

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1880.

SECOND QUARTER.

Lesson VI.—MAY 9.

JESUS AND THE YOUNG.

Matt. xix. 13-26.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 21-26.

Between the last lesson and this, Matthew records the healing of a lunatic, the payment of tribute, with various lessons, parables, and healings. The chronological order is here followed exactly to the end of chapter xviii. At this point, must be placed those events recorded in John vii. 11; xi. 54; Luke x. 1; xviii. 14. This brings the narrative into the early part of A. D. 30, when Jesus had finally left Galilee and was journeying beyond Jordan, through Perea, toward Jerusalem. The incident of Matt. xix. 3-12, led directly to the lesson. Parallels, Mark x. 13-27; Luke xviii. 15-27.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."—Matt. xix. 14.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. Jesus and the Young, Matt. xix. 13-26.
T. The Childlike Spirit, Matt. xviii. 1-14.
W. Jewish Blindness, Acts xxvi. 1-11.
T. Love of Riches, 1 Tim. vi. 6-21.
F. Misused Riches, Luke xvi. 19-31.
S. The Rich Fool, Luke xii. 13-21.
S. Following Jesus, Matt. iv. 17-25.

PARALLEL TEXTS.

- With vs. 13: Mark x. 13; Luke xviii. 15.
With vs. 14: Mark x. 1; Luke xviii. 16; Psa. viii. 2; Matt. xviii. 3.
With vs. 15: Isa. xl. 1.
With vs. 16: Mark x. 17; Luke x. 25; Luke xviii. 18.
With vs. 17: Rom. iii. 10; Lev. xviii. 5; Rom. x. 5.
With vs. 18: Ex. xx. 12-16; Lev. xix. 18; Gal. iii. 10; James ii. 10, 11.
With vs. 20: Rom. vii. 9.
With vs. 21: Luke xii. 33; Luke xvi. 9; Acts ii. 45; Acts iv. 34, 35; 1 Tim. vi. 17-19.
With vs. 22: Matt. vi. 19-21, 24; Matt. xxii. 23; Matt. xvi. 26.
With vs. 23: 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.
With vs. 24: Jer. xiii. 23.
With vs. 26: Psa. iii. 8; Psa. lxxii. 11.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE KINGDOM.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Child-Likeness, Vss. 13-15. II. Total Surrender, Vss. 16-22. III. Unbounded Trust, Vss. 23-26.

QUESTIONS.—What is the title of this lesson? Where was Jesus journeying at this time? What qualifications for the kingdom are named?

I. Vss. 13-15.—For what were little children brought to Jesus? How did the disciples regard this act? What reply did Jesus make to them? In what spirit did he reply? (Mark x. 14) What practical application of this incident is recorded in Mark x. 15 and Luke xviii. 17? What then is the first qualification for Christ's kingdom? (Matt. xviii. 3.)

II. Vss. 16-22.—Give, in your own words, the narrative of the rich man? What further surrender did Jesus demand? How did the young man meet this demand?

III. Vss. 23-26.—What comment did Jesus make on the young man's departure? What explanation is added to this comment in Mark x. 24? How does Jesus illustrate this difficulty? What three qualifications for the kingdom of God have we discovered in this lesson? Name a person who obeyed the requirement? Read Luke xiv. 33. What is the third qualification? How was Jesus led to speak of this? What kingdom remains for those who fail to enter into that of Jesus? (See Matt. xxv. 34, 41.)

EXPLANATORY NOTES.—Verse 13.—Children. Luke says, "babes," his first Greek word for "children" having that sense. The likelihood is, that some were of very tender age. Matthew is alone among the three Evangelists in adding, "and pray."

Verses 14, 15.—Mark says, in addition, that Jesus was "much displeased." Suffer little children. "Allow the little children. Of such. Jesus does not say that to children belongs the kingdom of heaven, but to those that are such as children; in other words, to those that have the traits of children. Matt. xviii. 2-6, is a good commentary. "These little ones that believe in me," is the

description. In a previous lesson, Matt. xi. 25, "babes" is used in the metaphorical sense, which explains this saying. Not the child, but the child-like soul, is the true heir of the kingdom of heaven. An acted parable. This incident is used by the defenders of infant baptism, to make that rite appear sanctioned by the Saviour's example. On the contrary, that he said nothing whatever about it, that he did nothing whatever about it, on an occasion so opportune—an occasion that almost seemed to invite it—this, with the absolute, the universal, silence of Scripture on the subject, alike in precept and in example, is evidence enough. We are to lead our children to Jesus for his blessing.

Verse 16.—As Christ withdrew, perhaps with some speed, for it would seem that it was with great promptness, one came, a "ruler," we learn from Luke, "running," Mark says, (who adds, too, that he knelt), and asked a momentous personal question. Came and said to him. Better, "Came to him and said." Good Master. The best editions omit "Good." "Teacher," instead of "Master."

Verse 17.—Why callest thou me good? The text approved by all the best critics, reads: "Why dost thou ask me concerning good?" There is none good but one, that is, God. This should read, "One is the Good." Jesus does not disclaim being good. He simply takes up a word and asks, why he used it toward him. Will. Obedience to God was the way to life.

Verses 18, 19.—The ruler evidently did not see the deep meaning, for he asked, "Which?" as if it might be some particular class of commandments that was meant. Jesus answers him with a rapid enumeration of the commandments of the second table, closing with a form of expression summing up all in one.

Verse 20.—From my youth up. Not in the true text here, but evidently transferred from Mark and Luke.

Verses 21, 22.—Mark says, Jesus, beholding, loved the young man. He now speaks the critical word that will test the young man. If thou wilt be perfect. Keep the second table of the law, and then complete your obedience by keeping the first: "Come, follow me."

Verse 23.—The young man's sorrow was that of reluctant disobedience. He fought against his conscience. Hardly. Not in the sense of "scarcely," but, "with immense difficulty."

Verse 24.—The figure used is the familiar one of hyperbole. It raises difficulty into sheer impossibility. The eye of a needle—means just that, and not some small gate so named. There is a Jewish proverb, in which the elephant is similarly employed, instead of the camel.

Verse 25.—The disciples understood correctly that, if mere wealth was such a hindrance to entering the kingdom of heaven, it must be hard for any one to enter.

Verse 26.—Jesus beheld them. The disciples' amazement sprang from their misconceiving salvation as a matter of human desert. Merit salvation, men could not—the Saviour taught. If man were all, man could not be saved. But there was God; and God being taken into the reckoning, impossible things became possible.

Without deep spiritual likeness to Christ, we are always in danger of misunderstanding him.

Jesus is ready to welcome little children to his arms.

Beware of forbidding, in any way, little children to come to the Saviour.

Ponder earnestly whether, through infant baptism, you may not be teaching them that they have come already, and so be virtually forbidding them to come.

Let parents learn from the precept and the example of Jesus, not to have their children baptized in unconscious infancy, but to bring them, by prayer, to Jesus, in their tenderest age, to receive his blessing.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

TEACH Who are to that it means to by, we should hen we should } COME.

Teach the children that as we do not know how old those children were; some of them may have been just their size. We must obey Jesus in everything.

Though we cannot see him with our eyes, we can talk to him.

Tell the story of the young man who came the same day to Jesus. He came, but he went away! He loved money, after all, better than he loved Jesus.

WE SHOULD COME TO JESUS WHEN YOUNG—Because the older you grow, the harder it is.

No child is to be saved just because he is a child. A little child should be gentle, loving, kind, willing to be taught and obeys his parents—trusts in their care—so those who belong to the kingdom, whether seven years old or seventy, trust and obey their Heavenly Father.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Boys' Department.

Bible Enigma.

No. 70.

A DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

Find the words here described and the texts where they are found. Their initials and finals will give the name of the best and most important person that ever lived in this world, in connection with the most important class of persons on earth. They are also a title to be found on this page.

- 1. The smallest part of a Hebrew letter.
2. A Jewish measure.
3. An ancient town in the island of Crete.
4. What the Jews were forbidden to take from the poor.
5. A former powerful king of Egypt.
6. A son of Aaron who perished because of his presumption.
7. A famous Syrian General.
8. What the wicked steward could not do.

CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

- 44. What was the Old Testament punishment inflicted on parties who were found dealing in slaves?
45. Were the Jews allowed to eat clams and oysters?
46. Try and find out the following puzzle. It will afford capital fun, for the good boys and girls who read the Messenger.

F
N U
R O F
G E H T
O B D O O
N A S Y
I G D
L R
S

Answer to Bible Enigma.

No. 69.

A mariah,
N aboth,
T aanaah,
I shbibenob,
O nyx,
C innamom,
H ananiah.
ANTIOCH.

Select Serial.

Florence Walton,

OR,

A Question of Duty.

BY MAY F. MCKEAN.

CHAPTER X.—DEACON HODSON'S MISCHIEF.

"Perhaps Brother Lyman is right in regard to Eben Hartford, but it seems to me like a very doubtful case. However, since he is still to remain a little while longer, I will do my duty by him. I will go and see him, and have a serious talk with him. I hope I may be deceived, but I'm fearful, fearful."

Thus Deacon Hodson soliloquized to himself as he walked slowly toward the "Seventeen Acres" a few days after the meeting of that eventful sewing society. Yes, come what may, the zealous deacon was resolved that if Eben Hartford did fall, it should not be through lack of warning from him.

Let not my readers think that in the person of Deacon Hodson I am presenting to them an overdrawn picture of a very rare specimen of humankind, whose chief delight consists in depreciating and discouraging the efforts of his brethren from any light or selfish motive. No, Deacon Hodson was a good man in his way; the same thought lay nearest his heart which should be dearest to every devoted Christian—namely, the maintenance and advancement of the cause of Christ. His intentions were good, his desires were right, though it must be confessed he often thwarted the very object he was trying to attain.

Shall we say by his over-zealousness?—nay, for we may none of us be too zealous—rather through a mistaken zeal, in which that charity which "hopeth all things" and which "thinketh no evil" had not a prominent place.

Alas, that there are so many Deacon Hodsons all over our land—men who with honest hearts and a desire to do only good are constantly giving a cold shower-bath to those around them!

At last our deacon reached the cottage for which he had been looking, and there with a gloomy frown upon his brow and a gloomy foreboding in his heart, he knocked.

The door was soon opened by Mrs. Hartford, looking neater and more cheerful than she had for many a day, in a modest new wrapper fashioned by the deft fingers of Florence.

"Good-afternoon, Mrs. Hartford. Is your husband at home?" inquired the deacon with his usual doubtful sigh.

The artist was at home, and feeling more like a man, more like the self-reliant, honest man of years ago, than usual. Why? Because that very morning good, kind Dr. Ronselle had brought him a generous customer for his last work—generous indeed, for he had paid even more than had been asked.

Something of his old enthusiasm had returned to him as he had wrought upon it, and his eyes kindled with new fire as he gazed upon it, now resting on his easel before him, tracing there the landscape scene—the winding stream with its dainty cascade, upon whose banks the wild rose grew in rich profusion;—a portion of the country road straight as the flight of an arrow shot by an unerring hand, along which a solitary figure was seen; a deserted pasture-field, with here and there, near the rude fence forming its boundary, a tall tree rising, sentinel-like, to guard the scene, and casting long, slanting shadows in the morning sunlight, not yet high enough in the clear cloudless heavens to dispel the early mist, which hung like a tender presence over all, pervading it with a soft rich mellowness alone witnessed on a lazy summer morning.

Who will blame him if his eye rested with a look of pride upon the work of his own hands that happy afternoon of which we write? And besides all this, Eben Hartford remembered a small, mourning-clad figure which had paused beside his chair with sweet words of praise and encouragement; had glided to his child's chamber, and seemed to lighten the dark shadow resting there; had gently checked the complaining tones long used to murmuring, while she encouraged his wife, and even with her own fair hands had shewn her many of the little womanly ways of rendering home attractive.

He remembered too the deep interest the good pastor took in them all; and Dr. Ronselle, how kind he was! Eben Hartford was looking at the world from a very cheerful standpoint this afternoon and therefore he turned from the contemplation of his picture with a bright cheerful face to greet his visitor.

"Ah, Brother Eben," remarked the deacon as soon as he had finished his chary compliments on the work, "you have not performed your church duties as you should of late. It has been a long time since I have seen you there; I fear you have gone back to the state of those ancient Hebrews who had to be admonished by Paul 'not to forsake the assembling of themselves together, as the manner of some is.'"

"I have neglected almost everything," faltered poor Hartford, a blush of shame mounting to his temples; but he was determined to make what reparation he could, so he continued: "God has been very merciful to me, and with his help I am going to do better in the future. I have sold my new picture here, and now I can get a new dress for Jennie and a coat for myself; I think you will find us both at church next Sunday, Deacon Hodson."

But Deacon Hodson shook his head soberly: "I fear your heart is not right in the sight of God, else you would never let your coat keep you from his house. 'The Lord is no respecter of persons.'"

"I know that, Deacon Hodson," said Eben Hartford sadly; and then seemed buried in his own thoughts, which, evidently, were not of so pleasant a nature as they had been a short while before.

"I have been much grieved to hear of the course you have been pursuing of late," continued the deacon reproachfully. "You must have known it would bring reproach upon the cause you have professed to love."

Poor Hartford's head sank low upon his breast and the bright red spots burned brighter on either cheek. "But I tell you I am going to try to do better in the future," he said.

"I sincerely hope you will; and if you prove by your future conduct that you

really are striving to do the best you can you may be sure of my sympathy and help. I have often feared of late that you never have really been a child of grace, else you could not have gone so far astray; for you know, 'By their fruits you shall know them.'"

Deacon Hodson left soon after, feeling quite satisfied with himself in that he had performed his whole duty in admonishing his fallen brother, though in his heart he had but little faith to believe it would do him any lasting good.

Nor did it. Left to his own thoughts, the artist quite forgot his recent exaltation; everything looked sombre-hued now. Regret and shame for the past, mingled with fears for the future, distorted his mind; he could think on nothing calmly. Remembering only that he had been a disgrace to the church, to his family, and to himself, he caught up his hat and sought in an impatient walk in the chill wintry twilight to find relief for his burdened conscience. The old feverish desire for stimulant came over him with a force he had thought never again to realize. For a time he resisted it bravely, but finally, as he paused before a brilliantly-lighted saloon which in other days had been one of his favorite resorts, he cried out, "Where is the use of trying? No one believes me; they think I am a hypocrite. Perhaps I am, but I cannot help it; once more will I drown all my sorrows in the wine-cup."

He walked resolutely in, and was greeted by the clamorous applause of his old companions. Glass followed glass until the weary night waxed late, and then his uncertain feet almost refused to bear him homeward.

"I fear Brother Lyman, all our efforts to save poor Eben Hartford will only prove in vain," said Deacon Hodson to his pastor about a week later.

"Why so despondent? Don't you remember the prayer that availeth much? I am not willing to give up hope yet."

"But have you seen or heard of him lately?"

"Not for a week past; you know I've had sickness in my family which had detained me at home more than usual."

"Then I'll tell you; he has been drinking again—went home Thursday night scarcely able to stand up."

"Are you quite sure you are not mistaken? I had hoped better of him than this."

"Quite sure. Besides, I called to see him as you suggested, you know, pastor, and had quite a serious talk with him. He was very moody, although, so far as I can judge, not penitent."

"Poor man! this is most unfortunate. It must have been an hour of great temptation, for he is striving hard to overcome the appetite which clings to him with the greatest tenacity. But I had hoped the worst of the struggle was over, he seemed so earnest when last I saw him, so hopeful, so reliant on a Power higher than his own. But we can pray for him yet," returned the pastor.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

From Rev. W. E. Hall.

Dear Brother,—

I see Mr. Gaetz of Aylesford is out again in the Wesleyan of the 16th inst., I know your columns are too valuable to be filled with personal matter, but if you will allow me a little space I will try to keep Mr. G. to the point as much as possible. He does not say whether he ever heard a convert quote Rom. vi. 4; after he had sprinkled him. He gets off into other matter as far as possible. Some things in his letter are very sapient, e. g. "When Mr. Hall does so" (i. e. preach the gospel to every creature) "he will have to move off." Wonderful thought!

He does not pretend to say he was three years on the field without preaching baptism and thinks I must be conscious "of neglect of duty." I admitted that, but where is his insinuation that the Baptists started the discussion? Again "He will hear my voice and read my record only when he steps out of his way to give an unchristian thrust to doctrines of others and make uncalled for boasts of his presumed victories in connection with his dear pedobaptist converts." I made no boasts of my converts. So let Bro. Brown know through the Messenger that his lectures did good, I referred to one case only. Had I been desirous of boasting I could have referred to others who joined the Baptists in Melvern this Spring from the Methodist ranks. But I did not. He says "Mr. Tuttle did not start the discussion. . . Neither did he require the importance of talent." Excuse the English of that "importance of talent," Mr. Editor. But who did start the discussion? If to be the first to preach on Baptism was to start the discussion then Mr. T. did.

Mr. Gaetz thinks Mr. Tuttle able to defend any doctrine which he holds. I