

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1879.

SUNDAY, July 13th, 1879.—The Security of Believers.—Rom. viii. 28-39.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 35-39.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"If God for us, who can be against us?"—Rom. viii. 31.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, Rom. vi. Tuesday, Rom. vii. Wednesday, Rom. viii. Thursday, Rom. ix. Friday, Rom. x. Saturday, Rom. xi. Sunday, Rom. xii.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. The eternal purpose of God. Vss. 28-30. II. Security of believers. Vss. 31-34. III. Words of triumph. Vss. 35-39.

QUESTIONS.—By what union is the believer made free from God's law? Rom. viii. 1. Why? Rom. iii. 26.

I. Vss. 28-30.—What does Paul mean by the phrase, "we know"? What does he mean by "all things"? What by "the called"? Who are meant by "whom he did foreknow"? What is it to predestinate? What other passages illustrate it? State the difference in meaning of the terms "foreknowledge, predestinate, called, justified, and glorified."

II. Vss. 31-34.—What is the inference from the foregoing truths? Why can no charge of sin be laid upon the believer? What is meant by "maketh intercession for us"? 1 John iii. 1.

III. Vss. 35-39.—What troubles may a Christian conquer? What may he triumph over?

EXPOSITION.—I. The Eternal Purpose of God. Verses 28-30.

Note the connection and the structure of this section of our lesson. It is connected with vss. 26, 27, as at once a deduction and an expansion. God speaks within and rules without, and both works are for his own. The structure of the section is, first, a proposition (vs. 28); and second, its proof (vss. 29, 30).

Verse 28.—We know.—An assurance based on Scripture, and wrought into us by Christian experience. That all things, etc. The sentence describes two things: (1) a blessing; (2) its recipients. "All things," here, are, chiefly, all life's experiences, whether afflictive (vs. 23), or the reverse. But it can also be taken without limit; for we are Christ's, and Christ is God's. "Work together"—though so contrary in nature, so disconnected. "Fod good"—though, oftentimes, so seemingly evil in their tendency. Clearly, the comfort in this verse is not for men who do not love God.

Verse 29.—For whom he did foreknow.—This and the next verse expand the clause, "called according to his purpose." In the New Testament, to know, is currently to acknowledge as one's own—to accept. Not to know, is to refuse thus to acknowledge—to reject. Matt. vii. 23. For God to foreknow, or know before, is to acknowledge as his own, before the ones thus known sought or thought of God. He also did predestinate. God will not acknowledge a man as his own, without making that man fit to be his own. Hence purpose of acknowledgment, (that is, the foreknowledge), is inseparable from the purpose of preparation, (that is, predestination.) To be conformed to the image of his Son. This is the intent and result of the preparation. The conformity is not simply to Christ, as he was in this life; but to Christ as he is, in his glory. This conformity is, at root, holy obedience to God's will; and no wicked resting on an election which is sure, even if the elect one does not make it sure. 2 Pet. i. 10. That he might be the first-born, etc. Christ is both our brother and our Lord. Brother, by virtue of his human nature; Lord, by virtue of his divine nature; and first-born, by virtue of both—as human, first-born among us; as divine, first-born over us—with the first-born's authority, viz., headship, received as being in the place of the Father, that is, of God.

Verse 30.—Whom he did predestinate, etc. The call is here an "effectual" call; that is, a power drawing men to God, in Christ, so that the purpose to make men Christ-like shall not remain mere purpose, but shall pass into act, and so secure the proposed, or predestinated result. Whom he called, etc. To be justified, is to be pardoned as a sinner, and accepted as a son. This is the certain result of union with Christ.

And whom he justified, etc. Glory is the issue of grace.

II. Security of Believers. Verses 31-34.

Verse 31.—What shall we then say to these things?—A question, but in fact, an exclamation. What comfort, what solid, assured comfort, in such great gracious facts! If God be for us, etc. To be in Christ, is to be in God's heart; and who can reach us there, to harm us?

Verse 32.—He that spared not, etc.—The heart of God's purpose of grace, is the heart of God's Son; and the heart of the execution of that purpose, is the gift of his Son to become our Sacrifice, and our Head, through sacrifice. What Christ has, we, in Christ, also have. "Freely," that is, of grace; since by grace we become Christ's.

Verses 33, 34.—Who shall lay, etc. No one can, with success. Why not? It is God that justifieth. But God is the very fountain of the law; and so, if God justifies, if God pardons the sin and receives the sinner as a son, it must be because the law is satisfied. He cannot deny himself, and hence cannot deny his law. Who is he that condemneth? One first lays a charge—after that comes the sentence of condemnation. Who can lay a charge? Nobody. Much rather, then, who shall presume to condemn? It is Christ that died, etc. God justified; and the ground of this act is the atoning death of Christ, from which he came forth a victor justified, and so brought forth, justified and victorious, all those of whom he is the Head and Representative.

III. Words of Triumph. Verses 35-39.

Verse 35.—Who shall separate, etc.—"The love of Christ" is, here, Christ's love to us. This, brought home to our experience in redemption, wakes an answering love to him. As he holds on upon us in love, we hold on upon him; and therefore, in this mutual life of mutual love, we are inseparable. Shall tribulation, or distress, etc. There is a tremendous power of influence in such woes; only there is a greater power of influence in Divine love. Paul wrote thus from experience. 2 Cor. xi. 26.

Verse 36.—As it is written, etc.—Ps. xlv. 22. The perpetual killing, well describes the apostle's incessant sacrifices.

Verse 37.—Nay, in all these things, etc.—Paul was not insensible to his woes. Nay, he was deeply, keenly, intensely sensitive to them all. "We are more than conquerors," because the evils were borne, not only successfully, but exultantly; and not only without harm, but with utmost benefit.

Verses 38, 39.—For I am persuaded, etc.—Was there ever such a grand burst of exultant, eloquent, simple, solid, truthful testimony?

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, July 20th, 1879.—Christian Love.—1 Cor. xiii. 1-13.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."—1 Cor. xii. 13.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

Talk a little with the children about some things they know with certainty, and some things they do not know. There is one thing more important than anything else to know, and every child ought to be certain of it.

We know that all things work together for good to them that love God. Explain this, that it means not only that nothing can work any lasting harm, but that all things work together for good to them that love God. In the life of Joseph how sad it seemed that his brothers hated him; sold him for a slave. But if he had not been in Egypt, how could he have saved them from the famine; if he had not been in prison, he would not have been made second to the king.

We know that no one can harm us if God be for us.

We know that Jesus will not sentence those for whom he died. Do you think he would allow any one to charge the bills to his friend over again, which he himself had already paid?

We know that nothing can separate us from the love of God. Tell some incidents in the life of Paul; he was beaten, stoned, in prison, wrecked, etc.

Not only this, but he knew that such things would happen to him wherever he preached. Would these things make him feel that God did not love him, and was not taking care of him! No! Listen to his grand song of victory.

Answer to Scripture Enigma.

No. 27.

"ETERNAL."

- 1. E hud.....Judges iii. 12, 13. 2. Timothy...1 Tim. i. 2. 3. E zra.....Ezra vii. 6. 4. R izpah....2 Sam. xxi. 8, 9. 5. N athan....2 Sam. xii. 6. 6. A quila....Rom. xvi. 3. 7. L azarus...John xi. 5, 36.

Scripture Enigma.

No. 28.

As in the bright awaking of the earth, The birds their glad thanksgivings pour, And all the trees, in new and joyful birth, Break into life once more; So from the root of David, barren long, Now doth the Great Deliverer spring, And prophet-poets join in gladsome song, To hail Him Lord and King.

- 1. Hither from Rome, came many a Christian friend, To meet th' apostle ere his journey's end. 2. Thou didst uphold, to setting of the sun, A leader's hand, till victory was won. 3. In vain does Israel ask to pass, for lo! This kindred race is now a bitter foe. 4. On the housetops these leafy dwellings see, While the Lord's people praise Him joyfully. 5. O wondrous sight that strikes the murmurers mute! In one short night, this bloomed and yielded fruit. 6. He hews a bough, his comrades do the same; And soon the Pagan fortress sinks in flame. 7. Ye are the flock that did not go astray, The Shepherd seeks the lost sheep far away. 8. Unclean art thou for food, O bird of Spring! Whose notes through all the leafy forest ring. 9. Though lions suffer this for lack of food, God's children shall not want what'er is good.

Selected.

Quite Persuaded.

The pastor of the George Street Church was absent from town, and a stranger was in his pulpit,—a tall, white-haired man, of quiet manner and rather feeble voice. There might have been a slight droning quality in his tones as he read and prayed; at any rate, to the rich Mr. Warrenton, who slept during the opening services, it will be a kindness to say so.

But as the clergyman read his text, the slumberer roused himself and listened. "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

"I cannot find another passage of Scripture," said the preacher, "that rouses in my mind more conflicting emotion. It is at the same time my hope and my fear, my comfort and my despair. I have not to answer to God for one of you. I shall have to answer for the way in which I, and I only, have lived; when I have done all that I know how to do for you, if then you choose the wrong way, it will be my relief that in the Great Day I shall not be held to answer for you. And oh, terrible thought! I cannot then lay any of my guilt and sin at your door. By myself I stand or fall. Before that omniscient Judge we can neither help nor hurt each other."

Mr. Warrenton had listened with more than usual attention thus far, but just here a sudden idea relating to some new business scheme came into his mind, and although he still sat in a listening attitude and his eyes remained fixed on the preacher, he heard no more of what he said than if he had suddenly been smitten lifeless in his seat. A rustling of garments aroused him, and the congregation were rising to their feet. The service was ended.

Mr. and Mrs. Warrenton left the church and walked home slowly and in silence. Each was pursuing the same train of thought as during the sermon. At length the wife spoke,—

"We had a very solemn discourse."

"Yes, very solemn," said the husband, absently.

"I never before felt my individual responsibility so strongly," said the wife, timidly, for she seldom spoke of her deepest feelings. Indeed, it was only because she had been thinking about the same subject for some time, until her thoughts had become oppressive, that she ventured now to go on to say,—

"Robert, I don't think we do half the good we ought to do, considering our means, health and education."

"Well, Mary," said the husband, reluctantly dropping the thought of the business, and pretending to have listened to the sermon, "I thought that minister made one excellent point when he spoke of our not being accountable for the wrong-doings of others."

"Yes, but the stronger you make that point, the stronger comes home the truth that we are to answer wholly for ourselves. You can't help me, and I can't help you. We shall stand alone then."

"We stand alone now, don't we?"

"No, Robert. I do not want to seem to assume more piety than you, but the fact is that now I often represent us both in religious matters."

"How so, pray?"

"Well, for instance, you never go to Sunday school or to a prayer-meeting. I go, and your conscience is satisfied by knowing that I am there."

"I am too tired Sundays to stay to Sunday school, and as for going to the prayer-meetings, why, I can't get away from the store. I am sure I wouldn't want folks to think we took no interest in the meeting."

"Certainly not. But if my presence is sufficient to convince our friends and fellow Christians of our interest, it will not so convince God."

"But what about the store?"

"I don't know, Robert. When you are sick or take vacations, you manage somehow. You might plan equally well for one evening a week, I fancy."

"I rather guess, Mary, that if I didn't attend closely to the store, there wouldn't be much to give in charity."

"I think if you should put into the church treasury all that you make in the meeting evenings at the store, you would be giving your service to the Lord in an acceptable way."

"Why, Mary, what a preposterous idea! Sometimes I make fifteen or twenty dollars in an evening's sales. I guess you would soon feel a difference in your purse, if I were to give away twenty dollars a week."

"It might be, but I certainly know the church treasury would soon feel the difference. I give my time for that evening; why can't you?"

"Your time isn't as valuable as mine is."

"Then my service is not as acceptable as yours would be. God asks for our best gifts."

"Don't I give money for you and me both? I give money and you give time."

"Yes, you give some money, but you do not give in a year as much as you earn in a week, and besides, what I give is my gift, not yours."

"Don't I earn all the money?"

"In one sense, yes. That is, you receive money for your work, I receive for mine whatever you choose to give me; but my time and strength are largely at your disposal, and I have a right to a fair equivalent for what I give. That equivalent I can use as I please—it is my money. What I give is my gift, and what you give is your gift."

"No, Mary, I don't agree with you. That is not a fair statement. What I give I give as the head of a family, and it represents the family."

"No, Robert; I am only contending for the truth. Before we were married I earned my living, and considerably more, by teaching, and I could do it now. But you prefer to have me keep your house rather than to have me teach, and I may say that I prefer my present calling also. But I think you would be unwilling to say that I do not still earn my living and even more, though in a different way. Therefore when I give in charity, that is my gift, not yours."

"Now that view is absurd and I can demonstrate it, too."

"Well, let it drop for the present. You never go to Sunday school. There you feel that I represent you."

"But I get so tired that I can't stay so long in church."

"Yes, I know you get tired. But think a moment. Is it right for a man to work

so late Saturday night and get so tired that he has to sleep till nearly church time, and then is so exhausted that he can only remain through a part of the exercises?"

"Isn't Sunday meant for a day of rest?"

"To be sure! but in fact don't you work part of every Sunday?"

"No, indeed. You know I never attend to any business on Sundays."

"Don't you work later and harder on Saturday, Robert, calculating to make up for it on Sunday? Sunday is meant for a day of rest, but Saturday is not meant for a day of excessive overwork, and if it takes you all day Sunday to rest from the overwork of the week, I don't see the difference between that and working Sundays. How would our church prosper if all the members of it did as you do?"

"Why, Mary, you seem to be trying to make me out an awful sinner."

"No, I am not, but if we all did as you do, there would be no Sunday school, because even if the children came, there would be no teachers, and no prayer-meetings and no family worship either."

"Well, I don't see when you expect me to have family worship. We certainly don't have time mornings, and evenings the children are abed."

"We might make time somewhere. I tell you, you do too much business. Any man or woman does when there is no time for the service of God."

"You seem to think that you monopolize the religion of the family; you can't make any claim about representing me in family prayers, can you?"

"No, Robert, we are alike in fault there, but I do represent you in the religious training of the children. You think that I read the Bible with them and teach them about it, and your mind is easy on that point."

"I think a good life is the best kind of teaching for children."

"So it is; if our life and teachings do not accord, our teaching will count little. That is what I am trying to get at, and that is what I mean. Your good life proves your good efforts, but proves nothing in regard to me. Each one for himself shall stand or fall before God."

There was no answer, and a sudden sense of timidity overcame her who had just spoken with such unwonted boldness. The subject was not taken up again, but at the next prayer-meeting Mr. Warrenton was present, as also the next Sunday at Sunday school; and his wife now prays that he may yet find time to bow with his family in prayer daily, and she thanks God that she had the courage to say the right word at the right time.

We may lose heaven by neutrality, as well as by hostility; by wanting oil to our lamps, as well as by taking poison. The unprofitable servant will as surely be punished as the disobedient and rebellious servant. Undone duty will undo the soul.

Temperance.

Now it is true that the duty of removing temptation from the path of the drunkard is an important duty; just so far as it is possible it ought to be done; but it is not the whole work of the wise temperance reformer; it is not the largest part of it; the remaining thing is to reform the men rather than their circumstances; and any method of reform whose tendency is to make more of the environment than of the man, to weaken the drunkard's sense of responsibility and of guilt, to encourage him in the belief that he is the victim of unfavorable circumstances rather than the author of his own shame, will do in the long run much more harm than good. This is materialism gone to seed; and we fear that the whole of the noxious crop is not yet garnered.—Sunday Afternoon.

Vermont stands firmly by her prohibitory liquor-law. A bill for its repeal was defeated in the lower house of the State legislature by a vote of 165 to 64.

A law prohibiting opium-smoking in Nevada, under a penalty of \$1,000 fine or two years' imprisonment, went into effect on the 1st of May.