

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1879.

SUNDAY, September 14th, 1879.—The Christian in the world.—1 Timothy vi. 6-16.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 9-12.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”—John xvii. 16.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, 1 Tim. i. Tuesday, 1 Tim. ii. iii. Wednesday, 1 Tim. iv. v. Thursday, 1 Tim. vi. Friday, 2 Tim. i. Saturday, 2 Tim. ii. Sunday, 2 Tim. iii. iv.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Instruction. Vss. 6-10. II. Exhortation. Vss. 11, 12. III. Charge. Vss. 13-16.

QUESTIONS.—Of what place was Timothy a native? Which of his parents had most influence on his early religious training? 2 Tim. i. 5.—What did Paul call him? 1 Tim. i. 2. What was Paul's object in writing to him?

Vss. 6-10.—Why ought not men to be religious for worldly gain? With what is piety a gain? How are we to go out of the world? Comp. Matt. vi. 33. Is it sinful to be rich? When are riches hurtful? Comp. Mark x. 24.

Vss. 11, 12.—By what name does Paul address Timothy? Why? What four things in verses 11 and 12 does he tell him to do?

Vss. 13-16.—In whose sight does Paul now solemnly charge Timothy? What power does he attribute to God? By what royal name also does Paul charge Timothy? To what future event does the Apostle appeal? Would Paul ascribe honor and power to Jesus if he were not divine?

TIMOTHY, a native probably of Lystra, was one of the most interesting converts of the Apostolic Church. He is first mentioned in Acts xvi. 1, as a son of a Jewish mother, and of a Greek father. He was religiously trained in childhood. 2 Tim. i. 5; iii. 14, 15. He doubtless heard and embraced the gospel on Paul's first visit to Lystra (Acts xiv. 7-20), as the Apostle calls him “his own son in the faith.” 1 Tim. i. 2. On revisiting Lystra, Paul found Timothy well known and highly esteemed (Acts xvi. 2, 3), well fitted to become his companion and helper in the ministry. Accordingly, Timothy conformed to the law of his race, and thereby became a link between the Jews and the Gentiles.

THE EPISTLES TO TIMOTHY have ever been held to be genuine, but from what place the First was written has ever been a matter of doubt. It was probably written before Paul's last imprisonment at Rome. The Second Epistle to Timothy was the very last of Paul's writings, and undoubtedly written from Rome. The object of the First Epistle was twofold: (1) To oppose and resist the false teaching of the day; (2) To give directions about appointing ministers, punishing offenders, marking the duties and conducting the charities of the churches. Besides this, the Epistle is a treasury of practical precepts and admonitions, of value for all time.

EXPOSITION.—I. Verses 6-10.—Verse 6.—But godliness with contentment is great gain.—This refers to the statement in vs. 5. Tit. i. 11. True godliness constitutes man's true present wealth. Money has no intrinsic worth. Nothing outside of spirit has intrinsic worth. All worth resides in spirit, and consists in character. Satan can show no more utter triumph, than in getting men to find each other's “worth,” and “wealth,” in money.

Verse 7.—“For we brought nothing,” etc.—What we are to be after this life, we become in this life. The treasures of the eternal world we are to lay up in this. A title, at least, to our property there must be gained here. “After death, the judgment. In the light of eternity, of God's judgment, of divine truth, let a man not find his worth or wealth in money.

Verse 8.—And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.—These “necessaries of life,” are all-sufficient for life's great end. Matt. vi. 30-34. This is not to say that men should not acquire, or strive to acquire, property; but that whether they do or do not, property should be to them a matter of comparative indifference. Life is not a failure if one fails to gain such possessions, or if one loses them after having gained them.

Verse 9.—They that will be rich, etc.—They whose hearts are set upon riches

as a chief, or even prominent end. This desire brings men “into temptation and a snare”; because (1) it interferes with the clearness and force of the dictates of conscience; and (2) it gives to money an undue attractiveness, and a consequent power to induce dishonest means for gaining it. Foolish and hurtful lusts; such as envy, hatred, pride, vanity, and the like, develop themselves naturally and rapidly. Beggers are less pitiable than a man given over to the desire of riches. Note the gradation in this verse—“temptation,” “snare,” “lusts,” “perdition.”

Verse 10.—The love of money, etc.—Mark it well, not “money,” but “the love of it.” The verse should read, “a root of all evil,” not “the root.” All evils grow from this love as a root, but so they do also from other unholy principles, which may become each, in its turn, “a root of all evil.” Which while some coveted, etc. Even those who had been born of God, as the Apostle seems to imply. Christians, genuine Christians, feel unduly the desire for property, and unduly yield to it, and so bring harm and shame to themselves and their brethren. God will not allow them to get on easily in such course, but to save them, he brings them to grief; “pierces them through with many sorrows,” or causes their own sins to do this; and thus saves them, though “so as by fire” and by sword.

II. Verses 11, 12.—Verses 11.—But thou, O man of God [and not of the world], flee these things.—“Thou,” Timothy. We saw above that Paul elsewhere refers to those who taught for gain. The opportunities for religious teachers to make gain of converts in the new churches were, doubtless, considerable. Covetousness and its gratification, bad enough in anybody, are worst of all in a Christian minister; and the man who enters the ministry in order “to make money,” is a disgrace to himself even and much rather to Christ's church. What force in that word “flee!” As from a mad dog. Dread it. Keep clear of it, utterly and surely. The history of Christianity, and especially of state churches, lends force even to the force of this apostolic charge. And follow after, etc. Mark how these words, “flee” and “follow after” [pursue], are related to each other. By the earnestness with which we covet and seek God and goodness, we thrust away and disown Satan and all evil. There is, in fact, no way to get and keep Satan out of us, save by getting and keeping Christ in us. So does Christ “destroy” in us each “the Devil and his works.” No vacation in our religion.

Verse 12.—Fight the good fight of faith.—Ellicott translates: “Strive the good strife of faith.” The reference being to the contests of athletes in the stadium, not to war. Each has his own contest. Lay hold on eternal life. An act of a life-time, and not simply of the moment of conversion. “The hope set before” us (Heb. vi. 18), is “eternal life.” Though we have it, we must keep it. Professed [confessed] a good profession [confession] before many witnesses. Probably either at his baptism, or at his ordination. iv. 14; i. 18.

III. Verses 13-16.—Verse 13.—I give thee charge, etc.—Mark the solemn and awful earnestness of the words of this verse. Paul speaks to Timothy as a father to a son, with a holy, tender yearning, consuming solicitude, from regard for Timothy, for Timothy's Lord, and for the church of Christ. He spoke from thorough experimental knowledge. The appeal to God, as the Author of life, seems to be occasioned by the thought of the hazard, and, perhaps, surrender of natural life, in order to gain for himself, and others, eternal life (vs. 12), as did Christ under Pilate. Who before [under] Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession. Or, rather, “the good confession;” namely, that confession to which Timothy, in vs. 12, is exhorted. This witness to the truth of the gospel was borne by Christ in the surrender of his life on the cross. For such witness must Timothy also be ready.

Verse 14.—That thou keep this [the] commandment, etc.—That commandment,” is the gospel regarded as a law of life. The charge to keep this, that it should not suffer spot or blame, is especially pertinent, as he was a teacher and preacher, though pertinent for all. Until the appearing, etc. To the end.

Verse 15.—Which [that is, “the ap-

pearing] in his times he [God, the Father] shall show, etc. The reference to God's supremacy over all the kings of earth, fits well the charge to one who had to confront, in God's name, a hostile world.

Verse 16.—Who only hath immortality.—God alone has “immortality” as an original, inherent attribute. He, then, who identifies himself with God so as to have his Spirit and life, need not fear the death which men can inflict upon him. In the light, etc. A sublime conception, hidden from view by the very light of his own nature. See Matt. xi. 27. Yet he that sees the Son, sees the Father; and our fellowship is with the Father, by being with the Son. We are “the sons of light.”—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, September 21st, 1879.—The Christian Citizen.—Titus iii. 1-9.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's.”—Matt. xxii. 21.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

Our heavenly Father knows what we need, and gives us what he thinks best. Though it may not be as nice as our neighbors, or as we think we ought to have. Why should we fret? Teach the name of this satisfied feeling—Contentment. What has any one, after all, but food and clothing? A king met a stable-boy, and asked him what he was paid. “Nothing,” said the boy, “but food and clothes.” “Be content,” said the king, “I have no more.”

Need those who have Jesus, who supplies all their real needs, wish so very much to be rich? Explain that this does not mean that they must not work to earn money, but must not love the money. Teach the word Covetousness, and its meaning. Show how love of money leads to cheating, selfishness, greed, lying, stealing. Tell of Judas and Achan, and what love of money led them to do.

The two points, Contentment and Covetousness, are enough for any Primary Class, without the latter part of the lesson, excepting just enough to explain the Golden Text.

Answer to Scripture Enigma.

- No. 36. SAMUEL—HANNAH. 1. S hilo h. 1 Sam. i. 24. 2. A chmeth a. Ex. vi. 2. 3. M ammo n. Matt. vi. 24. 4. U nclea n. Lev. xiii. 45. 5. E llishab a. Exodus vi. 23. 6. L amec h. Gen. iv. 23.

Scripture Enigma.

- No. 37. 1. In varied forms, an evil in the heart Plays now an open, now a subtle part. Through ignorance of self-will, some pretend Freedom therefrom, or nourish and defend. E'en those who follow goodness, with surprise And pain behold the hateful shape arise. Within; and, when oft crushed and seeming dead, Though feebler, rear again its serpent head. 2. Some Christians have a heaven-constructed sight Or sense, in sacred things to judge aright; In doctrines and in forms to grasp the true And solid, and all counterfeits eschew; The false, the hollow, tinsel too and show, As service little meet they would forego. God heeds not rites which charm and cheat man's eyes; Lays bare the heart, each secret motive tries. We read in page, writ by heaven-guided pen, “In one be children, in the other, men.”

Enjoy the blessings of this day if God sends them; and the evils bear patiently and sweetly. For this day only is ours; we are dead to yesterday, and we are not born to to-morrow.

The man whose honor cannot be trusted in a business transaction is an infidel, though he superintends a dozen evangelical Sunday-schools, presides at the noonday prayer-meetings, and is accounted the most polished pillar of his church.

Youth's Department.

From Sunday Afternoon. Cris-Cross.

(Continued.)

Mr. Sylvester understood; formalism was his special dread in dealing with just such people; people who “say” their prayers and read their Bible daily and dutifully, but simply as a duty, without apprehension of the divine depth and sweetness in either practice, if only it be done with the heart, not with the head.

It is this which makes the conversion of the heathen an apparently easier matter than the conversion of many church members; the gospel is new, fresh, living, to the ear that has never heard its tender appeals and loving promises before; but where it is simply a ceremony to read the Word of God, and done ceremonially day after day, the pathetic words of the prophet become the modern preacher's adopted utterance. “And lo! thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument; for they hear thy words, but they do them not.” For it is not the poetry, the splendid images, the lofty moral tone of the Scripture that makes it a two-edged sword; but its living truth, and its practical application.

Mr. Sylvester went on: “I don't think you are alone in that feeling, Miss Lydia; but think a moment. How could Christ have given in any other way such abundant force and help to us as by suffering all things that we suffer, even the lowest and the poorest of us, so that we can never say ‘I cannot carry daily troubles to God; he is too great to understand them.’ You know what Paul says to the Hebrews: ‘For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are; and this for the very purpose of making known to us his sympathy and power to help in all things. This was part of His cross; the cross on which He lived; perhaps as hard to endure as that on which He died.’”

Miss Lydia looked strangely moved; her religion had been that of form and routine; a “desire to be as good as she knew how to be,” and a very honest desire, but so far it had not led her, as every such intent will lead soon or later, to the foot of the cross.

“It's as good as three sermons to hear you talk, Mr. Sylvester,” she said. “I see how blind-like I have read the Scripture along back; but it does seem, nevertheless, as though there were some things that pester you amazingly, that are too small to talk about in that solemn kind of way.”

“Then they are too small to be troubles at all,” said the minister, smiling; “anything that is a real trouble, and can be borne cheerfully, silently, bravely, because Christ sends it to us to bear, will certainly turn into a blessing to ourselves or somebody else; it will be Christ's cross instead of criss-cross.”

Miss Lydia's mind had been dwelling on the hens, the boys, the flies, and all her minor troubles, before, but while these last words dropped from the minister's lips her eye fell on the yellow telegram.

“Well,” she said, “I thank you kindly, Mr. Sylvester, for your talk. I'd thank you a good deal more if you would just give me a word about some trouble that came this morning. I'll fetch the letter first.”

While she bustled away the minister looked at his watch; it was late; he was tired; he had much to do that morning; he did not know how to spare Miss Lydia another moment; but he was a man who had learned to be afraid to preach without practicing, and for a long time it had been his habit in any doubtful matter to ask himself, “What would Christ have done in this place and these circumstances?” and act accordingly. Not that he could always certainly know; but he read the gospel so much that it seemed to him he could generally tell what would have been the Lord's course of action, and being naturally a considerate, just, and deliberate man, not blinded by impulse or passion, and one who prayed fervently for divine guidance, it is to be presumed the result of his judgment was as near

as humanity can achieve to the Master's example.

This was the secret of Mr. Sylvester's great usefulness; he was not a very brilliant or eloquent preacher, but he believed the Word of God with all his heart, and acted on it in all his life; and nobody who knew him doubted or caviled at his religion, for it was his daily living.

Miss Lydia came back directly with the letter from Mariette, and in her hand also the telegram whose yellow envelope still lay on the table.

“There,” said she, “read them if you're a mind to. I think that is nigh about a real trouble, Mr. Sylvester.”

“I think it is,” he said, as he glanced over them.

“Well, what had I ought to do about it?”

An unconscious sharpness toned her voice as she asked the question.

“What do you think the Master would do, Miss Lydia? Here is a young girl, headstrong, evidently, regardless of her duty to her parents, and ‘in love’ as she would call it, with a young man probably quite unfit for her.”

Miss Crane looked disgusted.

“But see here; she throws herself on to your protection; you are her only relative, and she has heard you are ‘real good.’ You have a character to keep up, my friend, a Christian character. It may be the turning point of this child's life,—the way in which you receive her; as you act she will judge your religion. Should you like to bring reproach on the gospel?”

An indignant warmth, strangely sweet and novel, seemed to elate the good woman's heart.

“Why you know I wouldn't she exclaimed.

Mr. Sylvester's cool eyes glowed. “I thought not. Then comes in the first consideration, what would Christ do with her? We need not seek that knowledge far; think of the patience, forbearance, the tenderness with which he treated individual sinners; worse sinners a great deal than this silly, willful girl. Here is a real cross, coming right into your house; may it prove Christ's cross to you truly!”

“You'll come again, won't you,” said Miss Lydia, a strange dimness in her dark eyes; “come and see Mariette.”

“Yes, indeed I will!” And so the good man departed, having done his good work.

Where shall I spend Eternity!

A lady had written on a card and placed on the top of an hour-glass in the garden-house the following simple verse from one of the poems of John Clare. It was the season when the flowers were in their brightest glory:

To think of summers yet to come, That I am not to see! To think a weed is yet to bloom From dust that I shall be!

The next day she found the following lines in pencil on the back of the same card:

To think when heaven and earth are fled, And time and seasons o'er; When all that can die, shall be dead, That I must die no more! Oh! where will then my portion be? Where shall I spend Eternity?

“Be a good man, Papa.”

Leaving home this morning for the office, we kissed our little four-year-old good-boy, saying to him, “Be a good boy to-day.” He somewhat surprised us by replying, “I will. Be a good man, papa.” Sure enough, we thought. We need the exhortation—more than he, And who could give it more effectually than this guileless prattler? The words of the little preacher have been ringing in our ears all day, and whether we wrote letters or editorials, pacified an irate correspondent whose effusion we could not publish, or pruned down a too lengthy report, we seemed to hear the sweet child-voice, saying, “Be a good man, papa.” If the exhortation had been given by Paul or Peter, would it have had more force than coming from this little apostle of innocence? We think not, at least to our heart. Oh, how many little children, if not in words, yet by the unhelpfulness of their lives and the trustfulness of their little hearts, are pleading, most eloquently, “Papa, be a good man!” May their tender admonition be blessed of God to the rescuing of many precious souls from the wreck and ruin of sinful lives!