

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1881.

SECOND QUARTER.

Lesson IX.—MAY 29.

PARABLE OF THE POUNDS. Luke xix. 11-27.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 26, 27.

After the time of the last lesson, Jesus left Galilee, crossing the Jordan into Perea, so journeying toward Jerusalem for the last time, (Matt. xix. 1, 2.) Incidents of this journey are given by Luke in ch. xviii. 15-43. Having finally crossed into Judea again, Jesus came to Jericho, where the words of the present lesson were spoken.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."—Romans xiv. 12.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. Parable of the Pounds, Luke xix. 11-27. T. The Lord's Departure, Acts i. 1-11. W. Waiting for the Lord, 2 Thess. ii. 1-17. T. Watching for the Lord, Mark xiii. 24-27. F. Improving Opportunity, Luke viii. 4-18. S. Faithful to the End, 2 Tim. iv. 1-8. S. Service of the Absent Lord, Luke xix. 11-27.

SERVICE OF THE ABSENT LORD.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Departure, Vss. 11-13. II. Service, Vss. 14, 16, 18, 20. 21. III. Reckoning, Vss. 15-27.

QUESTIONS.—Where was Jesus when he spoke these parables? Where did he afterward go? To what city was he journeying?

I. Vss. 11-13.—What reason is given why Jesus spoke this parable of the pounds? Who was about to go into a far country? For what purpose? Who is represented by this nobleman? What do the disciples think about Jesus' kingdom? What did Jesus leave for his servants to occupy? (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.)

II. Vss. 14, 16, 18, 20.—Service from three parties is described in these verses; give the facts of each case. What classes of persons are represented by the characters of this parable?

III. Vss. 15-27.—What did the first servant do in his master's absence? What was his reward? What was his reward? Who are represented by these men? What did the third servant do? How was he judged? Who are meant by this man? What final reward was bestowed upon the first servant?

There are many points of similarity between this parable and that of the Talents. This was spoken "when Jesus was nigh to Jerusalem," (vs. 11); and that some days after entering the Holy city, and from the Mount of Olives. Here, each servant receives alike one pound, a small sum given to test his fidelity; there, the servants receive larger and unequal sums.

NOTES.—I. The Great Trust, (11-14.)

Verse 11.—Nigh to Jerusalem, and were roused by their nearness to the Holy city to a high point of excitement, supposing that Jesus was now going there, to claim the throne of his father David. They thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear; that the movement of Christ was a political and national one, instead of being strictly spiritual. This parable, probably spoken in the house of Zaccheus, in Jericho, was intended to undeceive them, and to teach that his kingdom was not of this world; but that he must go away, and that a period of testing to his disciples must intervene between his departure and return.

Verse 12.—Nobleman. Literally "a man well born." Such was Christ, whether as the son of David, or as the son of God. Far country. As in Luke xv. 13, the idea is, far off in a moral sense. A kingdom. The spiritual kingdom in this, for he goes away to return. Jesus may have referred here to the custom of successors to a tributary kingdom of the Roman Empire, making their journey to Rome to be invested with kingly rights, and to have their succession acknowledged.

Verse 13.—His ten servants. Rather, "ten servants of his;" he had more than ten. Ten pounds; i. e., a pound to each. Various estimated in value from \$15 to \$25. The grace of salvation common to all believers. Occupy.

Do business, or trade with the sum committed to your charge; with the idea of increase. Till I come. Three times, in the parable, is the fact of his coming referred to.

Verse 14.—His citizens hated him. The Jews hated and rejected him. Sent a message. Or, rather, an embassy. They had sent an embassy to Rome to protest to Augustus against Herod's son receiving the kingdom, and begging the Emperor to rather convert their country into a Roman province. We will not have this man reign over us. No reason is given for this defiant message. Men perish, not because they cannot, but because they will not believe.

II. The Faithful Servants, (15-19.) Verses 15, 16.—When he was returned. Christ is coming again. The time of his coming is indefinite; but when he comes it will be as King. Gained by trading. "What business they had carried on." Thy pound hath gained ten pounds. The humility of the true servant is seen; it is thy pound, not my skill, and my industry. The gain is very large, a thousand per cent.

Verses 17-19.—Well, or "well done," commendation in a monosyllable, when coming from the King's lips. Thou hast been faithful. Men praise success; the Lord looks at fidelity. Have authority, etc. A royal reward. Mark the contrast—"servants," having "authority" as rulers. Each servant is rewarded in proportion to his gain.

III. The Unfaithful Servants, (20-27.) Verse 20.—Here is thy pound. This servant comes with an air of assurance and boastfulness, in marked contrast with the spirit of the others. His language implies that, in his views, his Lord had no right to expect more from him than a return of the pound entrusted to him. Laid up in a napkin. He paraded his honesty as an offset to his lack of fidelity, as many do who neglect the great salvation. He set over his harmlessness against his uselessness. It is not keeping the pound, but using it, that the Lord commends.

Verse 21.—I feared thee. The natural heart is full of excuses. Austere man. Hard, severe, oppressive. Thou takest up, etc. This is the picture of a despot who requires bricks without straw. The sinner looks upon God as a severe taskmaster, instead of a being full of love and grace.

Verses 22, 23.—Out of thine own mouth. There is no valid excuse. The very tendency to offer excuses proves the hostility within. The judge need go no further for witnesses. Will I judge thee. Solemn truth that the Lord will pass judgment upon all false pleas. Thou wicked servant. In Matthew, "Thou wicked and slothful servant." The wickedness here was his slothfulness. To do nothing is to do wickedly. The Lord does not accuse him of active opposition, but simply of neglect of duty. The bank. Literally, "the table, or bench," at which money changers sat, who paid interest on deposits, and loaned the money to others at higher rates.

Usury. Interest, not illegal, nor necessarily exorbitant. This servant did nothing with his pound; showed not the least desire to do anything with it. Verses 24-26.—Take from him the pound. "Non-use leads to death." To the slothful, the time comes when the power and opportunity are forever taken away. Unto every one which hath, etc. An oft-repeated axiom of our Lord's teachings. See Matt. xiii. 12, xxv. 29; Mark iv. 25; Luke viii. 18. "Every grace actively appropriated increases our receptivity for higher graces, while all grace rejected diminishes our aptitude for receiving new graces."

Verse 27.—But these mine enemies, etc. Both the certainty and severity of the punishment of the rejecters and opposers of the King, are clearly set forth.

The best way to prepare for our Lord's return, is to be using the pound, or the grace given us, industriously, that our gain may be great at his coming.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

Jesus once told a parable about a king who went away from his home. This king called his servants before he started, and gave one some money. He said that while he was gone he wanted them to work and try to earn more money. When the king came back

what did he do? He called each servant to give an account of himself. The first servant said, "Lord, I have gained ten times as much as you gave me." Don't you think that was good? Yes, the king said, "Well, thou good servant, thou has been faithful."

The second servant said, "I have earned five times as much as you gave me." The king was pleased with this servant too. Why did he not find fault because he had not earned ten times as much?

Here explain that if he did his best that was all the king required.

Then there came another servant bringing back the very money that the king had given him! He told the king that he had not tried to earn any more, but had kept his piece of money laid up in a napkin.

Do you think this pleased the king? No; he was very angry. Read vs. 24-27.

Has any king gone away and left work for you to do? Think again. Is not Jesus our king? Where has he gone? Will he ever come back? What will he ask each one of us to tell him? Read Golden Text from the Bible. Dwell upon the words "every one."

Some can do more than others, but to each one who does as well as he can, Jesus will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Boys' Department.

Scripture Enigma.

No. 128.

Find in the initials of the following, a direction given by an angel to one on a desolate island:

- 1. What understanding is said to be. 2. The man who cared for the Lord's prophets. 3. A friend of the Apostle Paul "chosen in the Lord." 4. An eastern palace. 5. The good woman who was falsely charged with drunkenness. 6. The fourth son of Aaron. 7. A lady to whom Paul sent salutations. 8. Mountains mentioned by David in his lamentations over Saul and Jonathan. 9. A constellation of stars mentioned by Job. 10. The "greatly beloved" prophet.

CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

- 203. Form these four words into a square word: 1. Substantial and true. 2. Sound sent back. 3. A wicked king of Israel. 4. A part of the ear. 204. Form another as follows: My first is an animal, savage you'll own, My second's the name of a precious stone; By ladies my third is often worn, My fourth is an insect that's treated with scorn. 205. Who were the authors of the following English works:

The Castle of Indolence. A Woman Killed with Kindness. The Orphan. Samson Agonistes. The Art of Preserving Health. Fairy Queen. The Beggar's Opera. The Muses' Looking-glass. The Pleasures of the Imagination. Night Thoughts.

The initials of the authors of the above works, spelled downwards, give the name of another English poet, the author of a poem which was not completed until seven years after it was commenced.

Answer to Scripture Enigma.

No. 127.

- 1. J ezebel. 2. E zekiel. 3. S hisback. 4. U z. 5. S adducees.

- 6. W atch. 7. E lijah. 8. P hilip. 9. T ogarmah. JESUS WEPT.

ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

- 201. "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink."—Hab. ii. 15. 202. Trash, rash, ash, as. Spear, pear, ear. Tray, ray, ay.

Secretary Lincoln is said to have more visitors than any other member of the Cabinet. His list is swollen by troops of colored people, who pour in simply "to shake hands with the son of the man who issued the Emancipation Proclamation."

A Heroic Horse.

BY CORA LINN DANIELS.

Almost every one of you children has had an uncle, an aunt, a papa or a mamma who has been to California and come home again quite safely, to tell such wonderful stories of that great and glorious country, especially of its climate and resources, that your eyes have stuck out with wonder and delight while your little hearts have positively ached to go and see for yourselves. They have told all about the "big trees" and the "gulches" and "canons;" about the monstrous rose trees, and wild callas, the wonderful grapes and strawberries, John the chinaman, and more than that, of the mines where so many men are employed in getting out great hoards of gold and silver. Some of the children who live in California may read this very story, and turn up their pretty pink noses at first, to think I'm trying to tell them something about their very own home; but never mind that! Very likely, before they get through they will think that, after all, they never had heard of the heroic horse that proved himself so full of courage and endurance.

In the mountains of California, as everybody knows, stages are used for the transportation of passengers and their baggage from one point to another; and twenty years ago there were many more in use than there are now; because since then railroads have been built, and of course people prefer to go by rail. But at the time I mean, the regular stage lines in the mountains were in full pressure of business, and wonderful was the speed and safety with which the great vehicles passed over roads so high and so steep, so narrow and so curved, that at times to look above and behind, it seemed as if they had just slid down a thread of yellow cotton! The drivers of the stages were generally very skilful men. They had driven up and down these terrible inclines so often that they were very confident, but not enough so to be careless. They depended much, however, upon the sagacity of the animals they drove, for upon their being well trained, sure-footed, strong and easily managed, the lives of all the passengers hung. One would have supposed for such work the stage companies would have picked out the mildest and oldest horses they could find, that there should be no possibility of their taking fright or getting ugly; but no! old and worn-out horses would not do! They were not swift enough nor strong enough to do the work. So almost every stage had four or six fine, well-kept animals, which made nothing of galloping up the first half of a long hill, or trotting down at a great speed, around curves and over "Thank ye marms," plunging into the valleys from the mountain-tops, and tossing their long manes with spirit and pride.

Strange to say, accidents were not very common. The "turn-outs" of the road, often cut into the solid rock, and leaving only a foot between coach and coach as they passed, were generally approached by a grand blow of the horn to let all teams on the road know that the stage was approaching; and if a wagon or coach was below, it would hurry up and glide into that place of safety, while the stage would whirl by with one pair of wheels within twelve inches of a precipice a thousand to twelve hundred feet in depth, at the bottom of which solid rock or a madly rushing stream would be its welcome, if it should tumble over. Many and many a time passengers have begged and pleaded to be allowed to walk down these terrible hills, but almost always the driver would laugh and say, "Not a bit of danger, Ma'am! I've driven over this road mor'n six year, and nothin' never happened to me yet, and I reckon Ma'am if you jest set quiet an' easy like, we'll jest s'ip ter the bottom o' this year gulch like greased lightnin'!" That is the way the drivers would encourage timid ladies; and I am bound to say timid gentlemen too! Great fat men who sat on the side next to the ravine would lean over towards the mountain, as if they thought that would save the coach if it should happen to go over the edge; and when I was only twelve—the first ride I took in that way—I hid my face and cried, I was so frightened. I had "just as live" own it as not, if I am grown up!

But once in a while accidents did hap-

pen; and when they did, alas! they were sure to be sad and often fatal ones. The one of which I am to tell is no fiction of mine. It really is a bit of history.

One morning the stage, with six passengers and plenty of baggage, began to go down a long incline with many sharp curves in it and many risky places. The four horses were in fine condition, and feeling in very good spirits as they gently trotted along at the regular gait. One of these was an especially fine and well bred creature. He had been born in the beautiful blue-grass region of Kentucky, and had blood in his veins which had come to him from the celebrated Arabian horses of the far East. His name was Whistler, and there was a jaunty and gay way with him in moving his thin, well-formed limbs, that some way reminded one of the brightness and cheerfulness implied in a merry whistle. They had gone down the hill but a little way, when a large bit of newspaper, which had been dropped in the road, was lifted by the wind and blown straight into the off-leader's face! He gave a spring to one side and pushed Whistler over, falling on to him, dragging the pole-horses, coach, passengers, everything—into space! Down they fell, over and over, crash after crash, cries and groans echoing up over those silent mountain sides, until it seemed the nine hundred feet of horrible descent would never be over, and silence would never come. But at last it did. In undistinguishable ruin the coach, passengers and three horses lay at the bottom, crushed, broken, wounded and dead together. The driver, who had been alone outside, when—in the brief instant which was allowed him to think—he had seen that he could do nothing to save his coach, had jumped with all his might into the road, and was saved. Two passengers escaped, also, with bruises and breakages of their limbs, but the others were killed outright—but where was Whistler? From every team up and down the mountain side men had collected, and were doing everything to aid the sufferers, and all noticed that there were but three horses. Where was the fourth? The driver, Dick Swinley, at last found time to think of his favourite. Going carefully out on to a rock that overhung the chasm, he heard a little whinny underneath him, and looking down, what should he see but whistler, standing on a narrow ledge about one hundred feet below! Yes! he had fallen upon his feet like a cat, and bruised and frightened as he was, he had had sense enough to stand still, and there he was, hung as it were in mid-air, between heaven and earth.

But he could not move! If he had moved one step, he would have been dashed down to certain death like the rest! For the ledge was only just big enough to hold him. He had not three inches of spare space! He could just stand there—and that was all. As Dick cautiously crept out a little way on the boulder, he gave a low sweet whistle which he had often used as a call to his fine horse, and Whistler pricked up his ears and whinnied again, a pitiful, sad-sounding whinny, as if he knew his desperate condition and felt he must sooner or later die. "Oh! boys!" cried Dick, getting back into the road, "I'll be dernded if that ain't Whistler alive and kickin'—no, not kickin', 'cause he can't move—but thar he stands like a statue, a-waitin' as peaceful as a lamb for me to come and git him!"

And with that the poor fellow, from excitement and horror and sorrow burst into tears and sobbed like a baby. "Carn't we do nothin' fer him?" said he. "We've got all the folks up, and doin' as well ez can be expected, and can't we do nothin' for Whistler? I vaow!" he exclaimed, tearing off his coat, "I'm a goin' to git him myself. I kin do it, and I will!"

"Why, Dick" every one cried, "you can never get at the horse in the world! You can neither get him up nor down. He will stand till he can't stand any longer, and then he will have to fall over."

"He sha'n't! He sha'n't!" cried Dick, "I'll save him if you kin help! Whar's the ropes?"

They soon produced some ropes, and wondered what Dick was going to do: "Put it around my body," said he, "and let me down! I'll take a blanket and some more ropes, and hitch up a tackle that'll bring Dick to the surface, if thar's power enough to haul him!"

They did... was being... waiting at... were not l... five feet a... —and the... Great wa... Whistler... rescue wa... him and t... impressive... old boy,"... ply: "Ye... drawn up... ropes was... put on ho... life, and... back with... the day... done if th... animal u... stand at... stand still... Sunset... ing into t... up the... darkness... was almo... sympathy... the boy... ropes, an... had been... he had t... nothing... Nothing... the time... ate their... pipes, to... themselv... tried to... Over an... teacher... whistle—... of the... gulf of b... —so lov... intellige... were wa... mal wo... strange... with low... beds of... think h... Plucky... Oh, in... had fal... strained... footsteps... he mov... himself... finest a... driv... strengt... What's... listened... nothin'... that ar... should... sudden... creature... heard t... swallow... noticin... watchin... ask him... feller's... his leg... when h... anyhow... body'll... away fr... dust, a... man ar... an' I d... boy! b... Whistl... I'll try... the res... Amen... Just... half b... question... he sho... Lord's... him!"... Mor... The m... up all... neep... hoop... leathe... with h... Whist... cast o... the m... and in... had hi... sure... And... nose... wise... swung... that V...