

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1881.

SECOND QUARTER.

Lesson II.—APRIL 24.

COVETOUSNESS.

Luke xii. 13-21.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 13-15.

The scene of this lesson is Judea, and the time late in A. D. 29.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Take heed, and beware of covetousness."—Luke xii. 15.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. Covetousness, Luke xii. 13-21.
T. Covetousness Illustrated, Josh. vii. 16-26.
W. Covetousness Illustrated, 2 Kings v. 20-27.
T. Covetousness Illustrated, Act v. 1-11.
F. Covetousness Condemned, James i. 1-9.
S. Treasure in Heaven, Matt. vi. 19-34.
S. The Sin of Covetousness, Luke xii. 13-21.

THE SIN OF COVETOUSNESS.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Covetousness Illustrated, Vss. 13, 16-19. II. Covetousness Condemned, Vss. 14, 15, 20, 21.

QUESTIONS.—What is meant by covetousness?

I. Vss. 13, 16-19.—What request did one of Jesus' hearers make? What did he mean by "Master"? In what respects did his claim illustrate covetousness? Describe in your own words the man presented in the parable. What wrong action is there in his case?

II. Vss. 14, 15, 20, 21.—Why did Jesus make the reply of vs. 44? What reason for shunning covetousness is in vs. 15? In what, then, does a man's life consist? What rule does the Lord give in Matt. vi. 33? What title does God give the man in the parable? (Vs. 20).

This lesson is intimately connected in theme, and, most likely, in time, with the preceding one. Coming forth from the house of the Pharisee, where he had uttered the bold rebukes in the last lesson, Jesus was surrounded by a great crowd of people ("an innumerable multitude," v. 1), and in their presence, taking the Pharisees as a text, he addressed his disciples upon the subjects of Hypocrisy (vs. 1-12), Covetousness (vs. 13-21), and God's care for his people, (vs. 22-34). The second subject forms our lesson. This, our Lord enforced and illustrated by the parable of the "Rich Fool."

NOTES.—I. The Occasion of the Parable, (vs. 13-15).

Verse 13.—One of the Company. One of the "multitude" spoken of in vs. 1. Not one of the disciples whom he was now addressing. This man was more intent upon worldly gain than spiritual profit. His address to Jesus, though abrupt and inopportune, is respectful. Speak to my brother, that he divide, etc. Bid my brother divide. This application, though revealing a selfish and worldly spirit, was quite natural; for as Geikie says: "It was the custom to refer questions of all kinds to the Rabbis for their counsel and decision, which carried great weight. Jesus does not call his claim in question. He may have been a younger brother who had been really defrauded by the older brother into whose hands the property had fallen, and who refused to give him the smaller portion which was a younger brother's share. This man's covetous heart desired the intercession of Jesus with a brother for a few acres of land, rather than with God for eternal mansions.

Verse 14.—Man. Used reprovingly. See Rom. ii. 1; ix. 20. Who made me a judge? etc. Almost the very words used in reply to Moses in Ex. ii. 14. Yet Moses was such afterwards by God's appointment. But Christ said: "My kingdom is not of this world." The judge decided points of law in disputed cases; the divider executed the judge's decision. Jesus came neither for the one nor the other purpose. He struck at the root of all difficulties,—the heart,—and, wherever Christianity prevails, there a just regard for others' rights, and the spirit of peace go with it.

Verse 15.—Jesus saw the covetousness of this man's heart, and drew from it a solemn warning. Take heed and be-

ware. A double admonition,—a suggestion of great and unsuspected danger. Covetousness. Better all covetousness; i. e., all kinds, for covetousness assumes many shapes. A man's life, etc. Not what a man has, but what he is, is his true life. The word life is used in its full sense, including all that makes living blessed in time and eternity.

II. The Parable, (vs. 16-20)

Verse 16.—The parable is concerning a successful and prosperous man whose desires to be "rich" were met, but who had within him the covetous craving for accumulation that never can be satisfied. The ground of this rich man brought forth plentifully. Jesus makes the illustration all the stronger, because he instances a man who grew rich by no questionable business. The parable cuts deeper than any worldly morality. The point of the story is not in the getting of riches, nor in the manner of getting them, but in the holding on to them, and making them take God's place in the heart.

Verse 17.—And he thought within himself. He took counsel with selfishness, instead of asking God. He planned with himself how to keep, instead of taking God's plan to distribute his gains. What shall I do? Wealth brings anxieties. The question of profitable investments is a perplexing one. Notice the large percentage which the Lord gives, (Luke vi. 38). The only true answer to his question is found in the word give. I have no room to bestow my fruits. Says Ambrose: "Thou hast barns,—the bosoms of the poor, the houses of widows, the mouths of infants,—these are the barns which will last for ever." Says Jesus: "The poor ye have always with you, and when ye will ye may do them good." This man said, "My fruits," unmindful of God's proprietorship, and the purpose for which these "fruits" were entrusted to his hands.

Verse 18.—This will I do. A sagacious conclusion from a worldly point of view. There is no sin, in itself, in business enlargement. I will pull down my barns, etc. The barns of that day were warehouses, or pits dug in the ground where the soil was dry, in which grain could be stored, safe from thieves and vermin. They were filled, and then covered over with soil to conceal their locality. There will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. He would hoard, not use. Nothing for the needy, for it is "all my fruits." It is again, "My fruits and my goods," with God entirely shut out of the question. But in what does all this differ from the prevailing ideas of worldly prudence at the present day?

Verse 19.—His folly increases. He now speaks as if his riches could feed and satisfy his soul. Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years. Communing with the soul may be very profitable, but what an insult to it, to speak as if worldly goods could fill it. The soul can feed only on God. His love alone can satisfy it. Take thine ease: eat, drink, and be merry. This is not the picture of what we call an immoral man that Jesus draws here, but of the inconsiderate, selfish worldly man who is found in good society; and the type of multitudes who are accounted excellent citizens.

Verse 20.—God said. An unwelcome interlocutor appears. As to Belshazzar (Dan. v. 5), so to this man there comes a message from God. It is vain to try to shut God out of our affairs. Thou fool. Unwise or unthinking one. Stier says: "His folly was fourfold: 1. He forgets the giver ('my fruits,' etc.) 2. He greedily reserves all for himself. 3. He imagines such things to be food for his soul. 4. He forgets death which is every day possible." He thought himself wise, and the world called him so. God said, fool! This night. Opposed to the "many years" which he had promised himself. Thy soul shall be required of thee, or rather, they require thy soul. Perhaps alluding to the messengers whom God would send to take it away from the scenes of mirth. Instead of being "merry," it should be snatched suddenly away to its doom. Then whose? etc. A pertinent question. Long before, the Psalmist had said: "He heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them, (Psalm xxxix, 6).

III. The Application, (vs. 21). So is he. Just such a fool, in what-

this man's hopeless end. Such an unwise one is, not shall be, the worldly man, who now layeth up treasure for himself. His whole course, from beginning to end, is folly, and is not rich toward God. The contrast is between self and God. "He who is laying up treasure for himself, is by so much robbing his real inward life of its resources; he is providing for the flesh; but the spirit is stripped of all its riches."

Our Lord knows how to bring wisdom out of folly.

The man of the parable is no exceptional case. It is not a rare and horrid monster whom Jesus paints. Indeed, in the cleanness of his hands in securing riches, he is far above multitudes who have the taint of injustice or even of crime upon their wealth.

To many respectable and thriving persons does this parable say, "Thou art the man."

The grand corrective of covetousness is to give out freely as God pours in.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

Begin with a short talk about the farmer and his work.

Allow the children to imitate, by gesture, sowing, reaping, etc.

After all the grain is cut down, where is it kept?

Draw the picture of a barn, and interest the children in it.

What would a man do, if he found that his barn was not large enough to hold all the grain and fruit that had grown during the summer?

I will read you a story, from the Bible, about just such a man. It is one of Jesus' stories. What do we call it, then? Read vs. 16, 17, 18. When this man saw how much he had laid up, he thought he would not work any more. He said: "These things will last many years. I will take my ease. I will do nothing but eat and drink, and have a good time." Read vs. 19.

Can you think of anything else that the man ought to have done?

If he was so rich, he certainly should have remembered the poor.

Whom, do you think, a man loves most, when he wants to do nothing but eat and drink and have a good time? I think he loves himself most. Do you think such a man loves God with all his heart? Do you think he loves his neighbor as himself? Tell me, then, the two great laws that this rich man did not obey.

"God was not in all his thoughts."

God said to him: "Thou fool! this night thou shalt die; then who will have all these things?"

It is not wrong to be rich; it is best not to think too much about the good things we can have here. We are so apt to forget about the better things in heaven.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Boys' Department.

Scripture Enigma.

No. 122.

A COMPANY OF BIBLE WOMEN—TWO FROM THE WHOLE.

Two—the types of Israel's blessing, Woman's foremost place possessing, From the following names discern, Or from Bethlehem's elders learn.

- 1. First, a widow newly mated (By those elders indicated), Who from Moab's land had come To a princely Jewish home.
2. Then, beside the Nile's blue water, An Egyptian priest's fair daughter; And her progeny describes Two of Israel's foremost tribes.
3. Next, a sable queen, whose servant Of the prophet's words observant, Travelling to his native land, Was baptized by Philip's hand.
4. Now we search and find another, Who became a happy mother; And her son the unction brings Unto Israel's first two kings.
5. Now, a captive Jewish maiden, With imperial honours laden; The proud Haman's fall achieved, And her people's lot retrieved.
6. One, the Jewish forms obeying, With a band of women praying, Who attended to the word Which, with opened heart, she heard.

- 7. Next, a farmer's wife appearing— He his sheep in Carmel shearing: He was foolish; she was wise, And found grace in David's eyes.
8. Next, a beautiful woman speaking, While her widowed heart was breaking: "Mara now my name should be; Bitter is the name for me!"
9. Then, a prophet-woman singing; "Praise the Lord, deliverance bringing!" For king Jabin's hosts were dead, And on foot proud Sisera fled.
10. Then, in later days, another, A believing mother's mother; And the faith that in her dwelt Was in her young grandson felt.
11. Then in Herod's reign, another, Who though old became a mother; And her son prepared the way, For the Saviour's gospel-day.
12. Othniel's wife, and Caleb's daughter Next, who asked for springs of water, (For her land no verdure drest), And he granted her request.
13. Last, a dame of wondrous knowledge Dwelling in the sacred college, When Josiah sought to know Of the days of Judah's woe.

Now, th' initials laid together, You may well distinguish whether They deserve the foremost place, Mothers of their ancient race. —Selected.

CURIOS QUESTIONS.

METAPLASM.

191. First I am one of Shakespeare's kings; change my head and have a highly-prized fruit; change again and have precious; again and have an animal; again and have to cauterize; again and have a boundary; another change and have one of the passions; again and have the use of one of the senses; again and have to consume slowly; again and have apparatus; again and have adjacent; again and have a drop of water; again and have part of a century; one more change—the fourteenth and last—and have the end, or hindmost. —Watchman.

- 192. MAKE A WORD SQUARE.
1. The ruling heavenly principle.
2. An unpleasant odor.
3. Wicked.
4. A lovely garden.

Answer to Scripture Enigma.

No. 120.

- 1. W indo w.....Gen. viii. 6.
2. A ban a.....2 Kings v. 12.
3. Yesterday.....Job viii. 9.
"I am the WAY." John xiv. 6.
No. 121.
1. B abel.....Gen. xi. 9.
2. U ri.....Exodus xxxi. 2.
3. R echabites. Jer. xxxv. 1-14.
4. N athaniel. John i. 47.
5. I srael.....Gen. xxxii. 28.
6. N azarene. Matt. ii. 23; Judg. xiii. 5;
7. G albanum. Ex. xxx. 34. [1 Sam. i. 1].
8. B eth-peor. Deut. xxxiv. 6.
9. U sury.....Deut. xxiii. 19, 20.
10. S lander.....Prov. x. 18.
11. H iram.....1 Kings 5.

BURNING BUSH. Exodus iii. 2.

ANSWERS TO CURIOS QUESTIONS.

- 191. DECAPITATIONS.
1. Y our, 9. B eagle,
2. E vent, 10. O pinion,
11. R ace,
3. M aster, 12. N arrow,*
4. U nit
5. S ewer, 13. A gate,
6. T ease, 14. G lance,
15. A maze,
7. B ark, 16. I deal,
8. E late,* 17. N ice.

YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN.

*ERIATA.—In Questions 191 "pole" should be hole. "Elate" should be Ebony. "Wrath" should be width.

192. Thou shalt not steal.

- 193.
1. Cow—crow.
2. day—day.
3. cook—crook.
4. book—brook.
5. dove—drove.
6. gay—gray.
7. gain—grain.
8. stove—strove.

Translated.

BY REV. J. CLARK.

God but spake, and angel fingers Bare my flower above; And a voice, whose music lingers, Whispered, "God is love."

Darkling thoughts in brightness perished: Heaven grew wondrous fair; Glad, I saw that what I cherished Bloomed immortal there. Yarmouth, N. S.

The train had just rolled into the station, and little Charley stood listening a moment to the sound of the escaping steam. Then, turning to his father, he said, "Pa, the engine's all out o' breath, aint it?"

Select Serial.

A Thorny Path.

BY HESBA STRETTON.

CHAPTER XV. DON'S THANKSGIVING.

Don began his new task with great energy—the task of providing for little Dot's wants. Fortunately for him, the worst part of the winter was over, though the nights were still cold, and many of the spring days were too stormy for a young child to live altogether out of doors. But the daylight lasted long, and the times were busy; it was just the season of the year when work was most plentiful. Even at the East End there was a difference when the West End was filled with its population of wealthy people. From the earliest dawn till the latest twilight Don was sharply on the lookout for any job to be done, and his keen eyes and quick movements often secured him work wherever there was a press of business on hand.

Sometimes Dot trotted beside him, or rode on his shoulders, when he went on errands. His happiest days were those when he had a little money to lay out in oranges or sweetmeats or other small marketable stock which promised him a quick return and a good profit on his outlay. Then Dot rode triumphantly on his hired wheelbarrow, keeping him merry with her little ways, and the chatter he loved to listen to. But he often found that she could not go with him when he was bound for any distance or was engaged for a few hours' work, and then, with sore misgivings of heart and countless terrors while he was away, he was compelled to leave her in the charge of some lodging-house keeper, or, still oftener, under the chance care of some apple-stall woman near his place of work, whose stall might happen to be in an archway or any other sheltered spot. The women were very good to little Dot, but it caused him many a pang of anxiety and many a sharp sense of gladness, first to leave her, and then to come back and find her safe and happy.

The wandering life they lived was very pleasant to him, and Dot threw well upon it. They scarcely ever spent a week in the same lodging-house, or even in the same street, though Don kept cautiously to the East End and the neighborhood of the docks, where he could almost always find some work to do. In his eagerness to be earning money for Dot and her wants he pitted himself against full grown men, and thrust himself forward for tasks too heavy for him. He could not get rid of his dread of the child being forcibly taken away from him, if there was anything miserable and neglected about her appearance. To ask any person for help or advice in any way would subject him to questions he could not easily and truthfully answer. If he found any of the people with whom he was thrown into company at all desirous to know his history, it was a sufficient hint to him to change his quarters, and any kindly inquiry from the woman who took care of Dot for him filled him with deep anxiety. Amid all his ignorance he knew he must not tell a lie; and he could not bring himself to break the law of the God of whom he had so faint a knowledge, even when facing the danger of losing little Dot. If he could only say she was his sister, that would be a sufficient answer to every inquiry, but Don could not. To speak the truth always, and to teach Dot to do the same, was what God required of him, and he must do it.

As a further precaution against being tracked and discovered by Dot's enemies, the police and parish authorities of Chelsea, who were bent upon imprisoning her in the workhouse, he dropped the name of Don, which he knew by this time to be too odd and singular to escape notice, and called himself John. He tried hard to call Dot "Hagar," which he believed was her real name; as old Lister had once said she was named after her mother had forsaken her. But he seldom succeeded in remembering her new name, except when anybody asked him what to call her. Still having taken these cautious measures, he felt he had raised yet another barrier against the chance of

her detection. The summer Don, and the were full of after the da could carry river, and and down, floating idly with the qu where they they came sailing with the open and strange sight of the sant days; better from ing up sto Clack. Th and white s the lessons and Jesus which were to him, yet no other w like good s ground of to bring future harv Don was lightsome thinner an growing hi hungry, an to poor foll put off an satisfied. concerna was his clothe looking er errands. for himself or as long not suppli she had an her pretty She never of been he cried at s openly, ar Don. He hunger an the river and gave h Don satisfi sharp-set o sary to liv to provide "It was a had saved and troue He had h days past, him that market to up for sale reduced by to buy the hard barg ones as pa told him he stood Don's tall face look strength. "Little took the and led h "to-mor some nev into one very bigg never be in the big thank hi thing. V know, bu me well Dot?" "I'll s "and pe clothes a lady doll "It's G Don. Very e away out lodging-h of the st Dot's fa drinking trusual to prese he doer were th time for looked and awe he was g As if h he gase standing thus of