

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1881.

FIRST QUARTER.

Lesson IX.—FEBRUARY 27.

CHRIST HEALING THE SICK. Luke v. 12-26.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 22-26.

Having been rejected at Nazareth, Jesus went to Capernaum and made that city the centre of his work.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"The power of the Lord was present to heal them."—Luke v. 17.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. Christ Healing the Sick, Luke v. 12-26. T. Parallel from Matthew, Matt. viii. 1-4; ix. 2-8. W. Parallel from Mark, Mark i. 40-45; ii. 1-12. T. Leprosy Cleansed, 2 Kings v. 1-14. F. Paralysis Cured, John v. 1-15. S. Sins Forgiven, Psa. xxxiii. 1-11. S. The Son of Man Bestowing Grace, Luke v. 12-26.

PARALLEL TEXTS.

- With vs. 12: Matt. viii. 8; ix. 28; Heb. vii. 25. With vs. 14: Lev. xiv. 4, 10, 21, 22. With vs. 15: Matt. iv. 25; xv. 30; Jehu vi. 2. With vs. 16: Matt. xiv. 23; Mark vi. 46. With v. 20: John v. 14; Acts v. 31; James v. 15, 16. With v. 21: Ps. xxxii. 5; ciii. 3; Isa. i. 18. With v. 24: Acts v. 31; Col. iii. 13. With vs. 25; Psa. ciii. 1. With the lesson: Matt. viii. 1-4; ix. 2-8; Mark i. 40-45; ii. 1-12.

THE SON OF MAN BESTOWING GRACE.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Grace to Heal the Sick, Vss. 12-18, 24, 25. II. Grace to Forgive the Sinner, Vss. 18-26.

QUESTIONS.—I. Vss. 12-18, 24, 25.—Give some account of leprosy. Where did Jesus meet the leprosy man of the lesson? What plea did the man make? How did Jesus heal him? What order did Jesus give the healed man? Why should he tell no man? What had Moses commanded for cleansed lepers? (Vs. 17.) What sick man was here brought to Jesus? How did he finally leave Jesus?

II. Vss. 18-26.—How was the palsied man brought before Jesus? Whose faith did Jesus see in this act? What did Jesus then say to the man? Who complained of Jesus for his claim to forgive sins? How did Jesus prove his power to forgive? How does he now prove this power? How did this scene affect the people? (Vs. 26.)

Several important events occurred between the last lesson and the present one; the draught of fishes (Luke v. 1-11); the miracles of casting out demons, and the cure of Peter's wife (iv. 33-39); with numerous other miracles of healing, which form a fitting introduction to this lesson.

I. The Leper (vs. 12-15). The incident of curing the leper occurred during Christ's first missionary tour through Galilee, as described in Mark i. 21-45. For other accounts of the same event see Matt. viii. 1-14, and Mark i. 40-45.

II. The Paralytic (vs. 16-26). Between these miracles Christ withdraws, to be alone with the Father. It is possible to sacrifice spiritual strength to a restless activity, which, in consequence, becomes superficial and powerless. The healing of the Paralytic took place at Capernaum (Matt. ix. 1.) For parallel accounts, see Matt. ix. 1-8; Mark ii. 1-12. Note the company of Pharisees and Scribes come to criticise, and the significant declaration; "the power of the Lord was present." See the connection between this "power" and vs. 16.

NOTE.—I. (vs. 12-15.) Full of leprosy. For the Mosaic enactments concerning leprosy, and its nature and symptoms, read Leviticus, chapters xiii

and xiv. See, also, Ex. iv. 6; Num. xii. 10; 2 Kings v. 27; xv. 5; 2 Chron. xxvi. 19, 21. Dr. Geikie says of it: "It began with little specks on the eyelids, and on the palms of the hands, and gradually spread over different portions of the body, bleaching the hair white wherever it showed itself, crusting the affected parts with shining scales, and causing swellings and sores. From the skin it slowly ate its way through the tissues to the bones and joints, and even to the marrow, rotting the whole body piecemeal. The lungs, the organs of speech and hearing, the eyes were attacked in turn, till, at last, consumption or dropsy brought welcome death." Trench calls it "the sickness of sickness," and "a living death." Whether contagious or not, has been a disputed question. 2 Kings v. 1; viii. 4; Lev. xiii. 12, 13. Compare Lev. xiii. 45 with Num. vi. 9, and Ezek. xxiv. 17. The leper was excluded from the camp (Lev. xiii. 46) because he typified one dead in sin. How fitting that the Lord of life should conquer death in life, by cleansing this leper.

Behold a man. A sudden appearance is denoted, as of one who had crept stealthily toward Christ. Fell on his face. Matthew says "worshipped; Mark, "kneeling down." Most likely, he did all three. Lord. Not necessarily implying an acknowledgment of Christ's Messiahship, as the word may express simply the respect due from an inferior to his superior. Yet his great need may have given him spiritual discernment. If thou wilt, etc. The language of faith. Contrast it with Mark ix. 22. There is no doubt of Christ's ability, here, but the leper's humility has a tinge of unbelief. He had not the promises which are given to us. Touched him. Mark gives the reason: "Moved with compassion." Another would have been made unclean by touching him; but Jesus, by this touch, brought him out of defilement. So Christ touched our impure nature, and laid hold upon it (Heb. ii. 16). I will. Says Bengel: "A prompt echo to the faith of the leper." Be thou clean. Diseases, as well as demons, own Jesus their Master. Even Moses dared not utter such commanding words over leprosy. See Num. xii. 13. Immediately. Immediateness is connected with all of Christ's cures, showing that there was no room for deception, and also typifying the immediate acceptance of the penitent sinner. Departed from him. Matthew says: "was cleansed." A marvellous fact, attesting Christ's Messiahship, for the Rabbinical books gave the curing of leprosy as a sign of his coming. Tell no man. Mark says that Jesus "straitly (or vehemently) charged him, and forthwith sent him away." The language implies a threat of anger if he disobeyed. Why this prohibition? Alford suggests, 1. A moral admonition, not to make his healing a matter of mere boasting. 2. A cautionary admonition, not to make a noise about it before showing himself to the priest, lest the priest, through malice, should deny the miracle. 3. For the reason given in Matthew xii. 15-21 that He might be known as the Messiah, not by his miracles, but by the result of his work on earth. Others suggest, more probably, that it was that his ministry might not be hindered by the great multitudes gathered out of curiosity (Mark i. 45) or by the premature violence of his enemies (John xi. 46, 47.) Show thyself. See Lev. xiv. 3-7. To obtain a certificate of recovery. Them. The priests. A testimony to them of Christ's power to heal, or against them if they rejected the fact. So much the more, etc. The leper disobeyed, and "began to publish it much" (Mark i. 45). Hence, the great throngs.

II. (vs. 16-26.) Pharisees and doctors. The gathering of these dignitaries from all quarters shows the intense interest which Christ's words and miracles excited. The incident here recorded led to the first open difference between Jesus and them. They came in no friendly mood. The power of the Lord, etc. In answer to prayer (vs. 16.) Them. Not the Pharisees, but those desiring to be healed. Palsy. A paralysis of the body, sometimes of one half, sometimes of all the portion below the neck, sometimes of the whole system. This man, like the leper, had the worst form of his disease, and was evidently incurable. Howbeit. Dr. Robin-

son says: "An oriental house was usually built around a quadrangular interior court." Jesus was either in the "upper chamber" of the house from which he spoke to the crowd assembled in the court; or, as Dr. Geikie suggests, and as seems more likely, the house was one storied, and "Jesus may have stood near the door, in such a position as to be able to address the crowd outside, as well as those in the chamber." The house had a flat roof, reached by a stair-way from the court. Up this stair-way the four men bore the paralytic. Tiling. Burnt clay, of which roofs were often made. Dr. Thomson in Land and Book, says that he has often seen roofs uncovered, after the method implied in this lesson. Their faith. The faith of the five. They knew little of creeds, but they believed in Christ's power to heal. The persistence under such great difficulties shows large faith; and the action of letting the paralytic down "before Jesus," was a powerful appeal. Thy sins, etc. Jesus read his thoughts and saw that a sense of sin—the sin which was the cause, perhaps, of his disease—oppressed him. Hence, he struck at the root, at once. Blasphemies. Who is this that blasphemeth, by ascribing to himself equality with God? See John v. 18. Who can forgive sins? etc. None but God can forgive sins, yet it is true that Jesus forgives sin. See John x. 30. When Jesus perceived. Better, instantly perceiving. See John ii. 25. What reason ye, etc. Matthew expresses how they reasoned in their hearts. "Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?" Their objections were not the expressions of honest doubt, but of jealousy, and hatred. Which is easier to say? It was easier to say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," because that could be put to no outward test. It was bolder to say, "Arise and walk;" and saying that now, with the visible fulfillment, would prove his right to say the words of forgiveness. Son of man. His favorite title for himself; coupled here with forgiveness, and in John v. 27 with judgment. All dealing with our sin belongs to the Son of man. He rose up before them. A visible proof to all that Christ has power to forgive sins.

The two diseased ones of the lesson were extreme cases, hopeless and helpless. But their very wretchedness commended them to Christ. So Christ saves the chief of sinners. Both were healed through faith; and it is written, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." They rejoiced and glorified God. Jesus teaches us to "touch" the sinner with our sympathy, affection, and prayers.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

Our lesson to-day is about two very sick men. One man was covered with dreadful sores; the other had lost his power to move; he could not walk nor lift his arms. Some one made them both well by speaking to them; who must it have been? Yes, Jesus. Jesus did not preach and teach all the time; he went about doing many wonderful things. Encourage children to tell those of which they have heard.

Tell how Jesus came to heal those two sick men. Obtain a clear idea of the construction of an Oriental house from commentaries, or otherwise, in order to explain how the man was let down.

After the first account, speak of the crowds who came to be healed, vs. 15-17. It was not by medicine; how were they healed? It was because Jesus had power to heal. Teach Golden Text.—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Youth's Department.

Scripture Enigma.

No. 112.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

Place the following described words in a column and you will have in both the initials and the finals, a most comforting assurance given in Psalm xxiii: 1. A joyful exclamation. 2. The mother of us all. 3. Giving freely. 4. To ask. 5. One of the four great divisions of the world. 6. An act. 7. Whole. 8. A musical instrument. 9. Exalted. 10. A collection of curiosities. 11. The close of day.

CURIQUS QUESTIONS.

- 168. A bouquet of flowers. 1. Part of a single man's dress. 2. Sugar in a bunch. 3. The upper part of a bird. 4. An appeal to be remembered. 5. Covering for a sly animal's foot. 6. Comfort for those in trouble. 7. The best policy. 8. The coldest of flowers. 9. A lightish red. 10. The warmest of flowers. 11. A saccharine vegetable. 12. A flower to make into candles. 169. Supply the vowels to this stanza. Hwdththltltsb, mprchshnahr, ndgthhnyllhdy, Fmrvroppngflwr.

Answers next week.

Answer to Scripture Enigma.

No. 111.

DOUBLE SCRIPTURAL ACROSTIC.

- 1. L ysanez S (Luke iii. 1) 2. O bedia H (1 Kings xviii. 3) 3. S alom E (Mark xv. 40) 4. T ortois E (Lev. xi. 29) 5. P hili P (Acts viii. 6) 6. I ndi A (Est. i. 1) 7. E glo N (Judges iii. 21) 8. C lou D (Ex. xiii. 21) 9. E gyp T (Jer. xliii. xlv) 10. O stric H (Job xxxix. 13-17) 11. F ac E (2 Cor. iii. 7) 12. M ornin G (Gen. i. 5) 13. O n O (Neh. vi. 2) 14. N ehushi A (2 Kings xxiv. 8) 15. E as T (Ezek. xliii. 2) 16. Y oke S (Gal. v. 1)

Primals, Last piece of money.

Finals, Sheep and the goats.

—Selected and corrected.

ANSWERS TO CURIQUS QUESTIONS.

- 165. TRANSLATIONS. Separable, Parable, Arable, Able, Abel. 166. RE A D E Y R E A R E A D E A R 167. 1. Pale, pall; 2. Rein, reign; 3. Sellar, cellar.

Select Serial.

A Thorny Path.

BY HESBA STRETTON.

CHAPTER VII.

OLD LISTER'S NEW SUIT.

Day after day the faint hope in old Lister's heart that he should find his daughter again smouldered lower and lower. Had she forsaken him and Dot on purpose, out of sheer wickedness and unnaturalness? Or was it partly his own fault, for quitting the gardens before she had had time to return to them? He could not tell, but the result was the same. Here he was dependent upon a strange person, who kept him out of charity, but who would be compelled by-and-by to send him to that dreaded lot which had been hanging over him so long—the ending of his days in the workhouse.

It had never been Mrs. Clack's custom to buy much cast off masculine attire, and she had only done so under compulsion, when the people she dealt with insisted upon her taking all they had to sell. But now she had a man dependant upon her, she looked at it with a more willing eye, examined it more carefully, and offered a more liberal price for it. Old Lister had no clothing but what he was wearing when Don found him; and this was very worn and thin. It seemed to be in the very nick of time that a whole suit was offered to her at a great bargain, not very much the worse for wear, and one that had fitted a man pretty much the same size as old Lister. Mrs. Clack bought them so cheaply that she came home in great triumph, although she was bent double under the weight of her blue linen clothes-bag.

"There, sir!" she exclaimed. "I've got a bargain for you. That's a real gentleman's suit, that is. I darsay when Don comes in he'll be proud to help you to dress yourself up in 'em, so I can see where they fit and where they don't fit. There's a top coat for you—feel it; double-breasted and velvet collar and cuffs, scarcely the worse for wear, and other garments, as it's a thousand pities you haven't the eyes to see how new and fresh they look—not gone at the knees at all, and a strong, stout cloth that you can feel how good it is. You'd be took more notice of in the streets with that suit on. Folks would take you for a gentleman come

down in the world, as no doubt you are, sir. I'm hoping Don mayn't be too late to-night." Fortunately, Don came in earlier than usual, and old Lister, as pleased as a child with his new suit, withdrew into the coach-house below, where he and Don slept. Mrs. Clack clapped her hands with delight and admiration when he reappeared.

"I shouldn't have known you again sir," she cried. "Now I've a real pleasure in looking at you. I could never have thought the sight of any man could have given me so much pleasure. Yes, you'll do wonders now; folks could never pass by and overlook you in that suit, I know. And if it was only summer, instead of being February and bitter cold, we'd all take a little trip down the river as far as Greenwich, with your fiddle, and see what luck we had. I never made such a bargain before, and I wish you luck and long life to enjoy your new suit, sir."

"I wish my daughter Hagar could see me," said the old man, half proudly, while he stroked the velvet cuffs and collar of his new coat, with a pleased and lingering touch.

He felt warm and comfortable in it the next day as he slowly paced the streets, though the wind was blowing from the east, and numbed his fingers, and made him draw very, very wailing notes from his violin strings. Passers-by took more notice of him than they had done in his threadbare and beggarly garb; and more money was given to him, even two or three sixpences in silver, as though Mrs. Clack's foresight was true, and people really took him for a gentleman come down in the world. He had never carried home half so much money, and when he put it down on Mrs. Clack's little table, and listened to the chinking of it as she counted it up, his sad old heart felt cheered as it had not done since he lost his daughter Hagar.

"It is every farthing your due madam," he said to Mrs. Clack, as she pushed it back against his hand, which rested on the table. "We've been living on your charity all this while; and I've often considered it was possibly my duty to hide my head, and my grandchild's head, in the dreaded union; but hope is coming back to me, madam; hope, with her silver wings. Take the money, Mrs. Clack; every farthing of it is your own; it's very beautiful to hear you talk so sir," she answered, with tears in her eyes; but a man ought always to have a little in his pockets, for other folks to see he's not without a penny. It's not the same with women; nobody expects us to have our pockets full; they may be as empty as empty. The more I dwell on it, the more difference I see betwixt men and women. It's a great gulf fixed, and there's no crossing over it; you're on one side of the gulf, and me on the other. It's a wonderful mystery; only we've both got human hearts, and you'd not see, me die of want, I'm sure; and it would be a comfort for me to know where you are, you'd got a few pence by you in case of need."

But a day or two after this, when Don awoke one morning in the dark coach-house, and struck a match to light their farthing candle, old Lister's white head was tossing to and fro in an uneasy slumber, and he was moaning pitifully in his sleep. The bed on which they both lay was nothing but a thin flock mattress, stretched on a heap of straw and rags to keep it from the damp of the ground. The place was choked up with Mrs. Clack's stores; cast-off clothing of all kinds and of all sizes. The air was close and heavy with the unwholesome smell of apparel that had been worn and laid aside unwashed. There was little light, and no ventilation in this old coach-house, and the feeble glimmer of the candle hardly lit up the corner where the mattress lay.

"I am very ill," moaned old Lister, opening his sightless eyes at the sound of the match being struck; "tell Mrs. Clack I cannot go out to-day. I cannot lift up my old head!" As the day wore on there was no doubt that he was very ill, and when Don came home again at night, Mrs. Clack sent him at once for the nearest doctor, who lived at the corner of the next street, and was not above keeping a shop, and

mixing up... tions of m... physicians. Mrs. Clack... side of the... the bed, kis... he would n... her. The... diously at... and felt the... feeling pul... W He is h... he's down... wonder, h... and brea... an expres... dens like... are his wif... "No! O... vously; "am nobody... by him as... what I cu... you say it... "It's fe... hastening... fresh air." "It coul... Mrs. Clack... never dea... clothes, I... had a suit... cheap onl... been wea... not be the... "Very... a great b... to you is... poor old... for him... he mutter... air that's... In a fe... that the... fever, an... bling in... his aged... strength... and moa... easily b... the coac... children... spite of t... to time... as possi... was a dr... one ano... afraid of... neighb... Clack; o... old man... to take... The f... ing its v... Lister's... clearer... almost... "Tel... voice, s... who wa... where I... Don... him, an... matter... dering... hat by... hot he... speke, ... into M... "I... "Oh... appeal... could... where... "I... saddy... "I... tered... from s... see so... "Oh... "you... of us... serry... "Dot... love... Clack... "Y... God!... "G... Don... loves... "A... used I... half... "A... "The... here... you;... where... and i... dying... A... He k... good... told... only... utter... "G...