

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1881.

SECOND QUARTER.

Lesson II.—APRIL 17.

THE PHARISEES REPROVED.

Luke xi. 37-47.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 38-41.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"But do not ye after their words: for they say, and do not."—Matt. xxiii. 3.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. The Pharisees Reproved, Luke xi. 37-47.
T. Woe to the Pharisees, Matt. xxiii. 1-22.
W. Woe to the Pharisees, Matt. xxiii. 23-29.
T. Traditions of the Pharisees, Mark vii. 1-23.
F. Defective Righteousness of the Pharisees, Matt. v. 17-26.
S. Pharisees against Christ, John xi. 47-57.
S. The Wrong spirit of Phariseism, Luke xi. 37-47.

THE WRONG SPIRIT OF PHARISEISM.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Attentive to External—not to the Heart, Vss. 37-41, 47. II. Scrupulous in Trifles—not in Great Things, Vs. 42. III. Seeking Honor of Men—not of God, Vss. 43, 44. IV. Imposing Heavy Burdens—not Bearing Them, Vss. 45, 46.

QUESTIONS.—Who were the Pharisees? What is meant by Phariseism? What four marks of its wrong spirit are stated in the outline?

I. Vss. 37-41, 47.—What facts are stated in vs. 37, 38? What did the Lord confess that they made clean? To what conduct of theirs did he thus refer? By what severe name does the Lord address them? How does he show their folly? How does vs. 47 show the same spirit? (See also vs. 45).

II. Vs. 42.—How did the Pharisees show their extreme care in small things? What is it to "tithe"?

III. Vss. 43, 44.—What new reasons for woe upon the Pharisees are named in vs. 43? What was wrong in either of these cases? What other class is addressed with the Pharisees in vs. 44? What is meant by "hypocrite"? To what does Jesus liken these?

IV. Vss. 45, 46.—What new class of persons is named in vs. 45? What was then meant by "lawyer"? What had this lawyer to say to Jesus? What was probably his motive in speaking so? What answer did Jesus make? What is the true spirit in the matter of burdens? (Gal. vi. 2).

The similarity of this discourse in the Pharisee's house with the fuller anti-Pharisaic discourse found in Matthew xxiii, has led some to suppose them to be identical in occasion and time. But the discourse in Matthew "was spoken in the temple, during the last week of Christ's ministry: it formed the solemn close of his public teaching."—Alford. That was spoken also "to the multitude and to his disciples," in public address; whereas this was in a private house where he had been invited to take the morning meal. Some think that this lesson belongs to the earlier period of Christ's ministry, while, as yet, he was in Galilee; and that Luke is not relating events in the order of their occurrence. Others claim that it rightly follows the events of the last two lessons, and was spoken on the way to Jerusalem.

NOTES.—I. (vss. 37, 38.) In vs. 29, we see the multitudes gathering thick about Jesus, and we have the beginning of a pungent discourse which extends to this lesson. Here he was interrupted, "as he was speaking," by a Pharisee who, most probably, heard that discourse, and now invites him to his house. A certain Pharisee. The Pharisees were the stricter and more orthodox of the sects, compared with the Sadducees, demanding scrupulous attention to external forms, and had degenerated into superstition, and hypocrisy. Besought. Possibly, from a desire to entrap him. Christ came to teach all classes of men. Dine. It was the morning meal. The same word is used in John xxi. 12, where (from vs. 4) dine is seen to refer to breakfast. Sat down to meat. Seated himself, or, rather, reclined at the table, without ceremony—as he was when he entered. Marvelled, etc. The Pharisees laid great stress upon the rite of purification before meals. See Mark vii. 2-4; Matt. xv. 1-3. This did not refer to

cleanliness, but to the avoidance of ceremonial pollution. They shrank not from dirt, but from defilement. Complete ablution is what the Pharisee expected of Jesus, at this time. word washed is baptised: and, of course, signifies an actual immersion of the body, which was the Pharisaic standard of ceremonial purity. That one claiming to be a prophet should be indifferent in this matter, shocked the Pharisee.

II. (vss. 39-44.—Vs. 39.) Now do ye Pharisees. Our Lord speaks in no mincing way. His charge is a personal one; the ye is emphatic, and the now is as much as to say, "Here is an instance, in your conduct." The outside, etc. Matt. xxiii. 25. By a striking illustration, our Lord contrasts their outside appearance of purity with their inward, moral impurity. Platter. A word translated charger in Matt. xiv. 8-11. The large, central dish, such as was before him on the table. Ravening. Avarice, or greed of gain. Wickedness. The inner corruption, the source of ravening.

Vss. 40, 41. Fools. Not the word of contempt and bitterness found in Matt. v. 22. Did not he? etc. He who appointed certain external rites, make the moral law, also, which requires inward purity? Give alms of such things as ye have, etc. Giving is the natural expression of love, as withholding is of selfishness. Hence the former purifies, while the latter defiles.

Vs. 42. Ye tithe mint, and rue, etc. For the law of tithes. See Lev. xxvii. 30-33; Num. xviii. 21. The Jew was required to pay one-tenth of his produce and income to the Lord's service. The "mint, rue," etc., were small garden herbs, of little money value, and might not seem to be worth tithing. Yet such was the scrupulousness of the Pharisees, that they observed the very letter of the law, in this respect. But while careful of externals, he says, they pass over judgment and the love of God. The weightier matters of the law," (Matt. xxiii. 23). By judgment, is meant, spiritual discernment of what is just and right. See, in Matt. xxiii. 23, "mercy and faith" substituted for the love of God. These ought ye, etc. Jesus came, not to destroy the law, even in little things, but to fulfil. The law is one, and the obedience given to it in one portion can never make good the fracture elsewhere. Strengthening the end links does not mend the broken link of the centre.

Vss. 43, 44. The uppermost seats, etc. Vanity, and love of distinction entered into their very worship, and caused it to minister to their selfishness. Those sitting in them faced the congregation, and were conspicuous. Greetings in the market. Formal salutations which recognized their dignity, and drew attention to them.

In vs. 44, omit scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, as not found in the best authorities. As graves, etc. To touch a dead body or a grave (Num. xix. 16) made one unclean for seven days. One might unconsciously walk over a concealed grave or tomb (graves which appear not) and be contaminated, not being "aware of them."

III. (vss. 45-47.)—One of the lawyers. Or scribes who interpreted the law and rabbinical precepts. Reproached us also. The dignity of a privileged class was touched by the Master's plain words. Lade men with burdens, etc. "The Mosaic law was in itself a burden to one who did not obey it from love; but the lawyers so multiplied its minute requirements as to make its observance a load which well nigh crushed the people. Love makes the "yoke easy" and the "burden light." See 2 Cor. v. 14; 1 John v. 3. Ye yourselves touch not, etc. There were many evasions in the more private affairs. Ye build the sepulchres, etc. In spite of their boasted reverence for the prophets, they were but following in the footsteps of their "fathers," who "killed them."

Jesus attended social gatherings, but never forgot that his mission was to teach, and to save men.

The spirit of Pharisaism has not passed away with the days of Christ, nor is it confined to the sect here spoken of.

If the law demanded at least one-tenth of the Jew's income for the support of his religion, should the gospel, which prescribes no specific rate, receive less honor than the law? Should not our freedom lead us to give more.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

We read in the Bible about some men who talked a great deal about being good. But they were not really good. These men were called Pharisees.

The Pharisees only pretended to be good. They went to church; they read the Bible; they prayed; they gave to the poor; and yet they did not obey God's laws. Jesus said of the Pharisees, "They say, and do not."

A Pharisee once asked Jesus to take dinner at his house. While Jesus was at the table, he talked to this Pharisee and his friends about their wicked ways. They could not deceive Jesus. He could see their hearts. Jesus told them that they were good only on the outside; that their hearts were full of wickedness. Use an apple, fair upon the outside, but bad at the core, as an illustration. The children may be able to recall Psalm li. 6, one of last year's Golden Texts.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Boys' Department.

Scripture Enigma.

No. 120.

1. That part of the ark through which Noah found means to communicate with the outer world.

2. A river of Damascus, the virtue of whose waters a Syrian captain somewhat boastfully extolled.

3. The date of every man's birth, as given by Bildah the Shuhite.

The initial or terminal letters form a word, an emblem of Christ, which presents our Saviour to us in the character of a safe guide.

No. 121.

The initials of the subjoined give the scene of an Old Testament miracle.

1. The city whose name means confusion.

2. The father of the inspired artificer in precious stones and metals for the tabernacle.

3. A family highly commended by God for their obedience to their father.

4. The Israelite in whom was no guile.

5. The patriarch whom God named, "A Prince of God."

6. A title of Jesus, prophetic in the persons of Samson and Samuel.

7. One of the ingredients of the holy incense in the tabernacle.

8. The burial-place of Moses.

9. What was a sin for a Jew to practise towards his own people, but allowable in his dealings with others?

10. A sin of the tongue, of which Solomon says, "he that uttereth it is a fool."

11. The King of Tyre who greatly assisted Solomon in building the Temple.

CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

1. Behead belonging to you and leave belonging to us.

2. Behead what happens and leave a pole.

3. Behead a teacher and leave a flower.

4. Behead one and leave an insect's egg.

5. Behead a drain and leave a water jug.

6. Behead to annoy and leave peaceful.

7. Behead a dog's voice and leave a large vessel.

8. Behead a hard wood and leave with large bones.

9. Behead a dog and leave a bird.

10. Behead a thought and leave a bird's wing.

11. Behead a contest and leave a unit.

12. Behead a little wrath and leave a weapon.

13. Behead a precious stone and leave a large door.

14. Behead a momentary look and leave a long weapon.

15. Behead to astonish and leave a difficult path.

16. Behead a result of thought and leave a thick board.

17. Behead pleasant to the taste and leave hard water.

Put the heads together in order and you have a statement of our Saviour of highest import to all.

192. Supply the vowels. Thshltntatl.

ADDITIONS.

193. Add an r to 1. a quadruped and make a bird. 2. the first division of time and make a carriage. 3. one who prepares food and make a bend. 4. papers fastened together and make a stream. 5. a lovely bird and make a number of cattle. 6. lively and make a mixed color. 7. profit and make wheat and oats. 8. a fire-place and make having made an effort.

Answer to Scripture Enigma.

No. 119.

- 1. M ice (1, 2, 3, 6,) 1 Sam. vi. 11.
2. "I am—He" (2, 5, 1, 4, 6) Isa. xli. 4.
3. C alm (3, 5, 7, 1,) Mark iv. 39.
4. H ail (4, 5, 2, 7) Exod. ix. 23.
5. A i (5, 2) Jesh. vii. 4-12.
6. E lim (6, 7, 2, 1) Exod. xv. 27.
7. L amech (7, 5, 1, 6, 3, 4) Gen. v. 28-31.

MICHAEL—Who to like God? Rev. xxii. 7-9.

ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS.—

188. FROST

189. LARGEST

190. To think of summers yet to come, That I am not to see; To think a weed is yet to bloom From dust that I shall be!

Select Serial.

A Thorny Path.

BY HESBA STRETTON.

CHAPTER XIV.

NO SIGN FROM GOD.

The shock to Hagar of thinking her child was found, and then discovering it to be a mistake, threw her back once more in health both of body and mind. She did not mourn greatly when they told her of her father's death; it was almost a relief to learn that he had died quietly, and his suffering and wanderings were ended. But the mysterious disappearance of Dot, and the utter failure of Abbott's efforts to trace her, preyed upon her depressed spirits. Mrs. Clack's companionship seemed to comfort her more than any other; and when work was slack at the dressmaker's she would go to stay with her, in the little room that had been Dot's last home, for a day or two, repaying the old woman by the skill with which she re-made the cast-off wardrobes she had purchased, and which she sold again more profitably after Hagar's clever fingers had been at work upon them.

Mrs. Clack had her own personal and special grief in the non-appearance of Don, whose return she had hopefully anticipated. If any one could find Dot again, it would be Don. She went to inquire after him at the fever hospital, and was referred to the Convalescent Home, but her letter to the matron there brought back the news that he had his fare paid up to London, and had been actually seen into the train, but nothing had been heard of him since, though he had promised faithfully to get Mrs. Clack to write for him.

They were disappointed in Don, who had seemed a very promising and grateful boy. As week after week passed by, and no Don appeared, Mrs. Clack was compelled to give him up and mourn over him as lost to her for a time. No one had seen him, except the cripple, and he had grown too much afraid of the consequences to confess the cruel trick he had played upon him.

The summer was bright and warm, with a long continuance of pleasant weather. The hardships of London life abated, and the poorest and feeblest found a brief season of release from crushing poverty. The children passed the livelong summer out of doors, some of the boldest pushing their way out of the sultry streets to the green freshness of the parks. Kensington Gardens were full of leaf, and the high branches meeting and arching overhead formed a thick and welcome shade from the sun. The thrushes and blackbirds sang as blithely, and the rooks cawed amid their nests in the topmost forks of the tall elms, as if there were no noise and smoke of a busy city all about them. Once or twice in the cool of the evening Abbott heard the soft, low cooing of a wood-pigeon where the trees were thickest, uttered shyly amid the bold and constant twittering of hundreds of other birds in the leafy branches above him. He tried to persuade Hagar to enter the Garden, but in vain; she could not conquer her sorrowful dread of them. She shut herself up day after

day of the summer time in her hot little attic under the roof.

"Hagar," he said one evening, when he went up to see her, and found her with a worn face and thin fingers stitching away at some work without pause or rest, "Hagar, you want a sign that God loves you and forgives you. Would it be any sign of his love if I told you I love you, though I know all you've done? If you'd only be my wife I'd do all I could to make you happy again."

"It's out of pity," answered Hagar, dropping her work and lifting up her bowed head to look at him.

"Ay, it was pity at first," he said; "I know it was pity, but it's love now, I'm thinking of you day and night and pondering over what I can do for you, how I can comfort you. I can't find little Dot; but if you'll be my wife, I'll love you truly and do all I can to make you happy."

"I don't deserve to be happy," replied Hagar, weeping. "If I'd only known God then as I know him now, I couldn't have forsaken them; and supposed we'd died together somewhere, it would be better than being as I am now. I can't forgive myself, and I can't see how God can forgive me. He can't undo the wicked thing I did; and there's no misery like being wicked. But I'll try to believe that God loves me, though He won't give me a sign. Some day or other, perhaps, he'll let me know I'm forgiven, even if I never find little Dot."

"And some day, said Abbott you'll be my wife."

"I couldn't be," she answered, looking at him steadfastly with her dark, sunken eyes; "I'm too heavy laden with trouble yet. I couldn't be happy in heaven itself. I know God must let us feel how bitter sin is, or we might fall into it again. It's right I should be sorrowful for what I've done. I should only make you miserable, too, if I was your wife now."

"Must I find Dot before you will marry me?" he asked patiently, seeing how deep her trouble was.

"Oh! she cried, "if she is not found soon I shall not know her again; little children change so. It's eight months already since I saw her; and if she's been ill, or if any accident happened to her, she might be changed past knowing again. That's what I'm afraid of always. Suppose she was a year or two in the workhouse, and grew like the workhouse children, perhaps I might see her and not know her again. I might feel as if it was her and never be quite sure."

"I'll try again, Hagar," said Abbott, "and if we don't find her before then, we'll be married next Easter at the farthest. That's seven months to come, and you'll be more at peace in yourself; or if not, we'll bear the burden of your trouble together. If I cannot make you happy, you will not make me miserable, I know."

There was a faint smile in Hagar's eyes, though she shook her head dejectedly.

"You are too good to me," she answered; "you're the best friend I ever had; but perhaps some day you'll be worn out, too, and forsake me. It would only be what I deserve, and I shan't blame you."

Yet in spite of herself it roused and gladdened Hagar's heart to believe that Abbott, who knew all about her, loved her well enough to wish to make her his wife. It seemed easier to believe in the love and forgiveness of God himself. His search for Dot, which had slackened a little, was renewed with more persevering energy than before; and Hagar, as she grew less downcast, entered into it more earnestly. Yet it was almost a hopeless pursuit, and grew more and more hopeless as the autumn succeeded summer, and itself faded into the chilly dreariness of winter. They followed up the faintest track, and caught up the vaguest rumors of lost children, but with no success. Many a child had been found straying about the streets since March, and had been carried to the workhouse, but not one of them was Dot.

"It's a year next Sunday since I forsaken them," said Hagar one day, as they were returning baffled and disappointed from some fruitless search, "and if you like, I'll go into the Gardens then." It was just such another day as the dreary day last November. The yellow