

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1881.

SECOND QUARTER.

Lesson I.—APRIL 3.

FOLLOWING JESUS.

Luke ix. 51-62.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 57, 58.

The scene of the last lesson was Galilee, perhaps at Capernaum or near Nain. The probable time was the summer or fall of A. D. 28. Between that time and the time of this lesson about a year intervened. Luke gives the mere outline of what occurred in this interval—for which see verses between the lessons—but he adheres in the main to the chronological order. Meanwhile another passover is held, to which Jesus did not go, but when the feast of tabernacles (October, A. D. 29) approached he started for Jerusalem. On the way the events of this lesson occurred.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."—Luke ix. 52.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. Following Jesus, Luke ix. 51-62.
T. Samaria Corrupted, 2 Kings xvii. 24-41.
W. Jews and Samaritans, John iv. 1-9.
T. Fire from Heaven, 2 Kings i. 1-18.
F. The Spirit of Forbearance, Rom. xii. 9-21.
S. The Spirit of Consecration, Luke xiv. 25-33.
S. The True Spirit of Discipleship, Luke ix. 51-62.

PARALLEL TEXTS.

- With the lesson: John vii. 10; Matt. viii. 19-22.
With vs. 51: Mark xvi. 19; Acts i. 2.
With vs. 53: John iv. 4, 9.
With vs. 54: 1 Kings xviii. 38; 2 Kings i. 10-12.
With vs. 55: Job ii. 10; Matt. xxvi. 41.
With vs. 56: Matt. ix. 13; John iii. 17; xii. 47.
With vs. 57: Matt. viii. 19.
With vs. 59: Matt. viii. 21.
With vs. 61: 1 Kings xix. 20.
With vs. 62: Heb. iv. 4.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. The True Spirit under Provocation, Vss. 51-56. II. The True Spirit in Self-sacrifice, Vss. 57-62.

THE TRUE SPIRIT OF DISCIPLESHIP.

QUESTIONS.—What is the title of the last lesson? What great feast was at hand? Which of the feasts did Jesus attend? Whither was Jesus going when the events of the present lesson occurred? In what province was he?

I. Vss. 51-56.—At what time did Jesus start for Jerusalem? What is meant by "received up"? How is his intention to go to Jerusalem expressed? Whom did he send before him? What did these messengers do? Why was Jesus not received at this village? Why did they reject him on this ground? (John iv. 9, 20.) Which of the disciples spoke up in this crisis? What name of these men is illustrated in their action here? (Mark iii. 17.) How did Jesus treat the proposal of James and John? What spirit should be in his people? How should they act under provocation? (Rom. xii. 19-21.)

II. Vss. 57-62.—As they went Jesus had interviews with three men; what passed between Jesus and each of these? What one duty was required of each? In which case does the requirement seem strongest? Repeat the Golden Text. Who, then, is fit for the kingdom of God? What is the true spirit of fitness?

Special Topics.—The feast of tabernacles; routes of travel from Galilee to Jerusalem—describe and trace on the map; the enmity between Jews and Samaritans; Elijah's inflictions upon his enemies; the Christian law of retaliation; the object of Jesus' mission; poverty of Jesus; ancient burial-customs; ancient ploughs; the kingdom of God.

NOUVE.—Verse 51.—Received up: into heaven. See Acts i. 1-11.—Set his face: resolutely started. Jerusalem: "possession or vision of peace." The chief city of Palestine.

Verse 52.—Before his face: in advance of his personal arrival. Samaritans: inhabitants of Samaria, the central province of Palestine.

Verse 53.—Because, etc.: see Home Readings in explanation of this enmity.

Verse 54.—James and John: who were brothers, and of so decided and ardent character as to be called "sons of thunder." Mark iii. 17. As Elias did: indignation at the villagers fills

them. Elijah's act seemed to justify their proposal.

Verse 56.—Son of man: Jesus' favorite title for himself. Of the disciples, Stephen only uses it. Acts vii. 56.

Verse 58.—Jesus said: self-sacrifice demanded in the matter of personal comfort and worldly advantage.

Verse 59.—Suffer me, etc.: seemingly reasonable, but wrong, as it placed a father's memory ahead of Jesus' command.

Verse 60.—The dead: in a spiritual sense. "Let those of the world attend to the world's duties."

Verse 62.—Plough: especially true of the imperfect implements of that day. Kingdom of God: in which God holds supreme sway.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

As the time drew near when Jesus must suffer and die he went up to Jerusalem. The shortest way from Galilee, where he was, to Judea was through Samaria. So Jesus sent messengers into a village in Samaria to make ready for him. But the Samaritans hated the Jews, and were especially jealous of Jerusalem, and would not receive Jesus.

James and John were angry, and asked him if they should not call down fire from heaven on them, as Elijah had once done. But Jesus turned and told them that he had not come to destroy men's lives, but to save. Instead of avenging themselves, they quietly went to another village.

On their journey a man told Jesus he would follow him everywhere. He expected that Jesus would be a great king and he would share in his riches and honor. Jesus told him that he was poorer than even the foxes or birds, for they had holes and nests, but he had nowhere to lay his head. The man then went away. Jesus said to another, "Follow me;" but this man wanted to go home and attend to something else first. Then a third one offered to follow Jesus if he could go home first. But Jesus said to him, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God"—that is, you must have your mind fixed wholly upon Jesus and follow him all of the time.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Boys' Department.

Scripture Enigma.

No. 118.

- 1. Who did the Apostle Paul say 'concerning faith he hath made shipwreck, and that his words "will eat as doth a canker"?'
2. Of whom does Paul speak as "My fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus?"
3. Who is mentioned by Paul as one of his "fellow-laborers whose name is in the book of life."
4. An apostate from the faith, who did Paul "much evil."
5. Who was "chosen in the Lord," to whom Paul sends salutation at Rome.
6. One whom Paul speaks of as "my brother and companion in labor, and fellow-soldier."
7. A Roman to whom Paul sends salutation, "who labored in the Lord."
8. A man of Asia whom Paul tells Timothy "turned away from me."
9. One of three persons of whose coming Paul was glad.
10. One whom Paul calls his son "whom I have begotten in my bonds."
11. A city where Paul was imprisoned and from which he wrote several of his epistles.
12. A Roman to whom Paul sends salutation as "our helper in Christ."
13. One of two Philipians whom Paul beseeches to "be of the same mind in the Lord."

Place these words in order in a column and the initials downward tell of God's care for mankind.

CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

HALF A SQUARE OF WORDS.

- 1. The sovereign of an empire.
2. Thin cloth.
3. A sacred song.
4. A girl's name.
5. The edge.
6. Upon.
7. The beginning of a race.
183. Who led the chor. and taught the singers in the reign of David?
184. Who was the great-granddaughter of Sarah and who was her father?

- 185. Of what country was Balaam native, and in what city born?
186. By whom was Jerusalem anciently inhabited, and what called?
187. Where is the city of Cabul mentioned in the Bible?

Answer to Scripture Enigma.

No. 116.

- 1. Joseph.....1 Chron. v. 2.
2. Abraham.....James ii. 23.
3. Boaz.....Ruth iv. 10.
4. Enoch.....Gen. v. 24.
5. Solomon.....1 Kings iv. 31.
6. Hezekiah.....Isaiah xxxviii. 21.
7. Gideon.....Judges vii. 19-25.
8. Israel.....Gen. xxxii. 24-28.
9. Lot.....2 Peter ii. 6, 7.
10. Eliakim.....Isaiah xxxiii. 20-22.
11. Adam.....Gen. iii. 20.
12. David.....Isaiah ix. 7.

JABESH-GILEAD. 2 Sam. ii. 4-7.

- 1. A methyst.....Rev. xxi. 20.
2. Lord God Almighty.....Rev. xxi. 22.
3. Lamb.....Rev. xxi. 22.
4. Emerald.....Rev. xxi. 19.
5. Leaves.....Rev. xxii. 2.
6. Unbelieving, Unjust.....Rev. xxi. 8; xxii. 11.
7. John.....Rev. xxii. 8.
8. Angel.....Rev. xxii. 8.
ALLELUIA. Rev. xix. 1, 3, 4, 6.

ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

- 182. 1. Psalms 14th and 53rd.
2. Peter, (Matt. xvii. 24-27).
3. A giant (2 Samuel xxi. 20).
4. Micah (Judges xvii. 1, 2).
5. Ezra vii. 21.
6. Elisha (1 Kings xix. 19).
7. Eutyhus (Acts xx. 7-9).

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Select Serial.

A Thorny Path.

BY HESBA STRETTON.

CHAPTER XII.

COMING HOME.

When Mrs. Clack and Abbott, standing under Mrs. Watson's window, heard Peggy say that little Dot was lost, they felt the shock and chill of disappointment more for Hagar than for themselves. Abbott did not know the child at all, and Mrs. Clack's mind was full of the poor mother's broken-heartedness, described to her by him. They asked Peggy again and again when and how the child came to be lost, till the girl grew quite grieved with their questioning.

"I'm sure I was as kind as kind could be," she said. "I was always giving her candy and peppermint, and it was too bad of her to stray away and get herself lost. But, there! you know as much as I know, and I can't tell you no more. Father flogged me last night, and he says he'll flog me every night of my life till she's found. And she didn't belong to nobody that they should make such a fuss."

Peggy slammed the window down in her anger, and then opened it and flung out Mrs. Clack's key without uttering a word. Abbott caught it in time to save Mrs. Clack's head; but her hand shook so much she could not fit it into the lock.

"Let me do it for you," putting her on one side. It was a very miserable coming home after a week's pleasure in the country. When the gas was lighted they could see how thickly the dust had settled upon everything, so that she was compelled to wipe a chair before she could ask Abbott to sit down. She had stowed away most of the drapery which usually hung about the room, before she left home; and the bare walls and bedposts looked comfortless and strange to her. Besides, the bad news about Dot, and the stormy interview with Peggy had quite upset her, coming after the tranquillity and peace of her holiday. She sank down on one of the dusty chairs in a fit of great trembling.

"I did hope as God would have taken care of Dot for me," she faltered. It seemed very hard.

The child had been brought to her without any wish of her own; and she had put herself out of all her customary ways to care for her and the old man. She had nursed him through his illness and death, and tended her neighbor at much cost and sacrifice to herself.

And now that she had come home refreshed and rested in body, and with her mind aroused with the pleasant thought of restoring Dot to her mother, it was a hard blow to find the child lost.

"God is taking care of her," said Abbott briefly. His face wore an expression of great disappointment also. He scarcely knew himself how deep an interest he felt in Hagar's troubles; but he had never felt a warmer glow of pleasure than he had done a few minutes ago, in the positive assurance that he was about to carry Dot home to her mother, and to break to her the news of her father's death, while she was upheld by the delight of having her little girl once again in her arms. Still the child could not be lost altogether; there were too many children among the poor for any one to wish to kidnap another, except for its good clothes; and Dot's clothing would not be very good. It was a great gain to know where she had been so lately as last evening; and surely it would not now be difficult to trace her. It was something, too, to know that Hagar's father had died peacefully in his bed, tended kindly by an old woman like Mrs. Clack. Poor Hagar! She would not lie awake again long hours of the night wondering where his old gray head was sheltering. He had been cared for as long as he lived; and he had escaped the doom he dreaded, that of dying in the workhouse.

"God bless you!" he said, "for all you've done for them. I'm going now to strike while the iron's hot. The little lass can't be far away. I'll come in again on Monday; to-morrow I run down to Birkenhead, stay there Sunday, and come back on Monday. But I'll send Hagar to you; and there's my address, if you hear aught of the child. Good-by, Mrs. Clack."

The place looked still more forlorn and desolate when Abbott was gone. She could hardly believe it had ever seemed so solitary in the old times, when she had lived quite alone. Now the poor old blind fiddler was dead, Dot lost, and Don away; oh, how dreary and lonesome it was! What pleasure would the fresh eggs and yellow butter be to her if there was nobody to share them? But surely Don would be coming home soon, very soon. She had not heard of him for a fortnight, when Peggy had gone to the fever hospital to inquire after him; but he was nearly well then; and he must soon be dismissed. At any rate she would go and see after him to-morrow.

Somewhat comforted by this resolution, Mrs. Clack roused herself, and set about restoring her room to its accustomed appearance. She unwrapped and shook out two or three of the smartest gowns to decorate the bedposts, and put the best bonnets she had in stock upon the top of them, and she clothed the bare walls with the gayest mantles and shawls. Home was looking like home again, and by-and-by her nervous depression was over and she was ready to answer the door when she heard a low single knock. It was Peggy Watson, with a cracked teapot in her hand.

"Please, Mrs. Clack," she said in a pensive voice. "I've made you a cup of good tea, and I'm very sorry I was so impudent. Father's come home and flogged me, and I never said a word against it. I'm sure I was good to little Dot—I was, indeed—and I'll go and search all London over for her till I've not got a sole to my foot!"

"Have you heard anything of Don, Peggy?" asked Mrs. Clack.

"Oh, yes! I've gone to the hospital again, out of my own head," she answered, "me and Dot, only he'd gone away from there to another hospital with a very hard name, down by the sea, and they said he'd come back as strong as a horse."

"That's good news," said Mrs. Clack, taking the teapot out of Peggy's hand, and going back to her room with a feeling of relief. The damp chips and coal which had been sputtering and smouldering in the grate, were beginning to burn up brightly, and by the time her little tea-table was set ready beside the fire, she felt very much cheered and in better spirits.

"Well, God is taking care of Don," she said, to herself, "that's quite plain, sending him down to the sea to get strong and well. And me too he's sent into the country, and it stands to sense he'll take care of Dot; he's not likely to overlook her, when he's so fond of

little children. Maybe Mr. Abbott's found her already. Eh! it's a rare thing to be a man."

Abbott had not found Dot, though he was hurrying from one police station to another describing her and her clothing as he had heard them described by Hagar and Mrs. Clack. His description was vague enough, and he could learn nothing about the lost child. At last, as he drew near home, he met with a policeman who was carrying on his arm a little creature that had fallen fast asleep with its head upon his shoulder. Abbott stopped him to look at the sleepy face, and drowsy little head.

"I've never seen the child I'm seeking after," he said, "and I'm fairly puzzled. I can't tell for certain if this is the one. Age, three; dark eyes—I cannot see the eyes; light, curly hair and fair skin; red cloak, brown hat and blue frock; button shoes—but this child has lost its shoes; name Hagar, but answers to the name of Dot. Dot!" he called, patting the little cheek, "Dot!" But the child only answered with a sleepy cry, and nestled its head down again on the policeman's shoulder. "I'm just going off my beat," he said, "and if you'll step with me as far as the station, I'll come round with you to Hawthorne Road, and take the child with me. It's no more than a step out of my way."

It was past midnight when Abbott and the policeman turned into Hawthorne Road, and all the houses were dark and silent except his own. He was five hours behind his time; and he knew very well that the two women standing on the doorsteps, looking out anxiously could be no other than his cousin and Hagar. Was he really bringing home her child to her. He did not know what she would do if this was not Dot.

The steady tread of their footsteps sounded loudly in the silent street, and reached the ears of the anxious women before they could see who was coming. Hagar was the first to catch sight of Abbott and of the policeman carrying a little child in his arms. She could see the curly head resting on his shoulder, as he passed under the lamps. Her heart seemed to stand still, and her limbs felt heavy and rigid, as if they would not move at her will. But with a great effort she recovered herself, and darting down the road, she met them before they could reach the house. She snatched the child, her child, from the policeman, and sank down on the pavement, clasping it closely to her bosom.

"Hagar! Hagar!" exclaimed Abbott. "I'm not sure it's Dot. I never saw your little lost girl. Look at her face, and see. Only you can tell if it's Dot."

She hardly dared to lift up the drowsy face or fix her own eyes upon it. Her arms relaxed their hold, and again her heart seemed to cease its throbbing. Abbott caught the little creature, and held it under her falling eyes, and then Hagar, with a low moan, pushed it away, and fell senseless to the ground.

Conversing before Children.

Endeavour always to talk your best before your children. They hunger perpetually for new ideas. They learn with pleasure from the lips of parents what they dream is drudgery to learn from books, and even if they have to be deprived of many educational advantages, they enjoy in childhood the privilege of listening daily to the conversation of intelligent people. We sometimes see parents who are the life of every company which they enter, dull, silent, and uninteresting at home among their children. If they have not mental stores enough for each, let them first use what they have for their own household. A silent home is a dull system for young people, a place from which they will escape if they can. How much useful information, on the other hand, is often given in pleasant conversation; and what unconscious but excellent mental training is lively social argument! Cultivate to the utmost the graces of conversation.

One who had left one church for another, without any intelligent idea of what he was doing, said that he "had abandoned the errors of the Church of Rome and adopted those of the Church of England."