

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1882.

SECOND QUARTER.

Lesson XI.—JUNE 11, 1882.

THE AFFLICTED CHILD.

Mark ix. 14-32

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Vss. 21-24.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"All things are possible to him that believeth."—Mark ix. 23.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. The Lesson, Mark ix. 14-32. T. Parallel in Matthew, Matt. xvii. 14-23. W. Low Spiritual State, Rev. iii. 14-22. T. Lord, increase our Faith! Luke xvii. 1-10. F. Warfare with the Powers of Evil, Eph. vi. 10-20. S. Christ's Sorrow over Israel, Matt. xxiii. 29-39. S. Sorrows of Christ's Servants, 2 Cor. iv. 1-11.

FAILURES IN THE PRESENT.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Want of Power, Vss. 14-18, 28, 29. II. Want of Faith, Vss. 19-27. III. The Saviour Rejected, Vss. 30-32.

QUESTIONS.—Where had Jesus left the nine? In what region?

Vss. 14-18, 28, 29.—What mortifying failure on the part of the nine? Had they received power to cast out demons? Who attacked them? Who came to their rescue? What reason for failure given in vs. 29? What had they neglected?

Vss. 19-27.—What exclamation did Christ utter? Who and what tried him so sorely? How did the father show imperfect faith?

Vss. 30-32.—What journey next? How, and why privately? What did Christ teach his disciples? Did they understand? Why did not they ask his meaning? How did he feel in view of their rejection of him? What sorrow do his servants now often have?

Special Subjects.—How far are our failures our own fault? Power of faith and weakness of doubt. Success sometimes out of our reach. Power by prayer. Fasting. Effect of a prayerful life on character and work. The failure of the Jews to be blessed by Christ's ministry. Constant trial endured by Christ.

Stier speaks of the contrast between the "open heaven and the sons of glory on the mountain, and the valley of tears, with its terrible forms of misery and pain and unbelief." While Christ and the three saw the first, the nine were passing through a far different scene at the base of the mountain.

NOTES.—I. The Demonized Boy, (Vss. 14-20).

Vs. 14-16.—To his disciples. The nine, who had probably been left at the foot of the mountain. The Scribes. Omit the. The reference is not to specific and known individuals. Questioning. Disputing, in which the Scribes, by reason of superior education and long practice, had the advantage over the disciples; and especially as the latter were hampered by their failure to heal the lunatic boy. Greatly amazed. We are not told why. Was it merely the opportune appearance of Christ upon the scene of his disciples' failure? What question ye with them? Jesus comes to the aid of his perplexed disciples, as their defender.

Vs. 17, 18.—One of the multitude. In the commanding presence of Jesus, the Scribes are silent; and it is an afflicted father who speaks. He proceeds to state the case. He started from home to bring his only son (Luke ix. 38) to Jesus. The son had a dumb spirit. He could utter a cry (Luke ix. 39), but not articulate words; he was also deaf, (vs. 25). Matthew speaks of him as a lunatic child, or epileptic; but the lunacy was the work of the demon that possessed him. There were times of terrible paroxysms, when the spirit tore him, or (New Version), dashed him down; and in these convulsions he foamed and gnashed with his teeth, and pined away; i. e., continued in them until he was exhausted. As these paroxysms were liable to come upon him at any time, they exposed him to many accidents. See Matt. xvii. 15. Not finding Jesus, the father had entreated the nine to cast out the evil spirit; but they could not. And yet Jesus had given his disciples power over evil spirits, (vi. 7). Did they try on this occasion and fail, through weak faith, or did this aggravated case paralyze their faith so that they made no attempt? However this may be, the could not is emphatic. As in New Version, they were not able. The Scribes who looked on quickly saw their weakness, and mocked them on account of it.

Vs. 19, 20.—Faithless [unbelieving] generation. The evidence of that inability was before him in this afflicted child. Jesus goes down to the cause.

It is not the difficulties of the case, or the refusal of divine power; but simply unbelief. How long shall I suffer [bear with] you? Our Lord's whole life was one of bearing with the waywardness and perversity of men. Bring him to me. Human weakness gives way to Almighty power. The spirit tare him. A specimen of Satanic bravado. The devil is wont to do his worst just before coming out of a man.

II. The Believing Father, (Vss. 21-24). He asked his father. It is not simply the purpose of Jesus to heal the boy, but also to excite and develop faith in the father. If thou canst do anything. Many, like this father, stumble, because their particular case is so peculiar in its difficulties. On us. The father made his son's case his own. If thou canst. The believe is properly omitted in the New Version. Jesus makes a felicitous turn upon his expression of doubt. The father said: "If thou canst do"; but Jesus puts it: "If thou canst." It is not a question of divine power, but of the father's faith; not whether Christ can give, but whether men can, i. e., will receive. All things are possible, etc. Wonderful words are these, expressing a great principle, and opening an illimitable field to the achievement of faith. Cried out. Not weeping, but speaking with a loud voice. With tears, Lord. These three words are, with good authority, omitted in the New Version.

I believe. True faith is, at last, born in his soul. He wants a still larger faith; hence his cry. Help my unbelief. There is significance in his using here the same word, help, as in vs. 23, where he prays for healing for his child. III. The Mighty Saviour, (Vss. 25-32). Vs. 25-27.—The mention of the running together of the people is one of those vivid touches which mark this story as the picture of an eye-witness. I charge thee. The I is emphatic. This emphasis is "our Lord's solemn self-assertion in the spiritual realm." Enter no more into him. The only place where Jesus gives such a charge, the spirit rent him sore, and left him as one dead, doing at the last moment all the mischief possible. Many said, He is dead. Still no faith, with the "many." But the "stronger than the strong man armed" was there; and he took him by the hand and lifted him up. New life must be imparted by the touch of Jesus. Vs. 28, 29.—Why could not we, etc. This question seems to imply that they had made the attempt to outdo the demon. This kind. A kind most determined and malicious. There are grades and classes among evil spirits, from Beelzebub, prince of demons, down. Can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting. The and fasting is of doubtful authority, and is omitted in the text of the New Version, although placed in the margin. It is faith, not prayer nor fasting, that Jesus said is the ground of achievement (vs. 23); but prayer and such self-denial as is evinced in fasting, are feeders to this faith.

Vs. 30-32.—Departed thence. From the region of Hermon, he turned southward to Galilee, passing quietly through it, seeking to escape the thronging of the people. Henceforward his mission was chiefly to his disciples,—to teach them and prepare them for their work after his departure. He makes to them another announcement of his coming death, and resurrection, which filled them with sorrow, (Matt. xvii. 23), although they did not understand his meaning. They were too full of their worldly hopes to entertain any idea of the tragic end to his career, much less to see its spiritual significance. And, strange to say, they were afraid to ask him about it. And yet the Lord loves the inquiring spirit.

SUGGESTED LESSONS.—As the disciples then dishonored their Master by their lack of faith and power, so now, the failure to perfect the miracle of a Christian life is a reflection upon the religion we profess. The worst cases are not hopeless; yet the devil does not easily come out of men. Only divine power can save, and it can save to the uttermost. Christ not only expels evil; he also implants good. He completes the work which he begins in us. The devil dashes men down; the Lord lifts them up.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.—As Jesus and his three disciples drew near the foot of the mountain, they saw the disciples; but there was a great crowd around them. What had happened while Jesus was up on the mountain? A father had brought his little boy to be cured.

What power had Jesus given his disciples? (Mark iii. 15). Yet they could not cure this poor, afflicted child. They tried; but the evil spirit would not

come out. As Jesus drew near, with Peter, James, and John, he saw the Scribes talking with his disciples. Soon the people saw Jesus coming; and they ran to meet him. Perhaps some of the shining brightness was all on Jesus' face; for, when the people beheld him, they were greatly amazed. But Jesus soon asked what the Scribes were talking about? Then the father of the afflicted child came right to Jesus, and told him all about his son. Read verses 17, 18, 20, 21, 22.

What a great change it must have been to see this dreadful sight, after the glory in the mountain! Finish the account, as in verses 25, 26, 27. Give the details impressively, and question back. Who were asked first to cure the boy? Read verses 28, 29. The disciples had no prayer with real faith.

Very little children cannot all just what is good for them, and that they must have so much faith in Jesus that they will always be willing to say: "Dear Jesus, give me what I ask for, if it is right for me to have it."

Encourage the children especially to pray that the evil spirit of anger may be cast out of their hearts. —Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Boys' Department.

Scripture Enigma.

No. 174.

Take the answers to the following questions; and of the initials form a very important statement made by the Saviour:

- 1. Who did our Lord say are the light of the world? 2. What prophet prepared his heart to seek and do the law of the Lord? 3. Who was the great lawgiver? 4. Job's native land. 5. A city in the centre of Palestine. 6. A rich northern city of Palestine. 7. Jacob's youngest son. 8. A Hebrew wife of an Assyrian monarch. 9. A name given to a certain state in the Old Testament. 10. The slave who belonged to Phillimon. 11. A city called the mistress of the world. 12. Where did Christ raise the widow's son? 13. A prophetess who saw the child Jesus in the temple. 14. The mount where the Philistines slew the Israelites. 15. The first high priest. 16. The tribe whose men knew what Israel ought to do. 17. A good man—one of the Jewish rulers.

CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

- 394. Make up eight imps: 1. With to do; 2. with what we breathe; 3. with the last of all; 4. with wandering about; 5. with ancient learning; 6. with a beverage; 7. with a title; 8. with skill. 395. Reverse a recompense, and have a sliding box. Reverse the great enemy of man, and have the past of existence. Reverse abused, and have saved from danger. Reverse noisy feasting, and have one of the mechanical powers. Reverse what is kingly, and have German beer.

Find answers to the above—write them down—and see how they agree with the answers to be given next week.

Answer to Scripture Enigma.

No. 173.

- 1. Ruth. 2. Esther. 3. Daniel. 4. Ezekiel. 5. Ezra. 6. Malachi. 7. Ecclesiastes. 8. Revelation. REDEEMER.

ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

- 391. "So on an oaken sprout, A goodly acorn grew, But winds from heaven shook the acorn out, And filled the cup with dew." 392. Transpositions. Acre, care, race. Cats, Acts, cast. Mine, Wine, Mane, Mile, Mint.

Don't depend on father.

Stand up here, boys, and let us talk to you. You have trusted alone to the contents of your father's purse, or his fair fame for your influence or success in business. Think you that "father" has attained eminence in his profession but by unwearied industry? or that he has amassed a fortune honestly without energy and activity? You should know that the faculty requisite for the acquiring of fame or fortune is essential to, nay, inseparable from, the attaining of either of these. Suppose "father" has the "rocks" in abundance; if you never earned anything for him, you have no more business with these "rocks" than the gosling has with the tortoise! Sooner or later you must learn to rely on your own resources, or you will no be anybody.—Exchange.

True Sight.

Let us hesitate before we condole with a brother who is under the chastisement of our loving Father in heaven. Be careful how you condole with a man who has lost his money and saved his good name—or congratulate the man who has made a million at the expense of his piety. When a Christian is toppled over from a dizzy and dangerous height, and "brought down to hard-pan," he is brought down to the solid rock at the same time; in the valley of humiliation he has more of the joy of God's countenance, and wears more of the herb called "heart's ease" in his bosom than he ever did in the days of his giddy prosperity. Sickness has often brought to a man spiritual recovery; suffering has often wrought out for him an exceeding weight of glory. The writer of this paragraph has lately been led through a very shadowy pathway of trial; but it has never been so dark that he could not see to read some precious promises that glowed like diamonds. The adversary tries hard to break our lamp; and to steal our diamonds in those dark passage-ways of trial. We need good eyesight in such times of trouble, so as not to stumble, or to lose sight of the Comforter, or of the bright light which shines at the end of the way.—Dr. Cuyler.

How Nutmegs Grow.

Nutmegs grow on little trees which look like little pear trees, and are generally not over twenty feet high. The flowers are very much like the lily of the valley. They are pale and very fragrant. The nutmeg is the seed of the fruit, and mace is the thin covering over the seed. The fruit is about as large as a peach. When ripe it breaks open and shows a little nut inside. The trees grow on the islands of Asia and tropical America. They bear fruit for seventy or eighty years, having ripe fruit upon them all the seasons. A fine tree in Jamaica has over 4,000 nutmegs on it every year. The Dutch used to have all this nutmeg trade, as they owned the Banda Islands and conquered all the other traders, and destroyed the trees. To keep the price up they once earned three piles of nutmegs, each of which was as big as a church. Nature did not sympathize with such meanness. The nutmeg pigeon, found in all the Indian islands, did for the world what the Dutch had determined should not be done—carried those nuts, which are their food, into all the surrounding countries, and trees grew again, and the world had the benefit.—Confectioner's Journal.

Try to keep your sympathies fresh and your interest in little things active. Remember that you were young once, and tolerate the crudities of youth. Be more; try to understand, and do not be impatient if young eyes cannot see things just as you see them. Grown men and wrinkles you cannot escape if you need not grow old unless you choose. So long as your age is on the inside, you will win confidence from young and find your life all the brighter from contact with them.

The devil has a great many servants; they are not only very busy and desperately wicked, but 'deceitful' in all things. They are so deceitful that they often make children, and grown-up people too, think they are his servants. And none of them are so or more deceiving, or do more harm, than these four, whose names we give:

- THERE IS NO DANGER. ONLY THIS-ONCE. EVERYBODY DOES SO. BY-AND-BY.

Would that we could all imitate the fl oyster! A particle of sand irritates itself into its shell, and this irritates and grieves it. It cannot eject the sand, but it covers it with a precious substance extracted out of its own life, which it turns the intruder into a pearl. Could we do so, with the provocation we receive from our fallen brethren, there would be bred within pearls of patience, gentleness, long-earing and forgiveness, by which which we had harmed us.—C. H. Spurgeon.

MISSIONARY INTELLIGENCE.

From India.

The following letter is from Rev. John McLaurin, of the Canadian Baptist Mission, contiguous to our own in India. His description of Bombay is quite graphic and striking.

DEAR SIR:—I am now sitting and writing in the midst of the falling ruins of the old Samalcootta Mess House, which is being transformed into a temporary residence for your missionary, as well as a permanent building in which to train our future Telugu ministry.

I think when I saw you last in Toronto I said I would not rewrite the oft told tale of the overland passage; but I believe I will depart from that promise sufficiently to say that we had a mild storm in the Mediterranean, the first we ever experienced; that we had just one week in which to admire the beauties of the Suez Canal and its scenery (?), as well as study the Sons of the desert. I will not stop to describe those noble Bedouins. It would be a difficult task even if I did, for they are like Captain Burnaby's Russians, so difficult to get down to the original man on account of the dirt.

The Red Sea was cool and comfortable and we landed in Bombay about 10 days later than we ought. If anybody wishes to reach his destination before the time, don't take the Anchor Line. Bombay is said to be the second largest city in the British Empire, and I believe the fifth largest in the world, over 800,000 people. The first mention of the island is made in 1534 when it was handed over to the Portuguese. In 1665 the king of Portugal gave it to England as a marriage portion with his daughter. In 1783, just a century ago, £500 was paid for a single ticket to London; now it can be had for £25. The peculiar features of Bombay and what gives her her proud pre-eminence in India are her capacious, land-locked harbor and her magnificent docks. Her position in relation to Europe and Eastern trade gives also a great advantage in the sea. People say that there are 80 languages spoken in Bombay,—I cannot say how many I heard,—I can say how many I understood. Bombay is famed for her Parsee people, their "Powers of silence" and the Caves of Elephanta. The Parsees are Persians, fire worshippers, disciples of Zoroaster, a shrewd, sharp, thrifty community whose vices are those of Oriental nations and their virtues mostly on the surface. There are about 50,000 of them in this city alone; while there are only about 80,000 of them in existence.

One of their prominent features is their mode of disposing of their dead. Believing that the earth is one of the pure elements and that a dead body is impure, they will not allow it to touch the earth, "the mother of us all." Some distance from the city on a high hill is a large walled space of nine or ten acres of ground. Inside of this is a priest's house, a fire temple and six huge towers of masonry. Four of them are large and two small. The largest is 25 feet high and 90 feet in diameter. They are all circular. On the top of these towers the body, wrapped in a thin muslin cloth is exposed. It is said that it requires but one hour for the fat, lazy vultures to do their work. The caves of Elephanta; so called because of the statue of an elephant found at the entrance, are dug out of the solid rock, on an island in the Bay. There is really but one cave though in three compartments. In the principal chamber there are seven groups of figures, representing scenes in Hindu Mythology. Some of these statues are ten feet high, many of them beautifully and expressively carved, and hewn out of the rock. The work must have cost much time and money. They are much disfigured by Portuguese vandalism. They are said to have battered the images with small canons; it was their most successful way in destroying idolatry.

Missions have made but little headway in Bombay. The Free Church of Scotland has been there for forty years, and one small Native Church, and a few scholarly disciples are the apparent result. Dr. Wilson was to this City what Duff was to Calcutta and Anderson to Madras. They have now a

school of three hundred boys with five European Missionary teachers. The American Board (Congregationalist) has been there also for many years and their success has been proportional. They have a small Native Church and one or two vernacular schools. I should have mentioned that the Scotch Mission has one or two of these besides the high school or college. The Episcopal Methodists are just beginning native work; their work hitherto has been among the Eurasians. In this they have done a good work and reached a much neglected class of people.

The Baptists are few and weak. One open church represents them and they are now pastorless. At their urgent request I remained over the Sabbath to preach for them their fifteenth Anniversary Sermons. We met with much kindness at their hands and were grieved at their position and prospects. We would like to help them if we could, but, with their free communion principles, I for one cannot see much reason for their existence. Monday the 6th March we left our kind friends and entertainers for Poona and Madras. Poona is on the height of land between the two coasts. It is 1800 feet above the sea level, the last stronghold of the Maharrattas, and from one of whose hills the Peishwa saw the flower of his vast army scattered by a handful of British. Poona is the hotbed of sedition in this part of India. Missions have made no more impression here than in Bombay. While here we were the guests of the Rev. Hormazjee Pestonjee of the English Baptist Mission. He was a disciple of Dr. Wilson in Bombay, a Parsee convert, is highly educated, was at home in Scotland and England with the Missionaries when Spurgeon preached his famous sermons on Infant Baptism. He was stirred to enquiry by the wave of unrest which swept the land at the time—and enquiry made him a Baptist. He was for 12 years Professor of Guzerati, &c., in King's College, London. Three years ago he came out as Missionary to Poona. We were glad to meet him and his European wife and interesting family. May God bless him to his native country very abundantly.

Thence we went to Madras. Met our old friends the Jewetts and our new friends the Waterburys. Heard Joseph Cook lecture three times, twice on Christian Evidences and different phases of unbelief; the third was on the future of India. On the first he knows a good deal more than we do, and we were much edified. On the third I am not sure that he told us anything we did not know, or believe or hope for before. But he was speaking to people who would heed what he said, and pass by what I might say.

On the 17th of March we landed in Cooanada, our old home. We were glad to see Bro. Timpany waiting for us on the wharf. Glad to see the faces of the native Christians, each with a smiling face. There was one face missing which we had many a time dreamed of seeing. It is in Heaven beholding the King in His glory. We were glad of the evidences of life and progress in the Mission and compound. Bro. Craig was down on a visit and looking well. The next day we all went out to Samulcootta to see the premises for the new school, of which more in the future. We are all in good health though the weather is meltingly hot.

JOHN M LAURIN. Samulcootta, March 31st, 1882. —Canadian Baptist.

Bishop Fallows, of the Reformed Episcopal Church says that the Christian Army in Chicago, of which he is the head, is now reaching at least 2,000 different persons a week, and that during the few months since its organization not less 250 persons have been hopefully converted.

The water famine continues in Victoria, Australia, the rainfall being below the average for the past twenty-four years.

Leave of absence for an indefinite period has been granted to Field Marshal Von Moltke by the German Government.

Be graceful if you can; but if you can't be graceful, be true.