

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1880.

FIRST QUARTER.

Lesson VI.—FEBRUARY 8.

THE TRULY RIGHTEOUS.

Matt. v. 17-26.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 17-20.

Having described the true children of the kingdom, Jesus considers the righteousness of the kingdom. Unlike the Scribes and Pharisees, who by corrupt teaching and practice virtually destroyed the law, he came to fulfil both the law and the prophets, even in their slightest details. This exactness was to be taught and observed by his followers. There is no parallel passage.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts."—Ps. li. 6.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. The Truly Righteous, Matt. v. 17-26.
T. The Perfect Law, Psa. xix. 1-14.
W. Obeyed by Christ, Heb. vii. 11-28.
F. Phariseism Condemned, Rom. viii. 1-14.
S. Phariseism Abandoned, Phil. iii. 1-11.
S. Forgiveness, Matt. xviii. 21-35.

PARALLEL TEXTS.

- With vs. 17: Matt. iii. 15; Isa. xlii. 21; John ii. 10.
With vs. 18: Luke xvi. 17.
With vs. 19: 1 Sam. ii. 30.
With vs. 20: Matt. xxiii. 23; Phil. iii. 9.
With vs. 21: Ex. xx. 13; Deut. v. 22; Eph. iv. 26; James i. 19; Rev. vi. 16.
With vs. 23: Deut. xvi. 16; 2 Cor. v. 19.
With vs. 25: Prov. xxv. 8; Luke xii. 58, 29.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE KINGDOM.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Fulfilled. Vss. 17, 18. II. Required. Vss. 19, 20. III. Illustrated. Vss. 21-26.

QUESTIONS.—What topic was discussed in the last lesson? What is the topic of this? What three views of this righteousness are presented in the outline?

I. Vss. 17, 18.—What is meant by "the law"? What by "the prophets"? What purpose concerning them does Jesus disavow? What is a "jot"? What a "tittle"? How did Jesus so completely fulfil the law? How may it be fulfilled in us? (Rom. viii. 3, 4.)

II. Vss. 19, 20.—Who shall be called least in the kingdom? Who shall be called great? What is meant by the "least commandments"? Why must every command be kept? (James ii. 10.) Why is it so serious a matter to teach men to break them? (Jer. i. 6.) Whose righteousness must be exceeded by those who enter the kingdom? What was the defect in their righteousness? (Matt. xxiii. 27, 28.) Where does God desire righteousness? What perfect righteousness is manifested by the gospel? (Rom. iii. 21, 22.)

III. Vss. 21-26.—By what old saying did Jesus illustrate true righteousness? Who had said this? What "judgment" was meant? Who did Jesus say should be in this danger? Who in danger of the council? What is meant by "Raca"? What council is referred to? Who is in still greater danger? What is this penalty? How is the righteousness of the kingdom illustrated by these sayings of Jesus? What duty is enforced in v. 23, 24? Why should this be done quickly?

EXPLANATORY NOTES.—Verse 17.—The law.—The whole Mosaic system, ceremonial and moral. Technically, the books of Moses which contained the law.—The prophets: the pungent enforcements of law which came from the prophets. Technically, the books of the Old Testament other than the law and the poetic books.—Fulfill: Jesus teaches the length, and breadth, and height, and depth, and fulness, and spirituality of the law; and then he obeys it fully, atones for its transgression, and makes believers love it.

Verse 18.—Jot.—The Hebrew Jod, the smallest letter of that alphabet.—Tittle: slight turns or curves, whereby some distinctions of Hebrew letters are indicated.

Verse 19.—Least commandments.—The Pharisees classified the commandments into great and small. Some duties justly seem superior to others, but all must be honored. Matt. xxiii. 23.—Least in the kingdom: in the Messiah's judgment and under his sway.

Verse 20.—Scribes.—Men who copied, read, and expounded the law.—Pharisees: the pretentious, self-righteous class of the Jews.—Enter in: become real partakers of the benefits of the kingdom.

Verse 21.—It was said.—In the public reading and expounding of the law.—The judgment: not the final judgment, but the inferior local court of the Jewish cities. Deut. xvi. 18.

Verse 22.—Without a cause.—There is a just anger.—Raca: a term of contempt, meaning vain, good-for-nothing fellow.—Thou fool: a term of angry reproach.—Judgment, council, hell-fire: in Jewish parlance meaning the local court, the Sanhedrim, and the torments of Gehenna; as here used, indicating different grades of penalty under the spiritual sway of King Jesus.

Verse 24.—Go thy way.—Be active to satisfy one who has aught against you.

Verse 25.—Agree.—Come to a friendly, brotherly understanding.—Lest: difficulties grow by delay.

Verse 26.—Farthing.—The smallest Roman coin. Penalty follows disobedience, and it relaxes nothing, but demands all.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

Jesus, who knows all thoughts, hastened to tell the disciples that he had not come to put an end to their Scriptures, as they were written by Moses and the prophets; he had come to bring it to pass; to keep the law, and not to destroy it, as if it were no longer of any use. For though everything else shall pass away, God's word shall last for ever, and not the smallest part of the law shall pass away until it has all been fulfilled. And that they must be careful in little things as well as in great. This Saviour-King taught some of the laws of his own kingdom. He said that if we do not do right from a better motive than the Scribes and Pharisees, we cannot enter into his kingdom; for their righteousness is all outward show, but ours must come from the heart. Jesus showed the difference between just doing as the words of the Bible said and acting in the true spirit in which they are meant.

The Pharisees said if one killed another, he would be in danger of being put to death by the judges; but Jesus said we must not even be angry with another without a cause, and that we must never call bad or hard names. If you have been angry with any one without a cause, or given one cause to be so with you, hasten to make peace with him, and do all you can to take away the cause for the hard feelings, and do your part toward becoming loving friends. Agree quickly with any one with whom you have quarrelled; for if you should die while you have such unkind feelings, you would then have no chance to repent, and your punishment would never end.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Youths' Department.

Scripture Enigma.

No. 57.

- 1. A young man who drove three sons of a giant.
2. Manasseh's mother.
3. The first organized Total Abstinence Society.
4. The band under Cornelius.
5. A valley famed for its roses.
6. The Apostle Paul's landlord.
7. An ancient family who wore earrings.
8. A famous river of Damascus.
9. The first naval architect.
10. Queen Esther's cousin.
11. The man who was taken to heaven in a whirlwind.
12. The little boy priest.
13. The eldest son of Noah.
14. Where the disciples met on the first Lord's Day.
15. The man who had a church in his house.
16. A great coward who was killed by a lad.
17. A place famous for grapes.
18. The last city in which the Apostle Paul lived.

The initials of the names here described placed in order give the name of a friend who has visited the homes of thousands in all parts of the world for more than forty-three years.

CURIOS QUESTIONS.

No. 30. Who was it was told by the Lord to go to his house and speak to the people who came, and whom they afterwards threatened to kill for so doing?

Answer to Enigma.

No. 56.

- 1. Q uail.
2. U r.
3. E lem.
4. N abal.
5. C ephas.
6. H aran.
7. N ebo.
8. O livet.
9. T iberias.
10. T ychicus.
11. H annah.
12. E li.
13. S ilas and
14. P aul.
15. I snac.
16. R ebecca.
17. I chabod.
18. T homas.

QUENCH NOT THE SPIRIT.

1 Thess. v. 19.

ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

- No. 29. Square of words.
J O N A. John i. 42.
O B E D. Ruth iv. 17.
N E R I. Luke iii. 27, 28.
A D I N. Ezra ii. 15.

Bright Games for dull Evenings.

A GAME OF MEMORY.

Some people can very easily remember poetry that they have read; others find it more difficult; but every one knows by heart at least a few lines from different poems. If, whenever one has read poetry, one tries afterwards to remember some of it, the memory greatly improves, and one is soon able to recollect whole verses, or as we ought to call them, whole stanzas.

With the few lines that all of us remember an amusing game of poetry can be played.

One begins by repeating some line from memory, for instance—

"I met a little cottage-girl,"

and he tells where it comes from—Wordsworth's "We are Seven." The next replies with another line which brings in a word that was in the line quoted before. It might be—

"Girls and boys come out to play,"

and it is stated that this line is out of a nursery rhyme. In the case of nursery rhymes, the author's name need not be given. Now the next player has to think of a line that will repeat some word that was in the last. The first line of Mrs. Heman's "Voice of Spring" would do—

"I come! I come! you have called me long."

The next has to follow it up with a word that was in that.

"The way was long, the wind was cold," might be quoted from Scott's "Lay of the Last Minstrel." And then—

"Colder and colder blew the blast,"

from Longfellow's "Wreck of the Hesperus," which might be followed by—

"The day is cold, and dark, and dreary," a line from "The Rainy Day" of the same poet.

Sometimes one poem suggests a great many lines that may cap each other, and also the change from serious to comic is at times very amusing. We may illustrate both these occurrences by supposing the first line given out of Wolfe's "Burial of Sir John Moore,"

"Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note."

This suggests to some one a negro song, which begins a verse with

"In came a nigger in a long-tail coat," and the next line matches, so he quotes it,

"Will you gib me de change of a five-pound note?"

The next one happens to know the same song, and goes on with it,

"About your notes I do not know," and the next again finishes the verse,

"But I'll gib you a note on the ole banjo."

The game may be rendered easier by giving the lines alone, without the names of authors or poems.

Notice that the word repeated must always be a noun, a verb, an adverb, or an adjective; that is, one of the chief words in the line.

Sometimes it will happen that no one can think of a line to bring in the word. In that case, after a few minutes' thinking, if every one agrees that nothing can be found, the player whose turn it was has the right of starting afresh with any line he chooses.

Many a man when he begins to accumulate wealth commences at the same time to ruin his soul. Instead of doing more for God he does less; and the more he wants of this world the less he cares for the world to come.

Select Serial.

Florence Walton,

OR,

A Question of Duty.

—BY MAY F. MCKEAN.

CHAPTER II.—MISS GRACE MARKWELL.

The next morning was the Lord's Day, a bright, beautiful day in the fore part of September. Florence arose early, and had already prepared her morning-toilet when her cousin awoke.

"What! up so early? We never have breakfast until nearly nine on Sunday mornings, so I prefer a morning nap."

"I always rise early," replied Florence, "and as I must still do so during the week, it would only spoil me not to do so on Sundays. I think I shall like my new position. Don't you think, Ethel, it is a very responsible place to be in, for you know a teacher cannot help having influence upon her pupils, either for good or otherwise?"

"Do you think so? But I don't think I should fancy anything which requires such hard work," came rather sleepily from the bed.

"Why, Ethel, you don't think we were put in this world to be idle?" Florence asked in a surprised tone.

"How very seriously you look at things! But I'm asleep," Ethel replied as she turned her face toward the wall.

Left to herself, Florence took up her Bible and sat down by the window.

The first few verses of her morning lesson she gleaned from the revealed Word, but the rest she read from the ever-open book of Nature, in which, if one but chooses, he may clearly trace the unmistakable presence of the Divine Mind in everything.

Florence felt very thankful this morning—thankful for the beautiful sunny day, for the trees, the birds, the flowers, for the pure air, and for life and health to enjoy them all; and for that young heart to be thankful was but for it to express her thanks, and therefore perhaps it was that the clear low voice warbled sweetly forth upon the morning air her thanksgiving in the words of the sweet singer of old: "Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, praise his holy name."

Half an hour later she met Dr. Ronselle in the garden. "You are very happy this morning, Miss Florence," was his greeting, given in a merry tone.

"Why should I not be? I would be ungrateful indeed if I failed to recognize my Father's mercies," she answered brightly.

Dr. Ronselle looked puzzled, first into the seriously happy face, then down at the deep mourning garb of its owner. He had in his profession seen much of sorrow; had almost become familiar with death; had heard rebellious outbursts of grief from the stricken ones; had seen sorrowing mourners with loud lamentations follow their loved ones to the grave. But to see this child-woman smilingly thanking her heavenly Father for his mercies when but two short months before Fate—or perchance that same Father—had at one blow bereft her of her earthly father and her only brother—he could not understand it, and yet he could not think her heartless.

Florence saw his glance, and quickly interpreted it. A look of pain, yet not unmingled with resignation, came into her expressive face, and a tear sprang to her eye.

"She is not wholly indifferent, then?" Dr. Ronselle could not help a little sigh of relief escaping him as he thought of this.

"I know what you were thinking," Florence said quickly. "It is not that I do not miss them. I do—oh, so much sometimes that I almost wish them back again—but then, you know," and a little smile shot through her grief, "it is not as if they were lost to us. They have only gone home, up there with Jesus, and are waiting to welcome us. Don't you think it is a blessed thought, that those with whom we used to walk and talk are now in the very presence of the Lord and the redeemed ones, where they can see and talk face to face?"

Dr. Ronselle was leaning caressingly over a tiny flower he had found half hidden away under the grass of the border along the walk. For perhaps the first time in his life he did not know

what to answer, and therefore said nothing. The silence might have become embarrassing had not at that moment appeared Lottie, who was general waiter for every one, saying,

"If you please, Miss Florence, Mrs. Walton wants to see you in her room."

"I cannot understand it. I never before thought there was really anything in this religion, and, judging from Miss Grace and Ethel, I should say the same yet; but this girl seems to have something that the rest of us have not, only somehow it does not spoil her and give her that 'touch-me-not-I-am-holier-than-thou' air which clings about those who really seem to have what they call 'religion' about them. I can't understand her." Thus Dr. Ronselle soliloquized as he watched the little retreating figure.

"I wish Dr. Ronselle were a Christian.—Lord Jesus, bring him to thyself," was the prayer of this same Florence as she hastened up to her mother.

They did not meet again until breakfast. How strange that Lord's Day morning meal seemed to both Mrs. Walton and her daughter! Only those who all their lives have been accustomed to morning devotion and a blessing at table can imagine what a sense of loneliness, of something wanting, this thankless breakfast gave them. Dr. Ronselle sat next to Florence, and somehow seemed very grave and thoughtful for him. Miss Grace was particularly gracious and condescending to all, and Ethel was scarcely wide awake yet.

"Do you think you will go to church this morning, sister? or do you prefer the quiet of home?" Miss Markwell asked as she daintily opened her roll.

"I fear I shall not be able to go; Florence tells me the church is some distance from here, and I have scarcely rested from yesterday's journey yet," answered Mrs. Walton.

"Then you and I can rest while we have a quiet chat; in order to secure which we will send all the young folks off.—So you hear, girls, you are not to bother us," said Aunt Grace.

"I don't know whether to go or not. Dr. Lyman is so stupid I'm always glad of an excuse to stay at home," Ethel yawned, with a glance out of the window to see if by any means the weather might offer that excuse; but surely no fault could be found with that this morning.

Florence looked from her aunt to her cousin in surprise. Such a thought as staying at home of a Lord's Day morning when there was nothing which absolutely prevented her going to church had never once entered her mind. In her Mother's enfeebled state of health she was frequently unable to attend public worship, but never from choice. The idea was entirely new to Florence, yet it was not until she found herself alone with Ethel in her room that she ventured to speak of it.

"Do you not always go to church?" she asked as she was adjusting the braids around her shapely head.

"Not always; our minister is terribly prosy, but I suppose there is no excuse for me to day. Which dress would you wear if you were in my place? Though let me see: I wore that last week, and this the Sunday before. I think I'll wear this. Don't you think it is pretty? And just the shade most becoming to me—see;" and Ethel threw across her shoulder the fold of a handsome steel-colored silk.

"It is beautiful," replied Florence as she went quickly about preparing her own toilet, giving it no more of her thoughts than was necessary, while Ethel quite forgetful of the day, went merrily on chatting of dress and pleasure—of anything but sacred themes.

"Wait, Florence; let me fix this; your chain is quite too pretty to cover up so. There now! that looks well—your dress is so very plain, anyway. Now how do I look?" asked Ethel as the bell commenced tolling.

"Nicely. But please, Ethel, I don't like my chain so; you won't mind if I put it under again?"

"Certainly not, if you wish, but folks will mistake you for a little Quakeress who dropped in at the wrong church." "Oh, well, I'm willing they should if they wish to," Florence rejoined pleasantly. "But come, we must hurry or we shall be late and I dislike to go into church after the service has begun; don't you?"

"I can't say I exactly dislike it, and you know it is not always convenient to get ready as early as we have this morning," was answered; and then they stepped forth into the beautiful though still powerful sunshine of this September Lord's Day morning.