

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1881.

SECOND QUARTER.

Lesson V.—MAY 1.

LOST AND FOUND.

Luke xv. 1-10.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 4-7.

After the feast of tabernacles, in October, A. D. 29, Jesus continued his work in and about Jerusalem for several months. He then crossed the Jordan into Perea, and labored there. In addition to Luke's narrative of this interval is that of John ix: 1 to 11: vi. Jesus probably entered Perea early in A. D. 30, and there he spoke the words of this lesson.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."—Luke xv. 10.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. Lost and Found, Luke xv. 1-10.
T. Christ Loved the Church, Eph. v. 25-33.
W. The Sheep Scattered, Ezek. xxxiv. 1-10.
T. The Sheep Gathered, Ezek. xxxiv. 11-31.
F. The Shepherd's Care, Ps. xxiii. 1-6.
S. Compel them to come in, Luke xiv. 15-24.
S. Grace Seeking the Lost, Luke xv. 1-10.

PARALLEL TEXTS.

- With vs. 1: Matt. ix. 10; Mark ii. 15, 16; Ezek. xxxiv. 23; 1 Tim. i. 15.
With v. 2: Acts xi. 3; Gal. ii. 12.
With v. 4: Matt. xviii. 12; 1 Peter ii. 25.
With v. 6: 1 Peter ii. 10.
With v. 7: Prov. xxx. 12; Luke v. 32.

GRACE SEEKING THE LOST.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Seeking in the Person of the Son, V. 1-7. II. Seeking in the Person of the Spirit, V. 8-10.

QUESTIONS.—I. Vss. 1-7.—What persons drew near to hear Jesus? Who complained about this? What was their complaint? Was it true? Was it just? Whom did Jesus mean by the lost sheep? Whom by the ninety and nine? Whom by the shepherd? What by the wilderness? Whom by the friends? What is the topic? How is this illustrated in this part of the lesson; How does this answer the murmur of the Pharisees? Read vs. 7. Why should one sinner's repentance cause this joy?

II. Vss. 8-10.—What second illustration of grace-seeking does Jesus give? Who is meant by the lost coin? Who by the woman? What by the house? What by the sweeping? What by the candle? To what is her final joy likened? What difference of statement between v. 7 and v. 10? Why all this joy over one sinner? What may we here learn concerning the value of a soul? What concerning the duty of repentance? What concerning the fate of those who do not repent?

NOTES.—Verse 1.—Then drew near (there were drawing near) unto him. . . publicans and sinners. The original implies, that at this period in Christ's ministry they were drawing near. Publicans and sinners knew that Jesus had turned, as in indignation, from the house of the Pharisee, and this, it may be gave them courage to approach him. The publicans were inferior officers employed as collectors of the Roman taxes. They were required to pay over to their superiors the exorbitant sum fixed by law and depended for their profit on what they could make by fraud and extortion. They were universally feared, hated, and despised throughout the empire, but nowhere more than in Palestine. The Talmud classes them with thieves and assassins, and regards their repentance as impossible. The sinners are the criminals and outcasts of society of all kinds. The Roman tax-gatherer had drained the nation of its life-blood, till it was sinking, as all Roman provinces sank, sooner or later, into general decay. The suffering multitudes hailed with enthusiasm one who, like Jesus, ignored baleful prejudices; taught the sunken and hopeless to respect themselves still, by showing that he, at least, still spoke kindly and hopefully to them, in all their sinfulness and misery.

Verse 2.—The Pharisees and scribes murmured, &c. The rabbis enjoined that a teacher should keep utterly aloof

from such people, even with the view of reclaiming them. It was a sign that wisdom did not dwell with one if he went near the thief or the usurer, even when they had turned from their evil ways. Receiveth sinners . . . eateth with them. The testimony of the scribes and Pharisees was strictly and literally true. The Lord Jesus is indeed one that "receiveth sinners." He receives them to pardon them, and to make them meet for heaven. Christ did not gain favor among unholy men by making their sins seem lighter than the scribes represented them to be: he made them heavier. He did not convey to the profane and worldly the conception that their sins were easily forgiven; but he fixed in their hearts the impression that God is a great forgiver.

Verses 3-7.—Spake this parable.—Compare Matt. xviii. 12-14, where the same parable occurs. There, however, our Lord brings out the preciousness of the one sheep ("the little one"); here the mercy of the shepherd in seeking and rejoicing over the one sheep.

Verse 4.—What man of you by saying, "What man of you?" (compare chap. xi. 11) he turns the argument directly upon his accusers. If he lose one, he must have minutely inspected them ere he discovered that one was missing. The lost sheep is a type of the sinner going away from a loving shepherd, and the green pastures and still waters he provides, wandering at its own will after forbidden delights, till it is lost in the wilderness of sin, and surrounded by a thousand dangers; unable to find the way back, yet sure to perish unless it does.—P. Doth not leave the ninety and nine. It was no mark of carelessness in the shepherd, as some have imagined, to leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness while he went to seek the one that was lost. In the wilderness. We are not to understand "the wilderness" as a sandy or rocky desert, without herbage; but rather as wide-extended grassy plains or savannas, called desert because without habitations of men, but exactly the fittest place for the pasture of sheep. Go after that which is lost. The Good Shepherd goes himself; he does not send another—man, angel, or archangel. Until he find it. A hint of what is the patience and perseverance of Christ, and what should be the patience and perseverance of the Christian.

Verse 5.—He layeth it on his shoulders. And how tenderly the shepherd handles that sheep which has cost him all this labor and fatigue! he does not smite, nor even harshly drive it back to the fold: nay, he does not deliver it to an underling; but "layeth it on his shoulders,"—on his "own" shoulders,—a delicate touch which our translation has let go,—and bears it home. Rejoicing. The work of saving, far from being done with a grudge in order to keep a covenant, is a present delight to the Saviour.

Verse 6.—When he cometh home.—there is ground for "joy in heaven." Calleth together his friends and neighbors. In its bearing upon our Lord's own chosen; "the angels of God," and the spirits of the just made perfect, who rejoice over one sinner that repenteth.

Verse 7.—I say unto you. I who know say to you that this joy shall be in heaven on the recovery of the lost. Joy shall be in heaven. This verse opens a window in heaven from which a ray of light shines revealing to us: (1) Something of the employments of heaven. (2) The value of the soul. (3) The awful danger of the sinner. No small escape would produce such joy. (4) It shows that God desires all men to be saved. (5) It proves that there is no other way of salvation.—P. One sinner that repenteth . . . than the ninety and nine just persons. Christ here, as in many other instances, takes the Pharisees at their own estimate.

Verse 8.—What woman having ten pieces of silver. The women of Nazareth still wear around the forehead and face a roll of silver coins, called "semees" to which the Saviour here alludes. The coins spoken of are drachmas, worth about eight and one-half pence or 17.6 cents each, although relatively ten times as valuable then. Piece of silver. A coin with the stamp of the king upon it, as the sinner has on his soul the image and superscription of God. The sinner is lost, but still he belongs of right to God. If she lose one. Light a candle . . . sweep the house. She lights her lamp, for in the East the apartment has

no other light than that which is admitted by the door; she removes every article of furniture, and sweeps the most dusty corners. "Ye turn from these lost ones with disdain, and, because I do not the same, ye murmur at it; but a very different feeling is cherished in heaven. There the recovery of even one such outcast is watched with interest and hailed with joy."

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

The Pharisees complained of other things which Jesus did besides the omitting to wash his hands so often as their rules required. One day they were grumbling because Jesus allowed some tax-gatherers whom they hated, and also some who were known to lead very sinful lives, to draw near and hear him as he taught.

He asked, "Which of you, if you had a flock of one hundred sheep, and one of them were to go astray, would not leave the ninety and nine on the pastures and go off after the one who was lost till he found it? And when he had done so, would he not lay it on his shoulders gladly and carry it back to the flock? And when he had come home, would he not call together his friends and neighbors to rejoice with him because he had found the sheep that had been lost?"

I tell you that when one of God's flock who has gone astray and lived in sin repents, there is greater joy in heaven over his return than over ninety and nine who like you, scribes and Pharisees and lawyers, think that you are so good that you do not need to repent.

Or suppose a poor woman: Read the text vs. 8, 9, "there is joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner."—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Booths' Department.

Scripture Enigmas.

No. 123.

- SCRIPTURE DOUBLE ACROSTIC.
1. The Hebrew for master.
2. One of the lesser prophets.
3. A name given to some of the Roman emperors.
4. The last king of Israel.
5. A name for a letter.
6. A king who was taught temperance by his mother.

The initials form the name of a man from whom a nation took its name, and the initials that of one of his wives.

No. 124.

- 1. Who told a lie to please his thirst for gain?
2. Whose husband's life did early wane?
3. What woman was restored to life when dead?
4. What son of Saul was murdered in his bed?
5. Whose lifeless head was thrown over a wall?
6. What physician was beloved by St. Paul?
7. What Bashan king did a large army raise?
8. What queen would not for her beauty be praised?
9. What kind mother did early teach her boy?
The way that leads to everlasting joy?
Take the initials and in them you'll find
A loving golden text when they're combined.

—Selected.

CURIOS QUESTIONS.

- 193. Form a half-square of words of
A peaceful ocean,
A defence of branches,
A mark to indicate omission,
One particular,
Suitable,
The verb to be,
The centre of frozen water.*
194. Form a diamond of the following described words:
A pig tail,
Supplied with food,
All the flowers,
The art of measuring the earth,
Our clothes,
Balaam's charger,
The end of day.

195. WORD BUILDING.

Take half of mixed-up type, add an article and find father. Add a rat's head and find what is equal. Add again one third of an evening meal and find a portion. Add the head of yourself and find a united company.

Answer to Scripture Enigma.

No. 122.

BIBLE WOMEN—TWO FROM THE WHOLE.

- 1. Ruth. Ruth iv. 11.
2. A senath. Gen. liv. 45; xlviii. 20;
3. Candace. Acts viii. 27-38.
4. Hannah. 1 Sam. i. 20; x. 1; xvi. 13.
5. Esther. Esther xi. 17; vii. 10.
6. Lydia. Acts xvii. 13, 14.

- 7. A bigail. 1 Sam. xxv. 2-35.
8. Naomi. Ruth. i. 19, 20.
9. Deborah. Judges v. 1.

- 10. Lois. 2 Tim. i. 5.
11. Elizabeth. Luke i. 5, 13.
12. A chsah. John xv. 16-19.
13. Huldah. 2 Kings xxii. 14.

RACHEL AND LEAH. Ruth iv. 11.

ANSWERS TO CURIOS QUESTIONS.

- 191. METAPLASM.
Lear, pear, gear, bear, sear, mear, fear,
hear, wear, gear, near, tear, year, rear.
192. LOVE
OLID
VILE
EDEN

Select Serial.

A Thorny Path.

BY HESBA STRETTON.

CHAPTER XVII.

NOT LONG FOR THIS WORLD.

But summer cannot last for ever. The autumn came early, with a long season of rainy days and gloomy skies, unbroken by sunshine. Don did not know it, but the gathering in of the harvest had been a bad one; for frequent and heavy thunderstorms had damaged the crops, and the country had lost millions of money by the failure of its corn-fields. It brought in a hard winter for the poor, and higher prices for the food they had to buy. The rise in flour and bread was not enough to cause anxiety in households moderately well off, or where work was certain; but to Don, and to thousands like him living from hand to mouth, a small penny loaf was a serious calamity. The bakers, too, were more careful of their stale bread, and not so ready to give it away for nothing; even when little Dot's bonny face was lifted up eagerly to them across the counter.

Yet Don did not lose heart, or for a moment entertain a passing thought of giving up Dot to the fate he dreaded for her. He seldom knew now what it was to have the gnawing sense of hunger quite pacified; but he was a boy almost a man, he said to himself proudly, and he could bear to be starved and pinched, though a tender little child like Dot could not. She hampered him, and hindered him from undertaking work by which he could have earned much more money than by doing any chance task that fell in his way. The constant watchfulness which his dread for her forced upon him, made it necessary that she should be always somewhere near at hand, that he might assure himself of her safety. If he was hanging about the docks seeking for work, Dot was sure to be close by, sitting by the charcoal fire of some chestnut roaster, or under the shelter of a fruit-stall. The fear of having her snatched away from him began to haunt him more, and to fill him with sharper care. He could hardly bear to lose sight of her; but it hindered him from getting on.

The gloomy autumn crept insensibly into the winter months, when the days were shortest, and the hours of work, with the chances of earning money, were few. Don had less to do, and more time to rest, but he was always weary, and every doorstep seemed to tempt him to sit down and breathe awhile. It was so long since he had rested himself in a chair, that he could hardly remember how easy and comfortable they were in that hospital by the seaside, where his last taste of home-comfort had been. To sit on doorsteps and the stone benches of the bridges, or on bits of planks and spare bricks, was all the rest he had had for many a month. He had not given a thought to it before; but when all his limbs ached, and his very bones felt weary as they always did now, the remembrance came back to him vividly of the cushioned rocking-chair by Mrs. Clack's warm fire, where he had been allowed to sit sometimes, nursing little Dot upon his knees. Dot often sat upon his knee still; but

how soon he tired of her light weight; Still Don had a good fund of hope and courage within him which kept him from sinking beneath his weariness and hunger. A few more months to struggle through, and summer would be here once more, and all those sunny evenings by the river side would come back again. He had some plans for learning to read during the winter; and he had already put them so far into practice as to prevail upon two or three persons who knew how to read, to teach him a few verses in the little book of texts which had been given to him at the Convalescent Home. Fortunately some of the verses had been marked by having a blank line drawn round them; and the matron had told him those were the texts she most wished him to learn.

His first verse was, "The Son of man is to come to save that which is lost." The words were so simple that he could learn them easily. But who was the Son of man? Those persons whom he ventured to ask were as ignorant as himself, or if they knew they either laughed at him or bade him hold his tongue. They did not care to think of Him in the midst of the dreary, miserable, vicious lives they were living. Yet the words had a pleasant melody in them to Don, something like the wonderful music he had heard in St. Paul's Cathedral; and often he repeated them to himself and little Dot: "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost."

All through the chilly autumn and the dark winter the little child was thriving and living happily even among the squalid hardship of the circumstances surrounding her. Whatever Don went without, Dot had enough as long as he could procure it for her; and like all little children having food and clothing, she was quite content. A home Don could not provide for her; and now and then, though the weather was not very winter yet she suffered something from the rain and cold. Still his love and care for her preserved her from much harm; her face continued rosy and plump, and she was growing fast, so fast that Don willingly believed it was her increasing size and weight which made her so heavy a burden to him that now he could no longer carry her even a few yards. Dot was a chattering, playful, merry little creature, so full of fun that Don would often carry on a game with her when the perspiration stood thick upon his forehead and his breath came fitfully and painfully through his pale lips.

It came to pass at last that it seemed as if he could not get any work to do. When an errand-boy was wanted, busy people shook their heads at him and chose somebody else. If a small burden was entrusted to him, eager as he was to carry it, he would stagger under the weight along the pavements, and be scarcely able to make his way through the throng of passers-by. To earn money was becoming so difficult as to be almost impossible.

One day as he went to fetch Dot away, after having left her in charge of a friendly apple-woman who had her stall against the Tower railings, he overheard her say to another woman near her, as he moved languidly away, "Poor lad! he isn't long for this world." Don turned back with his sunken face and wasted, weary limbs.

"Is it me misses?" he asked. "What?" said the woman. "Me as isn't long for this world?" he repeated.

"O dear, no!" she answered cheerily; "who'd have thought such a thing of you? It's another poor lad we was talking of."

"I don't know whatever would become of little Dot," he said wistfully. But though he tried to believe it could not be himself they were speaking of, he was not deceived. He dragged his feeble steps along, with Dot dancing and jumping beside him, till they reached a quieter spot in one of the narrow streets near at hand; and then he sat down to think. He did not feel as if anything ailed him, except that he was very weary, and he longed to lie down and sleep once again on his old mattress in Mrs. Clack's storeroom. He was never hungry now. He could go without food longer, much longer than he could two months ago, and feel no gnawing or craving for it. The very smell of bread in the bakers' shops seemed to satisfy him. Yet he could

not altogether were wrot homes in clothes, th of, hung u ton. Peo times in ment of h be starvat But suppo was not lo Don bur shut out the painf If he shou little Dot for her, d dreaed w striven so very bite would die her. The die, failin your life that sorr himself d house gi him! Then came a d once m where he He knew again the Clack ha swallow leaves w For a litt less, see lived ove almost f ness. B from his on such a take a lo pace, an many a r he would round at it shoul he was n It was already a little, Don star net leav wintry d out with penny w where t morsel head gr under t take lo resting: they w along o for an about l dreams dreams and lau not hav knew v filled h ful an had he when h his tha At t grimag wait a fall be where For D vague ing to there v not be taken come for lo creep a last, place anything and D world quered battle. Und gather tall h along know on th voice often h heart back buried Dot; old ti step