

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1881.

SECOND QUARTER.

Lesson VIII.—MAY 22.

PARABLES ON PRAYER.

Luke xviii. 1-14.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 11-14.

After the incidents of the last lesson, Jesus went into Judea, to Bethany and raised Lazarus from the dead. Because of a new conspiracy against him there, he journeyed from Jerusalem to the city of Ephraim, some sixteen miles northwardly, (John xi. 7-54). Thence he started on his last circuit through Samaria and Galilee, but with a return to Jerusalem as his ultimate purpose. On this tour, the incidents of Luke xviii. 11-37 and of the present lesson—which probably was spoken in Galilee—took place.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."—Luke xi. 9.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. Parables on Prayer, Luke xviii. 1-14.
T. Waiting on the Lord, Psa. xxvii. 1-14.
W. Encouraged to Pray, Luke xi. 1-13.
T. Victorious Praying, Matt. xv. 21-28.
F. Forgetting Self, Eph. iii. 1-14.
S. Humility in Prayer, Psa. xxxviii. 1-22.
S. The True Spirit of Prayer, Luke xviii. 1-14.

THE TRUE SPIRIT OF PRAYER.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Persistent, Vss. 1-8. II. Humble, Vss. 9-14.

QUESTIONS.—I. Vss. 1-8.—To what end did Jesus speak the parable of this lesson? For what did this woman pray? Who are God's elect? What encouragements to keep on praying do you find in this part of the lesson?

II. Vss. 9-14.—Who were the Pharisees? Who the publicans? To do what did a Pharisee and a publican go to the temple? Why go there to pray? (Isa. lvi. 7.) What was done and said by each? With which was God pleased? Why does God accept such a worshipper? (Psa. li. 16, 17.) Why did he reject the other?

NOTES.—I. The Prayer of Persistency, (vs. 1-8.)

Verses 1, 2.—This parable was spoken to his disciples, as the them goes back to xvii. 22. Men ought always to pray and not to faint. The purpose is not so much to teach us that we should pray, for that is taken for granted; but that we should persist in prayer for the specific thing desired, until it is received. To illustrate and enforce this teaching, the Saviour goes to a corrupt tribunal and speaks of a judge which feared not God, neither regarded man. Two strokes of his pencil present a character most execrable. Many "fear not God," but have some respect for public opinion.

Verses 3.—A widow in that city. Note the contrast between the position of the judge, strong and forbidding, and the weakness and defencelessness of this widow. The Mosaic law threw its protection around her (Ex. xxii. 22-24; Deut. x. 18); but this judge defied the law he was sworn to execute. She came to him, a useless journey, one would say. Avenge me of my adversary. Or, rather, exact justice, or protect me from injustice, from my adversary.

Verses 4, 5.—He would not for awhile He was selfishly indifferent to the claims of both justice and humanity. He loved ease. But afterwards he said within himself. From his soliloquy, we gather that the widow once repulsed, had come again and again. She made him fear her. For he said, I will avenge her lest by her continual coming she weary me, or rather lest she "beat me," or "smite me in the face." The same verb is found in 1 Cor. ix. 27, and is there rendered, "I keep my body under."

Verses 6, 7.—Hear what, etc. The unjust judge did a right action, at last, from a wrong motive; persistency prevailed. And shall not God. Mark the contrast. If the first be overcome by importunity, shall not God also be? His own elect. Another contrast. The widow was not the judge's own child. He did not yearn over her as a father. But the "elect" are God's children. Day and night. An exhortation and

encouragement to persistent prayer. Though he bear long with them. "Though he is long suffering in respect to them," that God does not at once deliver his people in answer to their cry, is not because he is indifferent, but because of his forbearance. See example of this in 1 Pet. iii. 20.

Verses 8.—I tell you. Spoken with special emphasis. He will avenge them speedily. He will not delay a moment longer than infinite wisdom sees it to be necessary; and when he comes he will make a speedy end, (1 Sam. iii. 12). Nevertheless. A sad turn to the joyous declaration just made. When the Son of man cometh. He is coming, then. This is the hope of the church. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" Shall he find faith on the earth? "One of those mournful utterances which show how hard a burden to the heart of Christ is the unbelief of his own disciples."—Abbott. See Matt. xvii. 17.

II. The Prayer of Pride, (vs. 9-12.) Verse 9.—In the parable of the Pharisee and Publican we see two classes of men found everywhere, and represented here not by symbols, but by specimens. It was spoken unto certain who trusted in themselves, etc. Like the Pharisees, they were self-righteous, and held themselves at a haughty distance from the common people; being, as is probable, persons of "respectability and culture."

Verses 10-12.—Went up.—Literally, for the temple stood on Mt. Moriah, and rose high above the other buildings of the city. To pray. Both went, apparently, for the same act of devotion, and to the right place. The one a Pharisee, the other a publican. A very striking contrast, one who was a type of all that was orthodox, and was supposed to be secure of a seat in Paradise. The other a member of a prescribed class; a man of no moral standing, and associated in the language of the day, with "sinners." The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself. "Took a position," in a prominent place, that men might see him. God, I thank thee. Nothing could be better than these words; but the spirit behind them turned them from gratitude into boasting. That I am not as other men. There is a sense in which such an expression would be most proper. But here, it was bold self-righteousness.

Extortioners. The mention of others guilt caused his own virtues to glow the more brightly. Unjust. Such as deal unfairly in ordinary business. Or even as this publican. He purged himself of sin in a lump by his reference to the wicked publican. The law would be satisfied with tithes of all produce, including flocks and cattle, (Lev. xxvii. 30). But he gave tithes of everything. "all that I possess." Hence a still larger amount of righteousness secured.

III. The Prayer of the Penitent, (vs. 13, 14.) The publican standing afar off. The attitude of humility. But this was the way to "draw nigh," (Psa. xxxiv. 18; Isa. lvii. 15). Would not lift up. Smote upon his breast. An ordinary sign of grief. See Luke xxiii. 48. God be merciful. Rather, "be propitiated." The word is the same used in Heb. ii. 17 to express making reconciliation or propitiation by sacrifice. To me a sinner. Rather, "the sinner." Justified. Or, "having been justified," implying a complete and abiding justification. His prayer was immediately answered. Rather than the other. The Pharisee did not ask to be pardoned or justified of God. He justified himself. Every one that exalteth himself, etc. The parable illustrates this general proposition. The self-righteous exalt self. But a heart that is full of self has no room for God.

Prayer puts us in an attitude where God, out of the abundance of his love, can give us what we ask. Prayer needs to be persevering, in due season you shall reap, if you faint not. Prayer needs to be specific. The widow and the publican knew what they wanted.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class. Jesus once told a story to his disciples of two men who went into the temple to pray. Read vs. 10-14. Jesus told them that God was much pleased with the publican, and not at all with the Pharisee. Why? God hates a proud look.

A picture of the scene should be presented if possible; it will also add interest to illustrate by appropriate attitude and gestures, the positions taken by the two men.

Close the lesson with a familiar talk on prayer. Listen while I read one, (Luke xviii. 1). Who was it that prayed all night out by the little river? Was God pleased? What name did he give Jacob because he prayed so earnestly? God is not pleased with all prayers. God hears all prayers; and if they are right prayers he answers. Sometimes God does not answer at once; he may want to teach us to be patient; he may know that what we ask is not good for us. Sometimes we are more thankful when we have to wait a little while. Do you think we ought to ask God twice for the same thing? I should think not, too; but God is so kind that he is willing for us to ask many, many times if we want anything very much. God wants us to learn to pray earnestly; that is why he lets us ask so many times; it is not because he does not hear.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Boys' Department.

Scripture Enigma.

No. 127.

Place the following described names in order and the initials will shew a touching evidence of love and human sympathy in the life of our Saviour:

- 1. A wicked queen who painted her face.
2. A prophet who describes his wife's death.
3. A king of Egypt, supposed to be the Sesostris of profane history.
4. A grandson of Shem.
5. The materialists of our Saviour's time.
6. An injunction given in one word by our Saviour.
7. One who was translated to heaven in a miraculous manner.
8. One with whom "the angel of the Lord spake."
9. A grandson of Japheth.

CURIOS QUESTIONS.

- 201. NUMERICAL ENIGMA. I am composed of 36 letters. Find in the initials a temperance injunction from the book of Habakuk. My 17, 22, 5, 7, 24, 33 was a beloved queen. My 31, 11, 2, 32, 12, one who listened at the gate. My 33, 19, 24, 22, 12 was a son of Zorobabel. My 22, 8, 9, 17, 20, 4 was in the Temple when the parents of the infant Saviour presented him there. My 32, 12, 16, 21, 32 was a Jewish king. My 35, 12, 14, 26, 17 was a son of Maath. My 28, 30, 23, 4, 25 is one who sealed the covenant after the return from the Babylonian captivity. My 20, 12, 10, 13, 3, 22, 27, another who sealed the covenant. My 1, 6, 33, 36 was what David meditated upon. My 1, 7, 15, 18, 17 was what the Levites were arrayed in. My 34, 31, 2, 4 is what the king of Bashan's bedstead was.

DECAPITATIONS.

- 1. Whole I am worthless, behead I am haughty; behead again, I am a tree; curtail and I am a conjunction.
2. Whole, I am a weapon; behead I am a fruit; behead again, I am a part of the human body.
3. Whole, I am a shallow trough; behead me I am a fish; transpose me I am a town in Scotland.

Answer to Scripture Enigma.

No. 126.

- 1 John ii. 15. Philemon 11. 1 Pet iii. 10. Colossians iv. 6. Ephesians iv. 2. 1 Timothy vi. 7. 1 John ii. 25. Revelation xxi. 7.

ANSWERS TO CURIOS QUESTIONS.

- 199. Anagrams. 1. Tower, wrote. 2. Ages, sage. 3. Horse, shore. 4. Snipe, pines. 5. Psalm, palms. 6. Wolves, vowels. 7. Taxes, Texas. 8. Roses, sores. 9. Lamb, balm. 10. Priest, stripe.

- 200. DIAMOND OF WORDS. D A N T A L I E N D N I E P E R T E P I D N E D R

Drowning the Baby.

As a missionary was walking by the river Ganges, in India, he noticed a Brahmin woman and her two sons; a beautiful boy of twelve years, and a little baby a few months old, with two female servants going towards the river. By their appearance he knew that the child was to be drowned to please the goddess Gunga. When they reached the principal bathing place four priests came up to them; and when the mother saw them she gave a loud cry and fell senseless to the ground. She was carried by her servants to the water's edge, where there was a great crowd of people. The chief priest then took the lovely babe from his mother's arms, covered its little body with oil, vermilion, and saffron, dressed it in red and yellow muslin, and began to repeat charms over its head. The priests tried to arouse the mother who at last opened her eyes. When she remembered what was going on, she sank back, saying: "Is there nothing that will save my child?"

"No," said the priest, who expected a large sum of money for performing the ceremony; "no. You have vowed to give him up, and you must do it. Are you willing? Say so, and let the goddess take her own."

"No, no!" cried the mother, "I am not willing. If I break my vow, I can only be cursed. Let the curse come. I would rather die than do it."

"Yes," said the angry priest, "the curse shall come, but not on you; it shall come on the lad there," pointing to the elder boy, "on the darling of your heart. You shall go home tomorrow taking your worthless babe with you, it is true, but leaving your noble boy, the hope of your house. Do you still refuse?"

The poor mother could not speak, and the priest added: "I will throw your babe into the river." The sign was given: the child was thrown. One little splash was heard; but the next moment the mother had it safe in her arms once more. Wild with grief she had plunged in and saved it.

"No, no; Gunga shall not have him!" she cried. "I was mad, quite mad, when I made that vow. If it were, a daughter perhaps I could give it up; but I can not see my baby boy drowned before my eyes."

The priest threatened her with still more fearful things. She was made to say again she was willing; and the priest was just ready to throw the child into the water when his arm was drawn back by the missionary, and he was thrown down by a soldier who was close behind. You know that Queen Victoria is Empress of India as well as Queen of England, and Englishmen have made a law that children shall not be drowned in this way. When the missionary found what was going on, he went in great haste for some soldiers to stop the priest, and arrived just in time to save the baby's life.

The frightened priest got away as well as he could, the crowd fled after him, and the missionary, the soldiers and the now happy family were left alone. The mother fell at the feet of the missionary crying.

"Thank you, thank you a thousand times, sir! You have saved my darling. You have made my mother's heart rejoice." Oh how could I have lived without my baby! I can do nothing for you, sir, but the God of the universe will reward you. I will always pray to our gods to send your their blessings."

Relieved and happy, the mother said to her servants: "Come, Dasee and Tara, let us go to our boats and leave this dreadful place. The gods grant that I may never see it again!"

Since the gospel has been carried to India, these dreadful things very seldom happen; and if all Christian people would do what they could to send missionaries there, the time would come when they would never happen. What can you do?

To indulge anger, is to admit Satan as a guest; but to indulge malice, is to close the door upon him as an inmate; in the first he finds a transient lodging; in the other a permanent home.

There are strings in the harp of every life, which though covered with dust, give out music when the wings of truth stir the air.

Paying the Debt.

High street church, Auburn, Me., seems to have had a most jubilant time at its debt-raising, April 3. Rev. A. P. Tinker, the pastor, prayed earnestly over the matter at the beginning of the service, and preached fervently. The Lewiston Evening Journal gives the following graphic report: "Now we must raise the debt, to-day."

I won't ask any man to give any more proportionally than I will, and I will subscribe five hundred dollars. Now let's have some singing, and we will start the ball rolling!"

"On condition that the whole amount is paid, I will give one-tenth of it, \$1,500," said E. F. Packard, Esq. "Brother Packard will give \$1,500, one-tenth of the whole amount! We must have another song for that!" said Mr. Tinker.

From that time the excitement grew. Several gentlemen gave \$1,000 subscriptions.

Then, some one bid \$500. "Hold on a minute, I must have another \$1,000 subscription, first," said Mr. Tinker.

More subscriptions of \$500 and \$400, and \$300 and \$250 came in. Mr. Tinker called for \$100 subscriptions, and responses came rapidly. The tellers announced that \$10,000 had been subscribed.

"Perhaps you think this is pleasant for me; if you do, you don't know me," said Mr. Tinker. "I had to bring myself to it."

By this time the excitement was intense. Some people were smiling through their tears, and others were wiping their eyes with their handkerchiefs.

"I'll give \$200," said a female voice. "God bless Aunt Charlotte, said the parson. 'She's just here from another church, where she lifted hard to pay a debt, and we could easily have excused her. God bless Aunt Charlotte!'" "A gentlemen who prefers to be anonymous authorizes me to subscribe \$150 for him," said some one from the floor.

When the pledges became small they came in faster. Subscriptions of \$100, \$50 and \$25 were followed by \$10 and \$5 subscriptions by the ladies and young people, and \$1 subscriptions by the Sunday school children. Several gentlemen added \$50 to their former large subscriptions on condition that the whole amount be raised. By half-past twelve o'clock the whole amount was raised.

"Now," said a gentleman at a suggestion from Mr. Saunders, "I want this society to go out of here without asking our pastor to pay a cent. I will give \$25 more towards the \$500 that Mr. Tinker subscribed."

The congregation broke out into an applause. "Hold on a minute! I won't!"—interjected the interrupted parson.

"Don't say a word, Mr. Tinker." "I'll make up the balance," immediately responded E. S. Paul, not giving the clerical voice a second for expostulation, and so in less than two minutes Mr. Tinker, whose sacrifices for his people have been ample without the addition of a financial burden, was relieved of his \$500 subscription, against his protests. Meanwhile Mr. Tinker was trying to speak: "I can't allow it," said he, "I want to—"

"Not a word, Mr. Tinker, not a word," said members of the congregation. Mr. Tinker was effectually silenced. The giving spirit became so infectious that more than the amount of the debt was subscribed, and the tellers announced that the subscriptions had reached about \$16,000. The ladies then pledged themselves to raise \$1,000.

In a recent discourse on the miracle in Cans of Galilee, Mr. Spurgeon incidentally remarked: "I abstain myself from alcoholic drink in every form, and others would be wise to do the same. This statement should effectually settle all doubts about the distinguished preacher's position on the temperance question."

A recently deceased Second Adventist, of Cambridge, Mass., fired a Parthian shot at what had been to him a distasteful religious doctrine, by the provision in his will, that none of the estate "shall go, at any time, to any person who believes in the doctrine of man's unconsciousness in death and the annihilation or extinction of being of the finally impenitent."

Letters

Rev. S. F. tour to Bur... esting "Let... to the Wate... the beautif... referring to... gives an acc... company of... in Burma.

"Many... came from... who are ex... vants and c... these peop... a branch of... but has rec... independe... ninety men... nearly eve... Teologoo p... bath in the... bers appea... conscious... the gospel... verted, the... Scripture r... duced succ... Jacob, Isr... Sarah, Reb... pastor, Joh... him after... his Englis... tures. On... this eveni...

member of... among the... had been... ta. He wa... Two Bible... them the... Smith, ma... One of the... the missio... faithful di... rested in... heathen m... him at onc... to prevent... tian. But... never fail... men plot... chariot ro... Rangoon... command... gospel in... baptized, ... also are v...

After t... disposed... ful melod... of their... Johann... seems he... and learn... Self-mov... it to him... sion of h... introduced... lish speak... acting as... like a dr... of Teolog... the host... same dia... men and... cup of... taken aw... whom m... their cro... say, in s... lestest th... for mine... And yet... grander... beating... assembly... ercises p... "Lord,"... The add... followed... diction... from wh... of being... of Old I... ferent la... as well... Could... these th... power o... rememb... and see... surely h... the pow... a Christ... not be... would... claimed... The exp... a repe... Gospel... A su... sage: c... says:—