

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1881.

SECOND QUARTER.

Lesson XIII.—JUNE 26.

THE GOSPEL FOR THE WORLD.

Luke xxiv. 44-53.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 45-48.

The text of this lesson was not chosen by the International Lesson Committee, but it is the selection of various publishers who desire uniformity in the Scriptures for this day also.

The events of the last lesson occurred on the day Jesus rose from the dead. On that same evening, he appeared to the apostles, Thomas being absent; a week later, he appeared again to them, Thomas being present.

With verse 44—Matt. xvi. 21. With verse 45—Mark viii. 31, 32; ix. 31; Acts xvi. 14; 2 Cor. iv. 6.

With verse 47—Dan. ix. 24; Gen. xii. 2; Psa. xxii. 27; Isa. xlix. 6; Jer. xxxi. 34; Hos. i. 23; Mic. iv. 2; Mal. i. 11; Gal. iii. 14.

With verse 48—Jer. xv. 27; Acts i. 22.

With verse 49—Isa. xlv. 3; Joel ii. 28; Acts ii. 1.

With verse 51—Eph. i. 20; iv. 8.

With verse 53—Acts ii. 46; v. 42.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"They went forth and preached everywhere."—Mark xvi. 20.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. The Gospel for the World, Luke xxiv. 44-53. T. Salvation in Prophecy, 1 Peter i. 3-12. W. Sins of the Heathen, Rom. i. 1-25. F. The Spirit Sent, Acts ii. 1-18. S. Christ Preached to Gentiles, Acts xiii. 14-41. S. Foreign Mission Work, Acts xiv. 1-28.

THE GOSPEL FOR THE WORLD.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. The Gospel Understood, Vss. 44-47. II. The Field Defined, Vs. 47. III. The Workers Equipped, Vss. 48-53.

QUESTIONS.—Vss. 44-47.—What did Jesus say should be preached among the nations? (v. 47). What is repentance? What the remission of sins? What is it to preach these? What three things written are specified in vs. 46, 47? Can one be saved without understanding them? (Acts iv. 12). What, then, is the state of the heathen? What do they need?

Vs. 47.—Why should a beginning be made at Jerusalem? (Matt. x. 5, 6; xv. 24). How lands are included in this order? How is this order expressed in Matt. xxviii. 19? How in Mark xvi. 15, 16?

Vss. 48-53.—Who were to preach the gospel on this field? What are they called in vs. 48? How may all persons help in this work? (Luke xi. 13).

We have here the Saviour's last teachings. In them he sets forth—(1) The supremacy of the Scriptures. (2) Our duty to give the gospel to the world. We have also his parting blessing as he ascended to heaven, and we see his disciples filled with joy, worshipping him and praising and blessing God.

NOTES.—I. The Supremacy of the Scriptures, (44-46).

Verse 44.—The words. Alford, "My words." His death and resurrection were in accordance with his own words, although his disciples had not understood him. See xviii. 31-33; xx. 37.

While I was yet with you. He had gone away from them as it was "expedient" that he should do, (John xvi. 7). The separation was consummated, and his abode was elsewhere. In the law of Moses, etc. The Jews divided the Old Testament into three parts,—the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa (holy writings). The Pentateuch formed the first division; Jo-hua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, with all the prophets except Daniel the second; the remainder, including 'the Psalms,' the Hagiographa. Jesus spoke of the different divisions of the Old Testament as of equal authority, and as inviolable and inspired. "All things" therein "must

be fulfilled." all the promises, all the threatenings, all things concerning him who is the burden of the whole.

Verses 45, 46.—It was not enough to open the Scriptures. The sun gives no sight to a blind man. He who made the sun, must also open the eyes to see it. Therefore, he opened their understanding. He had taken the veil from the Scriptures here he takes the veil from their hearts. Before his death, they were dull learners, because blinded by false ideas of the nature of his kingdom. Much that he had told them was not understood, (Mark ix. 32). That they might understand the Scriptures. The highest attainment for the understanding is to be wise, not "above what is written," but in what is written. The Scriptures are here put far above science and all human learning. The act mentioned of opening their understanding may be the same as that recorded in John xx. 22, where he breathed on them, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Thus it is written. The Scriptures ever supreme. The Scriptures specially revealed these gospel facts: (1) The Christ suffering for our sins. (2) A triumphant Christ, through his resurrection. (3) An inseparable connection between suffering and glory. See 2 Tim. ii. 12.

II. Our duty to the world, (47-49.)

Verse 47.—Having set forth the great facts of salvation, given of old in the Scriptures, but accomplished in his own death and resurrection, Jesus gives his disciples the Great Commission; lays upon them and us the duty of taking this gospel to the world. "Repentance and remission" go together in our preaching the gospel. The fact of pardon provided is to be urged as a motive for repentance. "Remission" is to be preached, not performed. The servants of Christ are not sent to forgive sins, but to tell of the forgiveness freely bestowed by Christ. In his name. On the ground of what he has done. His name represents himself and his work. "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission." All nations need the gospel; it is adapted to all. The dignity of the missionary enterprise is seen in the fact that its field is nothing less than the world. Beginning at Jerusalem.

(1) This would be according to prophecy, "Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem;" (Isa. ii. 3). (2) Jerusalem was the metropolis and heart of the then existing kingdom of God. "To the Jew first." (3) If the gospel was false, Jerusalem was the place to prove it so being true; it there challenged the closest scrutiny. (4) To show that there was mercy for even the chief of sinners; for the very murderers of the Son of God. The apostles were to begin at Jerusalem, but not to end there, nor to tarry till the whole city was evangelized.

Verses 48, 49.—Perhaps a better rendering would connect the last phrase with this verse, thus: "Beginning at Jerusalem ye are witnesses of these things." Ye is emphatic. As witnesses of Christ's resurrection, the office of the apostles was peculiar. See Acts i. 22; but witnessing was not to be confined to them. They who experience the Lord's pardoning love are also to tell the story, not from outward compulsion, but from inward joy. The promise of my Father. "The promise" is the Holy Spirit; made by the "Father" in the Old Testament (Joel ii. 28-32), and here renewed by the Son, and fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. Tarry ye . . . until ye be endued with power from on high. This command was given on the day of his ascension, (Acts i. 8). The Spirit was to descend "not many days hence," (Acts i. 5). The disciples waited in worship and prayer (Acts i. 13, 14) for ten days until "the Day of Pentecost had fully come." The world was in need of the gospel; yet divine wisdom said "wait," for it was folly to enter upon the great work without "the power." Endued. Clothed. A common and expressive figure. See Rom. xiii. 12, 14; 1 Cor. xv. 53; Gal. iii. 27; Eph. iv. 24, where the word is translated "put on." The disciples were to be invested with a new power, as with a new garb,—a power coming through the special gift of the Holy Spirit,—which should manifest itself in speaking with tongues, working miracles, and preaching the gospel with large results.

III. The Parting Blessing, (50, 51.)

The last day of our Lord on earth had come. The Scriptures had been ex-

pounded to his disciples; the great gospel facts unfolded; the commission to preach to all nations, given; the "power from on high" promised as near at hand; and now he must "go to the Father," that at "the right hand of God exalted" he might "shed forth" the Holy Ghost upon them, (Acts ii. 33). Led them out. Out of Jerusalem.

Bethany. A small village bordering on the Mount of Olives, where Mary and Martha and Lazarus lived. Our Lord ascended from the Mount, near to Bethany. Lifted up his hands. The gesture of blessing. See Lev. ix. 22, where Aaron, the high priest, having presented the offerings for the people, lifted up his hands to bless them. So Christ, as High Priest, having offered up himself as a sacrifice for sin, lifted his hands and blessed his disciples. This was his last gesture on earth, and words of blessing his last words. In the midst of this significant action he was parted from them, and carried into heaven. Gradually he ascended,—not at once disappearing, as in xxiv. 31,—that we might know that he carried with him our humanity. A cloud, perhaps the Old Testament Schechinah, received him out of their sight. He passed from bodily vision, but not from the eye of faith which now sees him where Stephen beheld him, "standing on the right hand of God," (Acts vii. 55). And faith also knows that "this same Jesus shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

IV. Joy and Worship, (52, 53.)

They worshipped him. Gave him divine homage; the first act of worship to the ascended Lord. Then they returned to Jerusalem as they had been directed to do. With great joy. Understanding now the words of Christ in John xiv. 28, "I go unto my Father," and believing the words of the angels that he should come again, (Acts ii. 11). Compare this joy with their sorrow as he left them for the cross. Continually in the temple. Daily, at the hours of prayer, (Acts iii. 1). Praising and blessing God. They mingled praise with their "prayer and supplication" (Acts i. 14) as they waited for the "power from on high." They rejoiced in the promise as if it were already fulfilled,—a hint to us all as to how to offer "prevailing prayer." These last words of this lesson form a fitting ending for our studies for the first half of the year 1881. May we, like the early disciples, be continually "praising and blessing God. Amen."

What has been done? The Bible has been translated by missionaries and others into 226 different languages. Mission Stations, churches, schools and other gospel work has been done in almost every land. Some countries have been altogether changed from idolatry to a profession of Christianity. There are 1,650,000 native Christians under the care of the missionaries. About \$2,000,000 are annually given by American Christians, and between \$3,000,000 and \$4,000,000 by the English churches to Foreign Missions. The past ten years have seen more extensive revivals of religion and larger numbers of conversions than ever before.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

Ask a few questions about the walk to Emmaus.

Picture, in detail, the scenes of vs. 36-43.

Forty days after Jesus rose from the dead, he came to his disciples, and led them a little way out of Jerusalem, to a pleasant place called Bethany. When they were all gathered on the hill near Bethany, Jesus lifted up his hands, and blessed his disciples. Listen to what happened then. Read, then memorize, v. 51. Read, also, Acts i. 10, 11.

What were Jesus' disciples to do now? Our Golden Text tells us what they did. The good news about Jesus is for all the world.

After they had waited and prayed many days, they went forth and preached everywhere.

How can you help the boys and girls of other countries to learn about Jesus? You can help to send others? You can pray for them; you can pray for the good men and women who have gone to be their teachers.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

If pride leads the van poverty brings up the rear.

Booth's Department.

The Watchman and the Stranger.

BY HELEN PEARSON BARNARD.

When the hum of business had ceased, the evening shadows had fallen, and the city lamps were lighted,—then began the duties of Captain Earnshaw, a private night watch. Every one in the square of which he had charge will remember the stately man of military bearing, who was so vigilant and faithful; no unlocked door, no gas left burning by careless clerk, escaped his eye.

"If Earnshaw owned the square, he wouldn't be more careful," was often said.

The captain's heart glowed with pride at the compliments he received,—very substantial ones at Christmas from some of the merchants whom he served.

Late one summer evening as he was pacing the square, he heard footsteps approaching. It was seldom that any one passed through these business streets at night, except an officer or some drunken person mistaken in his way. The captain paused in the shadow. Soon a tall figure passed under a lamp, a little distance off, but the keen eye of the watch had scanned his dress and knew that he was not an officer. He was a stranger, apparently, for he was looking from right to left as if doubtful of his course. When he reached the captain he paused.

"Are you an officer, friend, and will you direct one who was never before in your city?"

The quaint address and deep rich voice were peculiarly winning. He appeared like a clergyman, but his shabby dress and sailor-like bundle puzzled Captain Earnshaw.

"What do you want at this time of night?" was the gruff response.

"I came on a coasting schooner," returned the stranger, adding with great simplicity, "Do you know Andrew Smith? I go to his house to-night."

Captain Earnshaw would have smiled, but could not before that benign countenance with the flowing patriarchal beard. He told him respectfully that he did not know Andrew Smith, but if he had the street and number, the stationed police would show him the way.

"Will you permit me to rest a bit on these steps?" asked the old man. "I am too weary to go on."

"Certainly," said the watch. "You should have left the schooner earlier, sir; this is no time to enter a strange city."

"I landed before dark," was the reply, "but my Master's business kept me. That is always my first concern."

"I took you to be on your own hook," said the captain. "I should not think he'd expect one of your age to be about wharves after dark. It isn't safe. Desperate characters are there, who come out with the rats and the darkness."

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

The stranger repeated this slowly, with mournful emphasis.

"That's Scripture, I s'pose," said Captain Earnshaw, who had never heard a text when on duty, "but it's true."

He thought this a pious reflection, but his strange visitor did not seem satisfied, for he said earnestly,—

"I trust that you believe in the Holy Scriptures, friend; all that is written therein is 'upright, even words of truth.'"

The watchman suddenly thought he had "better be moving on." When he came on again he found the old man was asleep.

"Why, sir, you'll be robbed and murdered yet!" cried the captain, arousing him.

"My Master cares for me," was the calm reply. "I sleep unharmed among the violent. They care not for my treasures,—my Bible and these tracts," lifting his bundle, "but sometimes they listen a moment, so I go among them. On the sea-coast I am well known. They call me Father Gwynn. When they are in trouble I comfort them with God's Word. I preach on land and sea to those who do not go to church. I have no home, but there is always a place to lay my head, and that is more than my blessed Master had, for it is

written, 'The Son of man hath not where to lay His head.'"

Captain Earnshaw was silent.

"I talked on the wharf to-night with men that had never heard of Christ. Perhaps good seed was sown. In a few days I hope to return to the coast," then suddenly raising his eyes to the motionless guard, he said, "I must ask after your soul's welfare, friend! The Lord led me to you for some wise purpose."

All the unbelief in his listener's heart burst forth.

"So you think it's the Lord's doings? Now I say, you chanced to cross my beat when I was civil. But we all look at things differently; it'll be the same in the end!"

"My friend, you are greatly mistaken!" returned Father Gwynn. "It makes an eternity's difference whether one has the right belief or not. You are a watchman, I presume?"

This introduced the captain's favorite topic. With visible pride he told how he had guarded the square for twelve years.

"There's millions o' property here, sir, and the buildings are all in my charge. Nothing has happened since I took the position!"

"Have you had no robberies?"

"No, sir," said the night-watch, with emphasis. "They've had them in other parts of the city, but I keep on the move, and if any suspicious persons appear, I call the police."

"Have there been no fires in all these years?"

"Not here. I'm on the watch, you see!"

The stranger's next question was solemn and searching.

"Have you returned thanks for this long season of prosperity?"

"Why should I?" replied Captain Earnshaw almost angrily. "Haven't I been careful and faithful, never sleeping at my post? Why should I thank the Lord for my own prudence?"

Father Gwynn was silent, but his sad, shocked face subtued the other, for he added, kindly,—

"But you and I won't quarrel about this. It is now time to go if we would meet the police."

When they parted Father Gwynn said,—

"We may never meet again, friend. I wish I could convince you that God directs the smallest affairs of life. 'Not by might, not by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.' O my friend, will you not look into this matter?"

"And remember this," he continued, with the majestic severity that the old prophets might have shown, "it is written in God's Word, and He will yet prove it,—'Except the Lord keep the city the watchman waketh but in vain.'"

Father Gwynn repeated the passage again, impressively, and went away.

"He'd give the Lord the credit of everything!" muttered Captain Earnshaw, "but there'd be queer doings if it wasn't for us watchmen!"

But it was long before he ceased to think of his midnight visitor and the text that rang in his ears like a prophecy.

Some months later, as Captain Earnshaw was on guard, a gust of wind suddenly swept the square. Thinking it might betoken rain, he lifted his eyes to the sky. The blood leaped into his bronzed face; there was a lurid gleam in Warrenton, Power and Co.'s store,—fire in his own square! The captain instantly gave the alarm. The firemen were soon on the spot. But the building was so secured by bolts and iron shutters that they could not get inside, and the fire was in the upper story.

"I'll go to Warrenton for the key," cried Captain Earnshaw, starting on the run.

But he had not gone far before something new occurred to the athletic man,—terrible in the present crisis. His step faltered, his feet would scarcely support his trembling frame; like one in a nightmare, no effort of will hastened his progress. He met no one whom he could send ahead; he could only go slowly on, knowing that each moment was an advantage to the fire-fiend. He groaned aloud as he thought of the property he had so proudly guarded. He reached Mr. Warrenton's house too exhausted to pull the bell.

The captain says he was insensible about twenty minutes. When he came to himself he heard the clang of fire-bells, and as distinctly as if he were