

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1880.

FIRST QUARTER.

Lesson X.—MARCH 7.

THE SAVIOUR'S GOLDEN RULE. Matt. vii. 1-12.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 1-5.

The connection between this part of the sermon and what precedes is more obvious than some have thought.

Jesus now turns attention to the great reckoning, urging suitable conduct and encouraging men to ask for wisdom and grace.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."—Matt. vii. 12.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. The Saviour's Golden Rule, Matt. vii. 1-12. T. Judging the Judges, Rom. ii. 1-16. W. Civil Judgment, Rom. xiii. 1-7. T. Final Judgment, 2 Cor. v. 1-11. F. Pearls before Swine, Acts xiii. 42-52. S. God's Willingness, James i. 1-17. S. The Royal Law, James ii. 1-13.

PARALLEL TEXTS.

- With vs. 1: Rom. ii. 1, 2; 1 Cor. iv. 5. With vs. 2: James ii. 13; Judg. i. 7. With vs. 3: 1 Cor. xiii. 5; Gal. vi. 1. With vs. 6: Prov. ix. 7, 8; Prov. xxiii. 9; Acts xiii. 46; Tit. iii. 10. With vs. 7: Isa. lv. 6; Prov. ii. 4, 5; John iv. 10; Luke xiii. 24. With vs. 8: Ps. lxxxii. 10; John xiv. 13, 14; John xvi. 23, 24; 1 John iii. 22; 1 John v. 14, 15; Prov. viii. 17; Jer. xxix. 12, 13. With vs. 11: Luke xi. 11-13; Rom. viii. 32. With vs. 12: Lev. xix. 18; Rom. xiii. 10.

THE WISE SERVICE OF THE KINGDOM.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. The Rule of Judgment. Vs. 1-6. II. The Source of Wisdom. Vs. 7-11. III. The Sum of Righteousness. Vs. 12.

QUESTIONS.—What five topics from lessons on this sermon have we studied? What is the topic of the present lesson?

I. Vs. 1-2.—What is commanded in vs. 1? Does this forbid all judgment upon the acts and motives of men? What is meant in vs. 6 by "dogs," and by "swine"? What by "that which is holy," and by "pearls"? What reason is assigned for the duty urged in vs. 6? How can this rule be harmonized with that in vs. 1? What penalty of all judgment must be remembered by those who judge? (v. 1, 2.) By whom are all judges to be judged? Why should this fact make them careful? Who alone is a perfect Judge? Why is he so?

II. Vs. 7-11.—What do we need in order to judge aright? From whom can wisdom be had? (James i. 5.) What three orders are given in vs. 7? What six encouragements in vs. 7, 8? How does Jesus illustrate God's willingness to supply our wants? Why is God "much more" willing? What things will God give those who ask? How does Luke express this fact? (Luke xi. 13.) How does James express it? (James i. 17.)

III. Vs. 12.—What is the golden rule here given? Of what is this the sum? How is it so? Did Jesus originate this rule? Did Jesus observe it? Should we? Why? Do we? What makes us liable to play the hypocrite when we judge? What sort of people should judges be? What three authorities enforce this rule? In what is this action higher than selfishness? In what higher than retaliation? Recite the Golden Text.

Consider what are the qualifications for civil judges and for jurymen; Christian duty toward the vicious; God's law of answering prayer.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.—Verse 1.—Judge not. Not a prohibition of civil judgment (Rom. xiii. 1-5), nor of ecclesiastical (Matt. xviii. 17), nor yet of fair personal estimates of men (vs. 6, 15, 16); but it prohibits judgment which one would be unwilling to receive for himself (vs. 2), and for which he is mentally or morally incompetent. vs. 3-5.

Verse 2.—Shall be judged. By the principles he applies to others, by others

on whom he uses these principles, and by the Supreme Judge himself. James ii. 13.

Verse 3.—Mote. A minute splinter of wood, as contrasted with a beam or joist.

Verse 5.—Hypocrite. An actor, one playing a part, having no sincerity.

Verse 7.—Dogs... swine. Dogs are those people who oppose, snarl, or rage at gospel-workers; swine are those who are intent only on their own sensual indulgences. Holy... pearls. Believers minister holy truths, pearls of blessing. Acts xiii. 46.

Verse 9.—Every one. the universal law is that earnest endeavor secures success.

Verse 9.—What man. Even among selfish, narrow-minded mortals a child's petition moves a father's heart.

Verse 11.—How much more. By so much more as God is wiser, holier, kinder than men, will he regard the condition of his children and give them what they really need. It is better that some of our prayers be not answered. How often do we see that if our wishes at a certain time had been gratified it would have been for our injury. Luke in xi. 13 says give "the Holy Spirit." This gift will ensure acquiescence in God's will.

Verse 12.—Whatsoever, etc. Confucius, Hillel, Isocrates, and other ancient authors have given the negative side of this rule to refrain from doing wrong to others in retaliation for injuries. That is the silver rule; but Jesus gives the positive side, ordering us to do, to be active on this line. This is the golden rule.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

Jesus tells us that we must not judge harshly of the conduct of others. We have plenty of faults of our own. Let us first set ourselves to conquering our own sins; then we shall be the better able to help others to see theirs and leave them off. We would not throw precious pearls before dogs and swine, who would not know their value, but only trample them into the mud, so it is not always wise to speak of the most sacred things before wicked people. He has promised that if you really wish to know how to do right he will show you; he says, "Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." We may be certain that all who ask aright receive either what they ask or something even better in its place. God, who is so much better than any earthly father, will not give us what will harm us, but he will give his children all the good gifts they need if they ask him for them. If God is so good and kind, let us try to be like him, and whatever we would wish that others should do to us do even so to them, for this is the King's law of love. —Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Boys' Department.

Bible Enigma.

No. 61.

- 1. The absent disciple? 2. The woman unjustly charged with drunkenness. 3. The reproving prophet. 4. The country of gold. 5. He of whom Christ was said to be son. 6. King Ahab's father. 7. Joseph's best friend among his elder brothers. 8. What was Saul after David was made king?

These names placed in order, by taking the initials and finals; and reading downwards will shew the most eloquent one of the Nova Scotia Baptist Fathers.

CURIOS QUESTIONS.

No. 34.

WORD-SQUARE.

- 1. Twelve wells of water there were seen, Palm trees three score and ten, And there encamped upon the green Lay a multitude of men.

- 2. I am to load what may be brought, Of any sort or kind;

- 3. My third is nothing but a thought That passes through the mind.

- 4. When you come home from toil at night, Both weary and oppressed, The sight of my last will put to flight Your cares, and give you rest.

—Selected. G. L. B.

Answer to Enigma.

No. 60.

- 1. A aron.....Exodus iv. 14. 2. C ana.....John ii. 1. 3. A ijalon.....Joshua x. 12. 4. D eillah.....Judges xvi. 4. 5. I thamar.....Exodus vi. 23. 6. A ppii-forum.....Acts xxviii. 15. 7. C aleb.....Numbers xiv. 24. 8. O phir.....1 Kings xxii. 48. 9. L azarus.....Luke xvi. 25. 10. E ot.....Genesis xix. 25. 11. E lizabeth.....Luke i. 3. 12. G eliah.....1 Samuel xvii. 13. E noch.....Genesis iv. 17.

ACADIA COLLEGE.

ANSWERS TO CURIOS QUESTIONS.

No. 33.

FIRE IRON ROAD ENDS

Select Serial.

Florence Walton, OR, A Question of Duty.

BY MAY F. MCKEAN.

CHAPTER IV.—FLORENCE VISITS NELLIE HARTFORD.

It was nearly a week before Florence found the time to visit the poor sick daughter of Eben Hartford. Then, as her timid knock at the door of the miserable, broken-down house designated by the card the doctor had given her was answered by the untidy woman who opened it, the words he had repeated came back to her with fuller meaning than she had thought they could convey: "So utterly repulsive to all the finer feelings of true delicacy and refinement." Repulsive? If she had acted according to her inclination, she would have retraced her steps at once, and never looked back until she had reached Auntie Grace's pleasant parlor. That was her first thought, but the second came quickly: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me;" and strength came with the thought.

"Mrs. Hartford, I suppose? My name is Florence Walton, and I have come to see your sick daughter."

The face and voice were full of curiosity, but not unkindness, as she said, "Come to see my Nell? Well, now, that is real clever of you. Come right in," as she threw the door wide open. "I hope you'll excuse the appearance of my room. I haven't cleaned it up yet. You who don't have to work can have no idea of how long it takes one pair of hands to do everything. Just come this way, please. My Nell's room is up stairs, and you know, since her back has been so bad, she can't leave it."

Mrs. Hartford led the way from the disordered room into which the street-door had admitted her visitor up a flight of steep, narrow, carpetless steps, through a short, dark entry, to a small room on the right.

Here, for the first, Florence felt as if she might take a full breath of fresh air, for the stale odor of the badly-cooked dinner, fragments of which were even yet visible below stairs, seemed to be shut out from this room, where the pale, sweet-looking girl was bolstered up on the bed.

"Nell, this lady has come to see you. —Take this seat here by the window, miss; it is uncommon warm this afternoon.—Here, Maggie, run quick and get the lady a fan."

Florence had almost involuntarily leaned over the suffering face with its sweet pleading eyes and imprinted a kiss upon the broad forehead, so white that the delicate tracery of purple veins was plainly visible through the transparent skin. A moment after Mrs. Hartford excused herself, having first assured Florence that her "Nell was an uncommon clever girl."

How different this bit of a room seemed from what Florence had expected when she first came into the drunkard's home! Every particle of the cheer and brightness of the house was condensed within these four walls. Everything was scrupulously clean and neat; even the sunshine seemed to have forgotten its glare as it lay almost caressingly across the faded carpet. "I tell Maggie what to do, and she can

work almost as well as I," Nellie had explained to Florence afterward.

They soon entered into pleasant, unrestrained conversation. Nellie had told her visitor of her injuries, carefully avoiding, whenever it was possible, any mention of her father—though it was rather pride than love which kept back the sad story—and Florence had said in return that she meant to be a good friend to the sick girl and call often.

When these subjects were exhausted, and for a moment or two the busy tongues were still, Florence glanced around the room, whose walls were profusely adorned with pictures of all styles in frames of straw or pine burs.

"You are fond of pictures?" she said as she glanced back to the face against the pillow.

"Yes, so fond of them! My frames are not very pretty, but they are better than none. I don't know what I should do, lying here all day, without them to look at. But I have more here; Dr. Ronselle brought them to me yesterday. are they not beautiful?"

Nellie with some difficulty produced from under her pillow a large gilt-bound volume almost every other page of which was a fine steel engraving. Together the two bright young heads were bowed over the pages as if they had not been the offspring, one of a minister of power and learning, the other of a drunkard—the daughter of the tenderest solicitude with the child of poverty and disgrace.

"I like this one best," said Nellie as they paused over one representing a festive gathering where youth and beauty were rivalled only by the work of God's own hands. "I love to think of what I should do if I were only weak and strong as these are here. How nice it must be to be able to enjoy the free sunshine in the field as these do!"

A weary little sigh escaped her lips, and she turned a wistful face toward Florence.

"Yes, health is a blessing for which we cannot be too thankful; and yet 'he deth not willingly afflict,' returned Florence as she took one of the sick girl's hands in both of her own.

"I can't understand it at all. If that is true, why do I have to lie here in such misery day after day?"

"There are some things that we cannot understand now, any more than a little child can know why its mother refuses it some request which she sees would not be prudent; but this we do know, that God loves his children far more than any mother ever loved her darlings, and that he will give us just what is best for us to have. Are you one of his children, Nellie?"

A tear-drop trembled on the girl's long lashes:

"I'm almost afraid I'm not, Miss Walton. I used to think I was but somehow since I've been lying here—Oh, Miss Walton, it seems almost cruel that I should suffer so for another's wrong. I have wondered if God ever loved me at all."

"Can you not trust him, even though the way seems dark?" asked Florence softly.

"I try to and sometimes I almost think I do; but I'm afraid, after all, it is only my head that believes, not my heart. Don't you think that with so many others to think of He might forget just me?" Nellie asked with grave solicitude.

"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows," quoted Florence.

When ten minutes later, Florence arose to go there were still traces of tears in Nellie's eyes, but she looked up brightly through them as she said,

"I know you are right, Miss Walton, and I will not forget what you have said. You'll come very soon to see me again, won't you?"

Florence promised readily as she kissed the bright, upturned face.

There had evidently been an attempt at "clearing up" the room below, which Florence was quick enough to notice, though it was that sort of a clearing up which, had Adam Bede's mother, Lizbeth been present, she would probably have denominated "a catlick."

Florence had almost reached the front door under the escort of little Maggie

when Mrs. Hartford appeared from the realm of somewhere or nowhere; her visitor could not have told which:

"Well, miss, so you are going? I hope you'll come again. My Nell don't have many callers now-a-days—only the doctor and Mr. Lyman sometimes; he's the minister, you know—but she gets tired and lonely, and the sight of a fresh face would do her lots of good. I know we live mean and poor, and it must seem quite a difference to you who live better;—here she gave a depreciating glance around the humble room, and then examined Florence's dress—"but the dear only knows what I've ever done to deserve such a hard lot. I'm sure I work till I'm 'most tired to death, and little thanks I get for it, either."

She was beginning to whine now, and Florence stood looking at her in blank dismay; at length not knowing what to do or say, she moved uneasily toward the door.

"Yes," continued Mrs. Hartford, wiping her eyes with one corner of her soiled apron, "I've had a hard lot of it. I've always tried to do my duty by everybody; and now to think that Eben takes on so, and we are so poor, and Nell's back is so bad, and all! It just does seem as if some people were born to misfortune, and I'm one of them. My poor Nell! my poor Nell!"

How much longer Mrs. Hartford would have continued in the same strain is a matter of uncertainty, had not at that moment an energetic rap-rap sounded at the door. Maggie opened it to admit Dr. Ronselle.

Florence felt that she could do no good by remaining, so in the moment which followed she hastily made her adieus, and was glad to escape, turning her steps homeward.

It was a pleasant walk. In the midst of all God's beauties around her Florence could not long feel depressed, and soon her mind reverted to Nellie. It was more pleasant than to dwell upon her unfortunate mother.

I think Christ always sends part of his promised reward along with the work he gives us to do—not in the self-complacent feeling of the Pharisee, who would cry, "Come and see what great deeds of kindness I have done," but in the restful, satisfied peace "which the world giveth not" coming into our hearts and testifying to his pleasure in our efforts:

Florence felt something of this during her homeward walk. "Ye have done it unto me." How sweetly the words came to her mind now! She tripped lightly up to her mother's room, humming snatches of the glad music made in her happy heart, to pour into that ever-sympathetic ear a history of her afternoon's visit, little imagining that others besides her Master, for whom she loved to work, had been watching her movements."

Mistakes concerning Alcohol.

Alcohol, whether given in the form of beer, wine or whisky, has, in every case, the same destructive tendency. I am well aware that some physicians claim a power for alcohol which it does not possess. They prescribe it as a restorative, and assert that in wasting diseases, it is useful in arresting or preventing waste of tissue; neither of which effects I am positive it possesses, and for these purposes it is futile to prescribe it. I am quite sure that in a state of health, there is not a single organ or tissue of the body that derives any benefit from its use; and quite as positive that it is a most destructive agent to every organ and tissue of the body either in a state of health or disease. Most mistaken ideas have long been entertained of the efficiency of alcohol in many diseases of the system, and its general effects upon the human body; but actual experiments have convinced several of the ablest and most profound thinkers in the medical profession, that it has always, and in every form, proved itself to be the most pernicious agent that was ever employed—mechanically or otherwise. Being, therefore, satisfied that its use in a state of health is never necessary, and in a state of disease it is most injurious, I have for years past abolished its use in the asylum.

Dr. Dickson.

There are some people who think that eternal vigilance is a terrible sum to pay for liberty, when a sort of easy-going slavery can be had for half that price.