand, chloride of lime, hot water, paint and whitewash could do, was done there, by the aid of strong arms and stronger will. The house was much like every other house in Lyndon; white, oblong, bedecked with green blinds, and having a kitchen at the back; but no other house was ever so speckless, so sweet of scent, so fearfully clean.

It was kept dark to be sure; no sunshine allowed on the premises; and it was bare of ornament, for pictures and brackets and vases gathered dust; but it was clean, and Miss Lydia devoted her daily energies to keeping it in this condition.

She had money enough to live on, but

her nature was frugal and industrious; so she took in fine sewing, and made shrouds and coffin trimmings for the Lyndon manufactory, till her bank account grew visibly from year to year, and she was more and more respected as a person of "means."

She had but one relative, a half-brother living in Ohio, who had been sent to his mother's relatives when their father died, and was scarcely a memory to her personally; yet they kept up a feeble correspondence, and she cherished a shocking quartet of daguerreotypes in her drawer as representatives, in the oldest style of the art, of Joseph and his wife, and their two children, John and Mariette.

With assured comforts, luxuries if she needed them, and no real trouble, Miss Lydia ought to have been a happy woman; even her heart, such as it was, had so long been idle that its capacities for joy or grief seemed dulled forever, and spared her the aching and throbbing that so disturbs the peace of her sex generally; but the very absence of genuine causes of suffering made her take for grievance all the lesser ills of life. There is a curious tendency in human nature to crave sorrow in a hidden and unconscious way, that does not need or find words, but betrays itself in actions. It is like the physical longing for salt; pure joy and peace are savourless without this pungent flavor of tears; there is no relief to sculpture without shadow, no delight to the eye like dawn, and yet dawn implies darkness, inevitably.

So Miss Lydia found her own troubles; and used them well; petted, cherished, and made the most of them. Her neighbors had hens, and the first and strongest tendency of hens, as we all know, is communistic; they want to and will share all the property about them; their cackling souls knew no reason why Miss Lydia's garden was not for them to scratch up as well as the rest of creation's attainable face. But this "bloated property-holder" objected, and after years of skirmishes, routs, reiterated charges and fresh repulses, screams of battle and clamors of victory, she defended her rights by a seven-foot paling all about the garden; which cost twice as much as all the hens had destroyed since their earliest trespass, but effectually discomfited them, and added another to the long list of triumphs of capital over labor.

Then there were boys in Lyndon, as usual; boys are an obstinate fact everywhere; we thank kind Providence that the Indians are exterminated in these regions, and plume ourselves on the fact that the last of the Mohicans pointed a moral and adorned a tale long ago; but do we ever reflect on the host and hordes of boys that are still left? I think Miss Lydia would have preferred the Indians.

However, boys seem to be a necessity in the scheme of man, "mighty maze" as it is, and it seems to be an equal necessity to boys to steal apples. Miss Lydia's orchard was tempting as the Hesperides. Early summer apples bedecked it with great crimson spheres and balls of gold, juicy and fragrant enough to have beguiled a deacon; and when the winter crop bent those gracious boughs with all sorts of fruity splendors, blushing Peck's Pleasants, rich dark gilliflowers, the striped Northern Spy, red as rubies, and enormous yellow pippins, glowing beside Roxbury russets, the Quakers of the tribe, and honest Newtown pippins, better far than their exterior promise; how could any boys resist them? Yet to see one urchin pick up an apple through the bars was agony to Miss Crane; she would have given them pecks for the asking, she was not stingy,—but she knew her rights and wanted them respected. But what fun is there in asking anybody to give you an apple when you can just pick it up? It was almost an adventure to steal "old Lyd's" apples in the face of her watchful eyes and alert ears; the fence went for nothing, boys will "find out the way"

to fruit, over more obstacles than Love in the old ballad; so here was a good, steady affliction, coming every other year as surely as the apple crop. Then there were the flies. But flies are an exhaustive subject, not for the brief limits of this article; I can only say in passing that if Miss Lydia had pursued Satan with half the energy, truculence, and untiring persistence with which she

hunted flies, he would have fled from her atmosphere and left her to peace and saintliness very early in life.

Besides these special and recurrent grievances, there were the daily "happenings," as we call them, of all human experience; times when the soap would not "come," do what you would; when the chimney smoked, the spout leaked, and crockery slipped from her fingers without rhyme or reason; when pork grew rusty in the barrel in defiance of precedent, moths got into the carpets, and mice into the garret;—in short, days when everything, to use her favorite expression, went "cris-cross"

(To be Continued.)

"I Won't."

Only two brief words; but many times have I wished that I had not said them. They were spoken more than a half century ago, when I was but a little boy; but I have never forgotten them. All this time they have been a bitter ingredient in my cup.

I was playing with a boy about my own age in a pond of water, when my mother called to me to come to her. Not so much because I cherished a spirit of disobedience, as to exhibit my smartness to my playmate, I rudely replied "I won't." When I met my mother at night, she gently reproved me, and all was forgiven and forgotten on her part. A year or two later she died of consumption, prematurely worn out in cares and toils for her eight children. Many times have I visited the dear spot where her mortal remains repose, and shed my tears at the recollection of her; but they have never availed to obliterate the memory of that unkind act. Children should be careful how they treat the mother that bore them; that cared for them during their tender years, and that has spent wakeful nights and weary days in watchings and labors for their good. None ever regrets kindnesses done to this best of earthly friends; but many have sorrowed inconsolably for an abuse of her.—S.

A message to the Brides elect.

To the bride in anticipation these words are especially addressed, those who have not yet left the parental roof, in whatever position in life you now may be, whether in humble, or in affluent circumstances, learn independence, look to your own resources, put your knowledge to the test. Ask mother to allow you to assume the responsibility of each particular branch of the house-keeping department until you feel competent to control the same. It will save you much annoyance, as well as expense which is necessarily incurred by repeated and unsuccessful experiments.

If you do not understand the formula of putting together the ingredients to make a palatable and digestible loaf of bread, or cake, I would advise you to commence at that particular point. A man may be blind to a little dust or cobweb, but he will rarely fail to see and appreciate a good dinner. After the romance of courtship and the honeymoon are over, how much of man's happiness seems to depend upon how his beef-steak and coffee are served. He seldom takes the pains to ascertain the ability of the wife in prospect, as to her culinary education, but expects her to develop into a full fledged housewife as soon as she gets domiciled in his own home, and in the face of circumstances, is it not wise to be forewarned in this respect?

I do not wish to be understood that I think the average man a tyrant, far from it, but I do think that much of the ill-humor and dissensions that often creep into homes, are due, directly or indirectly, to improper, ill-cooked food. It has been thoughtfully said that "the way of a man's heart is through his stomach." It is highly essential that a wife understand how all work should be done, even though she may never need to toil herself. The servants of to-day are, as a rule, unreliable and extravagant, and the only remedy is for every housewife to be a Mother Superior over her own realm, having her whole house under her personal supervision, where, with due care and economy, be she "mistress" or "maid-of-all work" she will have the sublime satisfaction of knowing that whatever reverses may come upon them, she is prepared to do her part in the emergency of the hour.