

## The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1880.

FIRST QUARTER.

Lesson VIII.—FEBRUARY 22.

GIVING AND PRAYING.

Matt. vi. 1-13.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 3-6.

The illustrations of righteousness so far given are manward duties. Jesus now looks Godward, under the general head of righteousness (v. 1), citing the great duties of almsgiving (vs. 1-4), prayer (vs. 5-15), and fasting (vs. 16-18). The first two form the lesson. See Luke xi. 1-4.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"Thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."—Matt. vi. 6.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M.** Giving and Praying, Matt. vi. 1-13.  
**T.** Unostentatious Charity, Ruth ii. 15-23.  
**W.** The Widow's Mite, Mark xii. 41-44.  
**T.** Vain Repetition, 1 Kings xviii. 21-29.  
**F.** Learning to Pray, Luke xi. 1-13.  
**S.** Asking of the Father, John xvi. 23-33.  
**S.** Full forgiveness, Luke vii. 40-50.

PARALLEL TEXTS.

- With vs. 1: Exodus xxiii. 13; Deut. xi. 6.  
 With vs. 4: Luke viii. 17; Acts x. 4.  
 With vs. 5: Prov. xvi. 5; Jas. iv. 6.  
 With vs. 6: Psa. xxxiv. 15; Isa. lxxv. 24; Matt. xiv. 23; Acts x. 9.  
 With vs. 7: Eccles. v. 2.  
 With vs. 8: Luke xii. 30.  
 With vs. 9: Rom. viii. 15; Ps. cxvi. 3.  
 With vs. 10: Matt. xvi. 28; Rev. xi. 15; Psa. ciii. 20, 21.  
 With vs. 11: Prov. xxx. 8; Isaiah xxxiii. 16.  
 With vs. 12: Matt. vi. 14, 15; Matt. xviii. 35.  
 With vs. 13: John xvii. 15.

REWARDS OF THE KINGDOM.

**LESSON OUTLINE.**—I. To whom denied. Vs. 1, 2, 5, 7, 8. II. On whom bestowed. Vs. 3, 4, 6, 9-13.

**QUESTIONS.**—I. Vs. 1, 2, 5, 7, 8.—Who according to vs. 1, is denied the rewards of God's kingdom? What is a "hypocrite"? How did they do their alms? Why did they do alms so? Did they get any reward? What reward? How did the hypocrites love to pray? Why? What reward did they get? What did they lose? Who were the heathen? What did they use in prayer? Why? Is it right so to do? Why not?

II. Vs. 3, 4, 6, 9-13.—To whom is this promise made? Are family and public prayer rewarded also? Is public giving never proper? What model prayer is given in the lesson? What is its proper use? What is suggested by its manner of addressing God? What seven petitions are in this prayer? To whom do the first three specially relate? To whom the remaining four? Explain each? What ascription closes the prayer? What does this mean? Who may, and who may not, use this prayer with success? (Vs. 14, 15). What rule of almsgiving does Jesus give? What rule of praying? When is public almsgiving proper? When public prayer?

Even right things may be done from wrong motives. The three chief good works of the Pharisees—almsgiving, praying, and fasting—though proper in themselves, were spoiled in them, by the spirit of ostentation and pride.

I. *Giving* (vs. 14). Jesus is always sitting over against the treasury (Mark xii. 41), noticing how we give. What is the force of the proverbial expression in vs. 3? May we never give publicly? See Mark xii. 44; Acts iv. 34, 35; Rom. xv. 26, 27. As the hypocrite cannot deceive God by his display, so no secrecy or darkness can hide any good work from him. They are rewarded openly. See Mark xii. 43; Matt. x. 42; xxv. 34.

II. *Praying* (vs. 5-8). The same warning against ostentation. Private prayer is a test of true piety. Matt. xiv. 23; Acts x. 9. Some heathen have praying machines. Notice that Jesus says, "vain repetitions."

III. *The model prayer* (vs. 9-13). Not a specific form for a liturgy.

**EXPLANATORY NOTES.**—Verse 1.—*Your alms.* The motive of the publicity is condemned.

Verse 2.—*Alms.* "Giving in charity." Do not sound a trumpet before thee. A supposed custom among the Pharisees of using a trumpet to call the recipients of their alms together. The hypocrites.

Christ's language means more than it says. It says, "They have their reward." It means, They have no reward except that.

Verses 3, 4.—*When thou doest alms.* Act simply and singly for the one motive of pleasing your Father in heaven. Escape, as it were, even your own observation. Then your Father, who sees secret things, will give you your reward.

Verse 5.—*When thou prayest.* "When you pray," the plural being used instead of the singular. *Standing.* The standing posture is not disapproved. It was common among the Jews. 1 Sam. i. 26; 1 Kings viii. 2. Jesus assumes that his disciples will stand when they pray. Mark xi. 25; not, of course, exclusively, for they also knelt. Acts ix. 40; xx. 36; xxi. 5. *In the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets.* The trouble with the hypocrites was that they chose these public places, with the motive of making a display of their devotion. There is a danger that Christians may commit the same sin in praying more in prayer-meetings than they pray in private.

Verse 6.—*Thou.* Emphatic, as before, for the sake of contrast. Daniel prayed by himself publicly, he even made his act of praying purposely public.

Verse 7.—*When ye pray.* One striking apparent instance of the heathens' practice is in 1 Kings xviii. 26. Christ himself in the garden repeatedly used "the same words" in his prayer of extreme agony.

Verse 9.—*After this manner.* In accordance with this model. *Our Father which art in heaven.* Literally, it is "Our Father, the one in the heavens." Whoever can truly take up this address toward God, is entitled to use the prayer. The spirit of adoption, the filial spirit, is his. He is a child of God. Being created new in Christ Jesus, does this. Not simply "Father," but "our Father." *Hallowed be thy name.* "Thy name" is a Hebraism for "thou," "thy being," "thyself."

Verse 10.—*Thy kingdom come.* Establish thy reign. *Thy will be done.* The key note of the whole prayer, and of all praying. *As in heaven.* In heaven there is no difference between the ideal God's will, and the actual creature's conduct. "So let it be on earth." Our Lord used his own petition in the garden. He became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.

Verse 11.—*Daily.* We are taught to pray each day for that day's required subsistence, not to be taken in a spiritual sense exclusively.

Verse 12.—*Our debts.* What we owe morally. *As we forgive.* The spirit that has not forgiven cannot pray.

Verse 13.—*Temptation.* Trial, testing, proof. The meaning is, "Do not bring us into circumstances where we shall feel the influence of a motive to sin. On the contrary, rescue us from evil. What follows, down to the word Amen, and including that word, being not of the original text.

Do not regret having done a kindness because the recipient is ungrateful. God is not unmindful.

Do not fail to do good things that you might talk about, and then—don't talk about them, even to yourself.

In your praying put God foremost. Pray to God for God—first.

Keep out of temptation. What you are taught to pray for, you are also taught to do.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

There are two kinds of giving and praying—that which comes from the inside, and that which is only outside.

*Inside and Outside; or Right, Wrong.* Show the difference between lip and heart prayer; between saying prayers and praying; between rattling off a prayer whose words we know so well, that we say the words without thinking of them, and asking for what we really want. Some people count long strings of beads, and call that prayer; others paste printed prayers on a wheel, and think they pray as often as the wheel is turned!

One of the things which Jesus taught his disciples, while he was on the Mount, was the prayer which we call "Our Father." Take one petition at a time, and try to explain it. Teach in how many ways a child may hallow God's name, may do his will, may help the coming of his kingdom, and for all we should praise him for ever.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

## Youths' Department.

Bible Enigma.

No. 59.

A precious word of ten letters which will be the subject of the song of Saints in heaven, may be found out by taking the initials of the following names:

1. Abraham's great great grandfather.
2. The name Samuel gave to a stone.
3. The second king of Israel.
4. The father of Matuselah.
5. The name given by Laban to a heap of stones.
6. The man who decided the dispute concerning circumcision.
7. Where the Apostle Paul left his cloak.
8. The surname of the great Betrayer.
9. The man who had the iron bedstead.
10. The man called "a hind let loose."

CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

No. 32.

Make the following into a square of words:

1. The sweetest place.
2. A sign.
3. To improve.
4. Extreme points.

Answer to Enigma.

No. 58.

- |              |                   |
|--------------|-------------------|
| 1. Tabor,    | 10. T abitha,     |
| 2. H ermon,  | 11. H erodias,    |
| 3. E maus,   | 12. E lizabeth,   |
| 4. F elix,   | 13. L ois,        |
| 5. E unice,  | 14. O nesiphorus, |
| 6. A pollos, | 15. R euben,      |
| 7. R uth,    | 16. D an.         |
| 8. O rphan,  |                   |
| 9. F estus,  |                   |
- "THE FEAR OF THE LORD."  
Psalms xxxiv. 11.

ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

No. 31.

T  
TEN (10)  
T E N E T  
N E T  
T

## Select Serial.

Florence Walton,  
or,  
A Question of Duty.

BY MAY F. MCKEAN.

CHAPTER III.—MRS. WALTON'S SUNDAY AFTERNOON.

"Why, Lottie, child, what are you doing there?" asked Mrs. Walton, not unkindly.

The little girl shrank back, and would have gone away had not Mrs. Walton's voice sounded so inviting as she repeated her name; then she came slowly into the room, trembling she could scarcely tell why—whether with delight at this unexpected kindness, or with fear if even this would not melt away, and be replaced by the air of queenly superiority which ever pervaded the bearing of the wealthy Miss Markwell and her accomplished niece toward the penniless orphan.

Lottie had always felt sure she was not half good enough to breathe the same air and be allowed to tread upon the floors with those lofty beings, and that it was the greatest possible privilege for her to serve them. Mrs. Walton being Miss Markwell's older sister, the child was quite prepared before she had seen her to place her upon the same platform of elevated dignity. But when the sister had arrived, and Lottie had looked, with the awe which age inspires in such timid hearts, upon the crown of silvered hair above the sweet face, she had stood aloof like some devout worshipper, while at the same time she could not fail to notice the difference between the two sisters. She thought now that she needed some justification, and so she said, in a voice scarcely audible.

"If you please, ma'am I don't mean any harm; I was only listening to the story. But I'll go right away—indeed I will—and never listen again."

"Why not stay and hear it?" asked Mrs. Walton.

"Oh, if you'd only let me!" and Lottie almost caught her breath in the intensity of her desire.

"You may bring that stool over here, and then you must sit very quiet," said Mrs. Walton by way of answer. But this last injunction was quite needless,

for never was there a more attentive listener than Lottie proved to be. She scarcely removed her eyes from Miss Florence's face until she had finished reading; then she asked, as a little sigh of relief passed her lips.

"That man did just right; don't you think so Mrs. Walton?"

Probably, had she been less interested she would not have dared to express her opinion thus freely, and now that she had done so she blushed and trembled at her own boldness.

Mrs. Walton looked at her in surprise. Could it be possible the child did not understand this was a parable, and that it was Jesus himself who spoke it? But she answered very quietly,

"Yes, dear, everything that Jesus does or proposes to do is right; it could not be otherwise."

"Oh, did Jesus do that?" The exclamation was almost involuntary. Lottie had heard about him when her mother was alive and they lived so happily together, but her ideas of him were rather confused. The thought of him as wondrously good and rich, living in a beautiful home which was in some way connected with her mother's present existence, but having nothing in sympathy with mankind. That he had talked with men—gave out his money to their keeping, as this story said—that she could not reconcile with her preconceived notions.

"Why, don't you know, Lottie, this is a parable?" asked Florence quickly.

"No, what is a parable?"

"A parable, my dear"—and Mrs. Walton stroked the sunny ringlets—"is a form of teaching which Christ often used while on earth, because the people could not understand him if he had not. It is a similitude—that is something taken from this life, so as to make its meaning clear when he wishes to tell us something about heaven."

Lottie looked more mystified than enlightened, but she only asked, "If you please, what does he mean to teach by this one?"

"The 'man' here is Christ himself. When he went to his home in heaven he 'travelled into a far country,' but he left to his servants—that is, his children—here, certain things; he did not leave them all the same thing or the same amount; but it is required of every one to improve what he gave, just as it was of the servants in the parable. He leaves his love and his promises to every one who will accept them. And then there are other talents and gifts he bestows upon men—to one riches, to another the ability to do some certain thing which all persons cannot do."

Lottie looked very thoughtful and somewhat disappointed.

"He didn't leave me anything," she said sorrowfully.

"I think he did," said Florence gayly.

"I heard you singing this morning, didn't I?"

"Yes, that is a talent," rejoined Mrs. Walton; "and the way you can improve it for him is to use it in singing his praise. You know when we get to heaven we shall all be able to sing much more beautifully than the most accomplished singer on earth."

Lottie had hung her head and blushed in pleased timidity upon the first allusion to her own singing, but as Mrs. Walton finished she said with a thrill of pleasure in her voice,

"Then mother can sing now even prettier than she used to?"

"Yes, far prettier than she ever imagined before," and there was an answering throb in Mrs. Walton's heart as she thought of her own loved ones.

"He gave Miss Markwell money, didn't he?" Lottie asked after a little pause.

"Yes."

"I wish he had given it to me too," and a weary little sigh escaped her.

"You must not wish that, Lottie. He gave you just what is best for you. He saw that in some way you could serve him best without being rich, and so he gave you something else in place of that."

"Charlotte! Charlotte!" Miss Grace's voice sounded sharply up the stairs. She had not found Lottie just when and where she had expected her. The child was on her feet in an instant, as indeed she knew it was best for her to be when she heard her entire Christian name pronounced in that decided manner.

"May I come next Sunday?" she whispered hurriedly; and then, without

waiting to hear the permission granted, she ran down stairs to wait on her mistress.

CHAPTER IV.—FLORENCE VISITS NELLIE HARTFORD.

Florence's busy brain was, if possible, more busy than usual on that Monday morning, the first of her life in Westtown, for was she not this morning to take up her life-work in earnest, to feel that she henceforth was to be the stay and support of her enfeebled mother? Besides this, what influence might she not have, either for good or evil, upon the young minds entrusted to her care?

She had told her mother she was sure her present situation had been procured for her by the direction and guidance of her heavenly Father, and that she felt sure he had some work for her to do in Westtown. She was reviewing his dealings with her in the past as she sat there now by the window awaiting the call to breakfast.

Professor Dalton, the present principal of the Westtown Academy, and Mr. Walton, former pastor of the mountain-village church, had been school-boys, and afterward college-chums, together. High aspirations, congeniality of nature, and the common bond of brotherhood in Christ had ripened their boyish liking into the friendship of youth and the steadier light of manhood's unalterable love.

It was with deep sorrow that Professor Dalton had learned of the death of his former friend, and within one week afterward of his only son, both stricken down in the very vigor of their usefulness by the mighty hand of disease, which the most skilful treatment of the physician and the tender care of the sorrowing wife and daughter were alike powerless to allay, for thus early they had "finished their course" and were "called up higher."

Afterward had come tidings of the enfeebled health of the widow and their reduced circumstances. He knew that the education of their only daughter, carried on as it had been much of the time under the direct supervision of Mr. Walton himself, was thorough and complete, and therefore felt no hesitancy in offering to her the situation in his school just made vacant by the marriage of one of his assistant teachers.

Thus it was that Mrs. Walton and Florence had come to live in Westtown. Thus it was that the latter was this morning reviewing the past with thankful heart, recognizing his hand in each step of the pathway, and forming many happy plans of being of use in her Master's service in the place he had appointed unto her.

The family were never early risers, and to the impatient heart that would be at her work it seemed very long ere she heard the summons to breakfast.

Dr. Ronselle was the first to greet her; he had been taking his morning walk again, and met her in the hall.

"You are quite a stranger, Miss Walton; I really have not seen you since my hasty retreat from the dinner table yesterday," he said gayly as he escorted her to her chair.

"Really! Why, I had quite forgotten you were not present at tea, and mamma had such a headache I remained to read to her, instead of going to church in the evening," returned Florence.

"Out of sight, out of mind," quoted Ethel mischievously.

The doctor assumed a droll expression:

"Yes, I fear it is even so—that is, in the case of Miss Walton, though I would fain believe it otherwise; yet think not I require the presence of so fair a—"

"Dr. Ronselle!" Florence's face was flushed, but was plainly not a flush of pleased vanity; annoyance was most visible there, and gave a slight ring to her voice as she pronounced his name.

"Please pardon me for interrupting you," he said, "but Ethel thought from your hurried summons it must have been a case of much importance which called you from us yesterday; would it be too inquisitive to ask? Perhaps, you know, we might be able to do something to aid the sufferer."

Men are capable of taking a peculiar kind of revenge against the women who are weak enough to believe them perfect. For a few months before marriage they sue for the lady's hand, but for all the years after marriage she is compelled to sew for them.