

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1880.

SECOND QUARTER.

Lesson I.—APRIL 4.

THE POWER OF CHRIST.

Matt. viii. 18-34.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 23-27.

Having closed the sketch of the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew shows the power of Jesus as seen in his miracles. To this end he selects incidents irrespective of chronological order. He first cites the cure of the leper (v. 2-4). This occurred in the first missionary tour of Galilee (A. D. 27). He next cites the cure of the Centurion's servant (v. 5-13). This occurred after the Sermon on the Mount (A. D. 28). He then cites the healing of Peter's mother-in-law and others (v. 14-17). This occurred in the first missionary tour (A. D. 27). Next follows the lesson, the events of which occurred after the Sermon (A. D. 28) and at the Sea of Galilee.—Parallels, Mark iv. 35; v. 21; Luke viii. 22-40.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!"—Matt. viii. 27.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. The Power of Christ, Matt. viii. 13-34.
T. Power over Diseases, Mark i. 23-45.
W. Power over Demons, Mark v. 1-21.
T. Power over Nature, Mark iv. 35-41.
F. Power over Death, John xi. 17-44.
S. Power, though absent, Luke vii. 1-10.
S. Comfort in Power, Ps. xli. 1-11.

PARALLEL TEXTS.

- With vs. 19: Luke ix. 57, 58.
With vs. 20: Ps. lxxxv. 17; Dan. vii. 13; Matt. xvi. 13.
With vs. 21: Matt. xix. 29; Luke ix. 59, 60; 1 Kings xix. 20, 21.
With vs. 22: Eph. ii. 1; Rev. iii. 1.
With vs. 24: Ps. xlv. 23.
With vs. 25: Ps. xlv. 1; Acts iv. 12; Acts xvi. 30, 31; Heb. vii. 25.
With vs. 26: Matt. xiv. 30, 31; Isa. xli. 10; Job xxxviii. 11; Ps. lxxv. 7; Ps. lxxxix. 9; Ps. cvii. 29.
With vs. 29: Matt. iv. 3; Luke iv. 41; James ii. 19; 2 Pe. ii. 4; Jude 6.
With vs. 30: Lev. xi. 7, 8; Deut. xiv. 8.
With vs. 31: Job i. 10-12; Job ii. 3-6.
With vs. 32: 1 Pet. iii. 22.

THE ROYAL POWER OF CHRIST.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Over Men, Vs. 18-22. II. Over Nature, Vs. 23-27. III. Over Demons, Vs. 28-34.

QUESTIONS.—From what great sermon were seven lessons of the last quarter taken? In v. 2-17, preceding the lesson, three great miracles of Jesus are recorded,—what are they? What proofs of his power are stated in v. 16?

I. Vs. 18-22.—Why did great multitudes gather about Jesus? To "the other side" of what would he go? (Luke viii. 22.) Give some account of this lake? What order to another man is recorded in Luke viii. 59? What did this man say? (v. 21.) What impropriety was there in this request? What answer did Jesus make? (See also Luke viii. 60.) What other offer and answer are recorded in Luke viii. 61, 62? What power over men does Jesus assume in these three cases? What is the extent of Jesus' power over men? (Ps. ii. 9-11).

II. Vs. 23-27.—What great danger did they encounter? At what part of the day did this occur? (Mark iv. 35.) With what cry did the disciples awake Jesus? How did he show his power over Nature? How did this act affect the disciples? What manner of man was he? (Ps. lxxxix. 8, 9.)

III. Vs. 28-34.—Into what country did Jesus come? Point it out on the map. Whom did he meet? What description of these men is given? How does Mark describe one of these men? (Mark v. 2-5.) With what cry did the demons salute Jesus? When is the time for them to be tormented? (See Parallel Texts.) What command had Jesus given the demons? (Mark v. 8.) What name did the speaker of the demons claim? (Mark v. 9.) What final act showed Jesus' power over the demons? What persons recognized this power? What did they beseech Jesus to do? Why? What three illustrations of power does Jesus give in this lesson? How did he show power over men? How over Nature? How over demons? What extent of power does Jesus claim? (Matt. xxviii. 18.) What duties do we owe such a king?

EXPLANATORY NOTES.—The miracles preceding the lesson show—(1) Christ's power over leprosy, the proverbial type of sin; (2) his power unlimited by place or time; (3) his power over sick-

ness and infirmity in general; and (4) his power over devils.

Verse 18.—The other side: of the Sea of Galilee.

Verse 19.—Scribe: copyist and expounder of the law.

Verse 20.—Holes, nests: places in which they lived—their homes. Son of Man: this was the common expression Jesus used when speaking of himself. Where, no settled home.

Verse 21.—Bury my father. Wait till his father was dead, an excuse which it was supposed would be regarded as a valid and virtuous one.

Verse 22.—The dead. Those who were in a state of spiritual death, or unconcerned about salvation.

Verse 23.—Ship: fishing-boats.

Verse 24.—Tempest: the lake is liable to sudden and violent squalls or whirlwinds.—Covered: water broke over them and filled the boat.—He: emphatic; the others were in terror, but he was asleep.

Verse 25.—Rebuked: commanded them as his servants.—A great calm: no agitated sea after the wind ceased.

Verse 26.—Marvelled: wondered.—Of man: man indeed he was, but he was also God.

Verse 28.—Gergesenes: on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. Mark calls them Gadrenes. Gergesa and Gadara were two neighbouring cities.—Devils: literally, "demons." Mark and Luke describe one only of these men, possibly the worst or the principal speaker.—Tombs: caves used as burial-places.—Exceeding fierce: see Mark's description.

Verse 29.—What, etc.: "We want nothing to do with thee."—Son of God: the devil and his subordinates knew who Jesus was. This is good evidence that they were not men affected with ordinary disease or insanity but were spiritual beings speaking through these men, and not simply human beings.—The time: of judgment, see Parallel Texts.

Verse 30.—Go: he spoke as a sovereign; the evident removal of the spirits demonstrated the reality of their existence and the superiority of Jesus; he may have thus inflicted a penalty upon Jewish speculators in swine an unlawful business.

Verse 31.—The city: Gergesa, or Chersa, near at hand.

Verse 32.—Depart: more concerned lest other swine be lost than that other men should be healed.

Ch. ix. 1 is the true conclusion of this narrative.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

Jesus was on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. A certain scribe said, "Master, I will follow thee wherever thou goest." Perhaps he expected that Jesus would become a great king, and then he would share in his honor and riches. But Jesus showed him that he would be poor, for the Son of Man had not even such a home as the foxes and birds have. Then another of his disciples wanted to go and bury his father first; but duty to Jesus must come before everything else, and Jesus said, "Follow me." Toward evening they got into a ship; and there were also other little ships with them. Jesus, being very tired, fell asleep on a pillow in the back part of the boat. The wind began to blow very hard, and the waves beat into the ship; the disciples were now much frightened, and awoke Jesus, saying, "Lord, save us," "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" Jesus rose at once, and spoke to the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" and the wind stopped blowing, and the sea was smooth and calm. Jesus asked his disciples why they were so much afraid; how it was that they had so little faith when he was with them.

They came safely to the other side of the lake, to the country of the Gergesenes. A man met them who lived among the caves where people were buried. Evil spirits had lived a long time in this man, and made him very wretched; he would not live in a house, nor wear any clothes, but cut and bruised himself with stones. He was so fierce that every one was afraid to pass where he might be. People had often bound him with chains, but he broke them all; night and day he screamed and howled like a wild beast. As soon as saw Jesus he ran and fell down at his feet to worship him. Then

Jesus said, "Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit." The evil spirit in the man answered in a loud voice, "What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I beg thee not to torment me." The devils begged not to be sent away out of the country, but to be allowed to go into a drove of pigs that were feeding among the hills, and Jesus said, "Go." As soon as they had entered into the pigs, they ran violently down a steep hill into the lake, and perished in the waters.—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Boys' Department.

Bible Enigma.

No. 65. DOUBLE.

The initial letters of the words here described shew a remarkable miracle of our Lord proving his power over disease; and the final letters shew another miracle proving his power over nature. Find the words and give the text of each one.

- 1. Our Lord's name for his covenant.
2. An ancient Jewish measure.
3. An appellation given to our Saviour.
4. An emblem of prosperity.
5. A wilderness where David dwelt.
6. He in whose day the earth was divided.
7. A country conquered by Nebuchadnezzar.
8. What the Lord is of his people.
9. What concerning Moses is unknown.
10. What comes through faith.
11. An animal used in sacrifice.
12. A valley named from a cluster of grapes.
13. One who was made a captain by Absalom.
14. He who defended Christ before the Pharisees.
15. What things are only known to God.
16. The first victim of Satan.
17. The youngest son of Jesse.

CURIOS QUESTIONS.

No. 39.

Find two or more words having all the regular vowels in their alphabetical order.

Answer to Bible Enigma.

No. 64.

Patmos, Eden, A celdama, Canaan, E school.

PEACE.—John xiv. 27.

ANSWERS TO CURIOS QUESTIONS.

No. 38.

WANT A GUE NUTS TEST

Select Serial.

Florence Walton, OR, A Question of Duty.

BY MARY P. MCKEAN.

CHAPTER VI.—ETHEL AND CLIFFORD WALRAVEN.

The doctor and Florence were walking just in advance of Ethel and Mr. Walraven.

"A penny for your thoughts, Miss Florence," the doctor had said when they had gone a short distance in silence.

"I was just wishing that you were a Christian, Dr. Ronselle," she answered, with so much earnestness that her companion could not cast it lightly aside. He therefore made no reply, and again they walked on in silence.

He was not yet fully conscious of his sin and danger—not yet prepared to give up all else and be a Christian. He would live uprightly and honestly—more conscientiously than some he knew who were professors of religion; he would be just as temperate, not because God would have him so, but for the very sake of justice.

Not another word was spoken until they reached home, when she wished him good night and went up to her mother's room.

Thus the two records were borne upwards—one of an opportunity improved the other of an opportunity worse than wasted—but it does not yet appear what the consequences depending upon these records may be. For, though the earnest wish of the one faithful soul, expressed with childish simplicity, may not now be heeded, the thought may not die with

the breath which gave it utterance, and perchance the seed thus sown may some day spring up, bearing blossoms for eternal life.

And the other—the eager soul waiting for encouragement and receiving none—will the Spirit ever strive again? Ah me! we know not now what weighty consequences may be laid in the balance when our words and actions come to be measured. We cannot any of us live without our influence.

"Well, Clifford, how did your 'test' work?" asked the doctor next morning.

"I think I must have been suffering from some affection of the nerves last evening," laughed the ever-graceful Mr. Walraven as he fondly twisted the end of his moustache. "I almost wonder that you did not prescribe something to strengthen them, doctor? But I am feeling better this morning, thank you—no need of a perscription now. I have slept over the matter, and am quite myself again."

"Then you have decided to drop the whole subject?" he inquired.

"Yes, entirely. There can be no great danger. I suppose it is all very well for those who like a parade of such matters as for instance, Miss Florence," said Clifford, rather lightly.

Dr. Ronselle flushed slightly. Whatever might be his opinion of religion, he still admired the moral courage which prompted this last remark.

"She at least, has the honesty to acknowledge her true convictions," was returned through compressed lips.

Mr. Walraven turned fairly white with anger. "And Ethel, at least, had the modesty—chiefest of womanly virtues, I take it—not to parade her piety before that crowded church," he cried excitedly.

"Do you call that 'modesty' which virtually denies him whom she professes to serve as her Master?" asked the doctor very quietly.

"I would have you remember," cried Clifford hotly, "that you are speaking of a personal friend of mine."

"I most sincerely beg your pardon; I quite forgot myself. My remarks were to say the least, ungentlemanly. You'll not harbor ill feelings?" said the doctor as he extended his hand.

Clifford took it, more because he thought it would be ungentlemanly not to do it than because he really wished it. However, he forced himself into goodhumor again, for, whatever the doctor had said, it was evident he harbored no ill feeling toward Ethel; it was the principle, not the person, and Clifford cared very little for principle at present.

After a few moment's silence the doctor spoke again: "I have not been able to quiet all my doubts as easily as you have yours. How did you dispose of the matter so as to satisfy your own mind?—that there is no God, and that the whole affair is a cunningly-devised fable, or that if there is a God, he is, must be, too merciful to punish eternally the creatures of his own hands?"

"The fact is I did not dispose of it at all; I merely dropped it from my thoughts," answered Clifford with a shrug of his handsome shoulders. It was not his nature to trouble himself about indifferent matters; he never inquired deeply into any subject, as the doctor did.

The latter remained a little time busy with his own thoughts.

"Perhaps you can dispose of it for me; at least you seem to be doing all the thinking," said Mr. Walraven presently.

"As yet, however, my thinking has brought me to no definite conclusion," answered the doctor bravely. "Six months ago I should have said without the slightest hesitation, 'There is no God,' but to-day I'm not prepared to take that stand. Neither can I accept a Deity in whom mercy holds sway to the exclusion of justice. He would not be a God were he not just. Yet where is the justice—or the mercy either, for that matter—exhibited in the affairs of life? Those who serve him most faithfully often fare the worst; those who strive the hardest receive the least; yet if he is all-powerful—and he must be that if he is God—he certainly has the power to direct all these things."

He was more "thinking aloud" than addressing his companion. He paused now, resting his forehead on his hand.

"Perhaps you think, then, that things go by chance, whether they came so or not?" said Clifford lightly as he drew

out his watch. "It is time I was going," he added, glad enough to drop the subject.

The doctor followed a few moments after in an abstracted way. He, true to his resolution, had been watching Florence very closely, and who can come daily in contact with a consistent believer without feeling his influence?

CHAPTER VII.—FLORENCE FALTERS.

The hands of the school-room clock at Westtown Academy pointed to ten minutes after four; Florence had arranged her books in order, and sat waiting for the last of the girls to take their departure.

She was feeling very tired this evening, besides having a severe headache. Her mother had spent a very wakeful night, and had coughed so much more than usual as to alarm Florence greatly. Now she rested her burning head against her hand as she sat thinking. She had promised to call on Nellie Hartford after school was dismissed, and, indisposed as she felt, she would fulfil her promise, for she knew how disappointed the poor child would be if she did not.

And yet this day had not been entirely without its cheering good news, and that very morning two others of her scholars had come to her with radiant faces to tell her of sins cleansed away through "the precious blood of Jesus," and she remembered three more who were still among the anxious ones. She thought of them now, with a prayer in her heart that they too might be led in the way everlasting.

Presently all was quiet in the school-room; one by one the girls had gone out, and Florence thought she was alone.

She raised her head from her hand and turned to get her street-wraps, when she noticed Emily Matthews, one of the very three of whom she had been thinking, lingering at her desk. It was a very sorrowful face which looked into her teacher's as Emily answered her surprised exclamation at finding her still there.

"And have you found no peace yet?" she asked as she drew the young girl close to her side.

"Oh no, Miss Walton; I am more miserable than ever. I try to pray, but it does me no good. I think I am too wicked for God ever to forgive me," sobbed Emily, laying her head upon her teacher's shoulder.

"He is able to save unto the uttermost. Can't you believe that, my dear?"

"Well, I suppose it is true, for it is the Bible; but, Miss Walton, you don't know. Now, if I had been a heathen and never heard of Christ, there might have been some hope, but I have read the Bible and been to church and Sunday-school all my life, and still refused to hear him. Do you think he is able to save me?"

"Yes, I know it; and, more, that he is waiting, even now longing, for you to come to him, that he may forgive you."

"Well, somehow I just can't, but I'm going to try to. Will you pray for me, Miss Walton?"

"Indeed I will, but you must pray for yourself also," responded Florence as she kissed the flushed, tear-stained face.

The early wintry dusk was casting its sombre shadows over the earth when she reached home. Nellie had taken cold, and was feeling badly; Florence had read and sung to her to lighten the weary hours; had paused a moment by the side of the artist to encourage him in his work, which was progressing finely; had smiled her pleasure at Mrs. Hartford's attempt at "clearing up," and invited both to go to the church.

"Perhaps so—some time, miss," had been Mrs. Hartford's answer as she held the door open for her visitor to pass out. "You look better this evening, mother," was Florence's greeting when she came in.

"I am feeling better, thank you, dear. I had a nice long nap this afternoon, and it refreshed me much. There will be no need of your staying home from meeting this evening."

"Thank you, mother dear. There is the tea-bell; shall I do anything for you before I go down?" said Florence as she stooped again to kiss the dear face.

"Nothing, darling; there is nothing but what Lottie can do when she brings me my tea, and I know you are tired—you look so."

Florence descended, and took her seat wearily at the tea-table, but, though