

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1877.

SUNDAY, September 9th, 1877.—Paul at Ephesus.—Acts xix. 1-12.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Vss. 1-6.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.”—1 Thessalonians i. 5.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, Acts xix. 1-12. Tuesday, Ephesians i. Wednesday, Ephesians ii. Thursday, Ephesians iii. Friday, Ephesians iv. Saturday, Ephesians v. Sunday, Ephesians vi.

ANALYSIS.—I. Paul at Ephesus. Vs. 1. II. Instructs certain disciples. Vss. 2-4. III. Their re-baptism and added gifts. Vss. 5-7. IV. Preaching in the synagogue. Vs. 8. V. Afterwards in the hall of Tyrannus. Vss. 9, 10. VI. Special miracles. Vss. 11, 12.

QUESTIONS.—What churches does Paul visit first on his third missionary journey? How long is it to this point since Paul's conversion? Since the death of Christ?

Where was Ephesus? Between what rivers did Ionia lay? What third river flows through the centre of Ionia? What city was built at its mouth? By whom was Ionia colonized? Of what was Ephesus the chief city in the time of our New Testament studies? What one of the seven wonders of the world was in Ephesus? Why did God remove their candlesticks? Revelation ii. 4, 5.

Vs. 1. Who was Apollos? Chap. xviii. 23. To what was his knowledge at first limited? Chap. xviii. 25. Who taught him? Vs. 26. What was his success there? Vs. 28: 1 Cor. iii. 5-7.

Vs. 2. What did Paul mean by the question he asked these disciples?—What was the meaning of their reply?

Vs. 3. What other question did Paul now ask them? What answer did they make? Of whom does this show them to be ignorant?

Vs. 4. How does Paul teach them that John's mission had passed away?

Vs. 5. Were these men, therefore, up to this point disciples of Christ? How, then, are they called “disciples” in verse 1?

Vs. 6. What blessing followed? See chap. ii. 4; viii. 17; x. 44-46.

Vs. 8. Where was Paul at first accustomed to worship after his arrival in Ephesus? What does he seek to accomplish by his discussions with the Jews?

Vs. 9. When persecution arose, to what place did Paul resort? Whom did he take with him? Who was this Tyrannus?

Vs. 10. How long did he continue to do this? What churches in Ionia may have been planted at this time?

Vs. 11. What did these special miracles refute? Had there been anything like them before? Matt. ix. 20-22.—What is the difference between an evil spirit and a disease? How did Paul support himself in Ephesus as in Corinth? Acts xx. 34.

After a brief notice of another visitation of the churches in the interior of Asia Minor (chap. xviii. 23) the narrative passes on to the place which formed the chief centre of Paul's labors on his third Missionary journey, introducing first the preparatory work of Apollos at Ephesus, and his departure thence to Corinth before Paul's arrival. Chap. xviii. 24-28. Paul then comes to Ephesus. From Ephesus he revisits and extends the churches in Northern and Southern Greece, returns by way of Macedonia to Troas, thence sails to Miletus, thence by voyage to Ptolemais, thence by land to Caesarea and Jerusalem. Here his missionary travels end. We now return to Ephesus, where we first meet Paul on his third missionary journey. It covers in all about four years, chiefly, however, in labors in and about Ephesus.

On the western coast of Asia Minor is a district known in the classics as Ionia. It lay mainly between two rivers; the *Hermas* on the north, the *Meander* on the south. Besides these two rivers there is a third, the *Cayster*, which flows between them, at whose mouth stood the city of Ephesus. This was Ionia, colonized from the selectest portions of the Greek race a thousand years before Christ. Twelve Greek cities rose along the coast, and upon the two islands, confederate for the purpose of government and religion, and for the common life and culture which gave birth to art and literature. Architecture attained here its finishing grace in the Ionic column. Genius sung here its sublimest epic in the *Iliad* of Homer, the blind bard of Chios. Here language, newly modulated, had a

breezy lightness and softness in the Ionic lyrics, which became the models of Greece. Ephesus was its great metropolis. It extended over a wide plain, and up the two slopes of Mount Prion, at its right, and of Mt. Coressus, at its back. Near the banks of the river, north-east of the city, rose the temple of Diana, one of the seven wonders of the world, with its one hundred and twenty-seven columns, each sixty feet high, and each the gift of a king. In this city were theatres and gymnasia. Partly within and partly just beyond the limits of Ionia, were the cities which were to contain the seven churches of Asia, planted, doubtless, by Paul—Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea—holding the seven golden candle-sticks that were to bear aloft the light of Christianity. Not far off is the little island of Patmos, not like the others which gem the waters with green, but rising as a bald and barren rock out of the Aegean Sea.

EXPOSITION.—This lesson is a glance at Paul in Ephesus. Once before had he been here (xviii. 19-22), and twice afterward he came to Miletus (xx. 14-18) 2 Tim. iv. 20. From 2 Corinthians ii. 1; xii. 14, 21; xiii. 1, 2, it is inferred that Paul made a short visit to Corinth during this visit to Ephesus, though Luke gives no hint of it.

I. Disciples of John. Verses 1-7.—These twelve (vs. 7), like Apollos (xviii. 26), had heard only of John and his teaching, and had not been taught of the history of Christ. Instead of “have not heard,” in vs. 2, “did not hear” is to be read. The question in vs. 2 refers to the reception of those supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit, which so abundantly attended the introduction of Christianity (1 Cor. xii. 7-11, etc.), and not to the Spirit as creating a clean heart, and renewing a right spirit. These gifts usually followed baptism, in connection with laying on of hands (viii. 18, 19), though once at least before baptism (x. 44-48). These gifts were very widely bestowed. The answer to Paul's question would make these persons incredibly ignorant of the Old Testament, unless it be understood to refer to the Spirit's special work in connection with the gospel. John vii. 39.

The re-baptism of these persons seems at first sight to imply that John's baptism and Christian baptism were wholly distinct, and that all Christians who received the former were to receive the latter, like all other converts. Some, to escape these conclusions, have regarded vs. 5 as a part of Paul's description of John's baptism, and so have denied the re-baptism. John's baptism was Christian Baptism in *form*, or *bad*, not fully expanded. Hence we never hear of the re-baptism of his disciples, save in this one peculiar case, (if it was a re-baptism). Compare with Paul's explanation of John's baptism Matthew iii.

The particular gifts granted to these disciples were that of tongues and that of prophecy. The gift of interpretation of tongues also implies that this gift was only a sign. See on this Mark xvi. 17; Acts ii. 4, etc.; x. 46; xi. 15-17; 1 Cor. xii. xiv. In verse 6 “spake” should be *began to speak*—that is, in consequence of the coming of the Spirit, and at once. The gift of prophecy was closely connected with that of tongues.

Public Ministry. Verses 8-12. As in all other places, it was first to the Jews; and when this became impossible by their fault, to the Gentiles. There was running along parallel with the public ministry an earnest and effective private ministry, referred to in xx. 20, from house to house, from man to man.

That this labor with Jews was fruitful in converts might be inferred from its continuance, as from parts of the Epistle to the Ephesians, ii. 14-22. But the word “divers,” or better, “some,” in verse 9, indicates clearly that on a large part, if not on the mass of Jews, Paul had had, and kept, a powerful hold.—This “evil speaking,” or blasphemy, was in the presence of the multitude doubtless, with the purpose of setting them against the apostle and his fellow-laborers—the outcome of a final purpose.

In going to the Gentiles a new place of meeting, instead of the synagogue was necessary. Whether Tyrannus was a Christian is not said; but for love, or for money, he allowed his hall to be occupied by the Christians—of course, at such times as he did not need it. “Disputing,” or discussing, reasoning

together. In xx. 31 his whole time at Ephesus is given by him as “three years”; though that does not necessarily mean three full years, but more than two. Asia is here the little province in which were situated Ephesus and the others of the seven cities of the seven churches of Revelation i. and ii. The miracles were unusual, as being exceedingly numerous, and wrought without the presence and word of the apostle; and perhaps this was because Ephesus was unusually given up to the belief in divination and pretenders. 14-41.

—Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, Sept. 16th, 1877.—Power of the Word.—Acts xix. 17-28.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thought and intents of the heart.”—Hebrews iv. 12

The Story of the Lesson.

FOR THE PRIMARY CLASS.

As Paul passed through Ephesus, he promised that he would come back. On his return to Ephesus, he found some whom he thought to be Christians; but when he asked them if they had received the Holy Ghost, they said, “We have not so much as heard whether the Holy Ghost has come.” You know, when any one is baptized, the minister always says, “I baptize thee in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.” So Paul asked, “Unto what, then, were you baptized?” They said, “Unto the baptism of John the Baptist.” Then Paul showed them that John himself had said that he preached repentance, to prepare men's minds for Him who should come after him, who was the true one to believe on—that is, Jesus. When they heard this they believed, and were baptized in the name of Jesus; and when Paul had laid his hands on them, they received the Holy Ghost, and spoke in languages they had not learned, as the Jews had done in Jerusalem on the days of Pentecost. There were twelve of these men. Paul preached in the synagogue, as they had invited him to do when he was there before. Some believed; but some were hardened, and began to speak so wickedly of Jesus, and to abuse the Christians, that Paul took the disciples into the school-room of Tyrannus, and taught them there for two years.

Select Serial.

From *The Day of Rest*.
DORA'S BOY.

BY MRS. ELLEN ROSS.

(To be Continued.)

CHAPTER XXXVI.—LISA IN A NEW CHARACTER.

At Hugh's suggestion Matthew offered to take the responsibility of Mr. Maurice's funeral upon himself, to save him and Lisa from contact with workhouse officials, of whom Matthew had a perfect horror. Lisa arranged to repay him by weekly instalments, one shilling or two, according as she was prospered; and Matthew paid down the money for the funeral without any doubt or misgiving, having as much faith in Lisa's honesty and sense of honour as of his own existence.

Lisa was overjoyed at Matthew's kindness in offering to do such a generous act for her. When the arrangement between them was concluded, she burst into tears, and taking one of Matthew's big hands between her own, in her demonstrative way, she kissed it, and said, “Oh, Mr. Pedder, I'm so sorry I ever thought you was a hard, unkind man! Why nobody could be kinder,—that Hughie have told me many a time, but I didn't half believe him, but now I know you are kind, and I shall love ye as long as ever I lives!”

Matthew did not look very comfortable at this declaration of affection. He smiled as he drew his hand from Lisa's, and laid it for a moment upon her head, saying, “I'm mostly as rough as a hedgehog to folks, I must confess, Lisa; but there's a bit o' feeling in old Matthew's heart under it all, only you musn't say too much about it, Lisa, else I shall get that puffed up that I shall think it's a shame everybody don't think so well of me as you and my boy!”

A decent funeral could not take place from such a locality as the court in which

Lisa lived without the whole neighbourhood getting to know the how, the why, and the wherefore of it. It was an unusual thing for any but a parish funeral to take place amongst those very poor and, for the most part, degraded people. So it got noised about that Matthew Pedder, the ogre, the cynic, the heathen, the un-Christian misanthrope, had lent Lisa Maurice all the money that was required, and freely given her all the personal help that she needed, to bury her father, whom they looked upon as being too worthless a sot to have a decent burying at all.

They were greatly exercised in their minds about this act of Matthew's, and after much acrimonious deliberation over it, they finally decided that Matthew must have more money hoarded up than he knew what do with; also that he would be sure to get better interest out of the transaction than he could by investing his money in any other way. So he did not get much credit from them for his goodness, nor did he wish it.

Lisa found that she was not desolate after her father's death: one and another showed her kindness in a rough though genuine fashion; and Miss Marner, after minutely enquiring into her circumstances, offered to take her into her house to give assistance in the kitchen, and to learn nice household ways.

This was a tempting offer to Lisa, who many a time envied the decent young servants whom she saw in passing nice houses. But knowing that her services would not, for some time, be worth more to her employer than the food and clothes she would require, and feeling she would not like to take money also at first, even if it were offered her, Lisa regretfully decided to decline Miss Marner's kind offer, and continue in her present line of life until she had paid Matthew Pedder her debt. So she removed to a cheaper and more comfortable lodging, which, after much seeking, she found in the small house of an old shoemaker and his wife, where she felt more homely and happy than she had ever done in her life before.

It was not much farther from Matthew Pedder's than her old home, and it was even nearer to her night-school, which she still attended with the greatest regularity and eagerness.

So she continued at her flower selling and other street business for eighteen months longer, at the end of which time she had paid Matthew every farthing that she owed him; and she had the satisfaction of knowing that the grave in which her father lay was not common property; but a spot which she could keep from unfriendly hands, and upon which she could bestow tender care. Some of her fairest and freshest flowers were carried there, and laid as gently among the grass as if they were being placed upon a human breast; and all the year round, tokens of her affection were found upon his grave, suggesting to observers that some loving and beloved one had gone to rest there.

It was when October was drawing to a close, and the cold dull days were beginning to be frequent, that Lisa bade farewell to her old life of street-hawking, and went to live in a more civilised manner in a house which she thought splendid, near to Victoria Park. Miss Marner was a gentle-spirited lady, between thirty and forty years of age, who kept house for her widowed brother, a gentleman of about fifty, who was a cripple and a confirmed invalid.

Lisa's impressions of the new order of things were given to Matthew and Hugh when she called to see them, for the first time after going to live with Miss Marner. She entered Matthew's shop rather shyly one evening, about a month after she had bidden farewell to their neighborhood: she knew that they would be astonished to see her so different from her own self, for now she was neatly dressed in a brown winsey dress, a black cloth jacket, and a brown straw hat; and certainly the Lisa of flower-selling days was scarcely recognizable in her.

She stood just within the door, and looked across at the counter with a smile on her face, and a rosy colour which deepened as Matthew exclaimed, “Blest if it ain't Lisa! Hugh, come here lad, and see Lisa!” Hugh hurried from the kitchen, and went and shook hands with her, as if he had always been accustomed to do so when they saw each other.—This naturally surprised her much, as she had never shaken hands with him

before; and for a moment she seemed too confused to do anything but smile and blush. But making an effort to forget her strange attire and circumstances, she recovered her old manner and said, “Well, I've come to see ye at last. And don't it seem a long time since I went away!”

“I dessay it seems longer to you than to we, Lisa,” answered Matthew pleasantly. “Time skips along pretty smart with us, and Saturday nights come round as if the weeks was teetotums, afore ever we've time to think as the Mondays and Tuesdays have passed. But you've got into a quieter line of life now, Lisa, and things don't seem so whirly like with you as they do here in the noise and bustle of bisniss. Well, and how d'ye like yer place, Lisa?”

“Oh, very much, thank ye,” answered Lisa, heartily. “They're all as kind to me as ever they can be, and it's a beautiful house to live in—everything so comfortable and splendid. And Miss Marner's got a lovely little garden in the front, and a bigger one at the back, and she's goin' to let me help tend the flowers; and oh, it's lovely to pick 'em for yerself out of a garden all a-growin' and blowin', instead of buyin' 'em ready picked from the market-folks. She's goin' to let me mind her flower-vases and keep 'em filled, and it's lovely to have such nice things to do.”

“You've got into a nice home at last, Lisa,” said Hugh, gladly.

“Yes, but it ain't all sweet in that house, Hughie,” she quickly responded. “There's trouble there as well as if it was ever such a poor place; and I used to think there couldn't be any trouble in them grand sort of houses. But, bless you! there's poor master always ill, and he don't seem as if he can enjoy anything in this life. He wants as much lookin' after as a baby, and Miss Marner's got to do it. She haven't got a easy lady's life, I can tell ye. And she looks after lots o' poor people besides. When our work's done in the kitchen, and we sits down in the evenings, I often thinks to myself *her work ain't done*.”

“You must be a good girl to her, Lisa, though I'm sure I don't need to tell ye that,” said Matthew. “Have they cropped off yer shiny hair?” he added, gaily, seeing not a vestige of it hanging about as of yore.

“No,” answered Lisa smiling; “but I've bin learnt to do it up neat and tidy.” And she turned round to show him how it was coiled up at the back.

“Well, you'll learn to do many a neat thing there, I guess,” said Matthew. “I'm sure you looks that neat and spank that I shouldn't ha' known ye if I'd met ye in the street. And I'm right-down glad to see ye as ye ought to be at last, every bit as well off as my little chap here, ay and better!”

“No, not a bit better,” exclaimed Hugh, enthusiastically.

“D'you know,” said Lisa, confidentially, “I felt that queer when I first went there, I didn't know how ever I could stay! It was so funny to have to stay indoors all day, and be dressed very particular, and wear shoes and stockings always. I didn't like it a bit, and I felt jest as if I'd like to run away. I was afraid to come and see you before, for fear I should have to tell ye that I wanted to leave her. But I've got to like it very well now, and I shouldn't like to go back to crossin'-sweepin’.”

“No, I should think not,” said Matthew. “In my 'pinion it's the best thing as could happen to ye to get housed with that good lady as 'll train ye well, and make ye a useful woman when you grows up. Providence has been kind to ye after all, Lisa, though things did use to look so dark for ye; and now you must be contented and very thankful, which same I knows ye will. You're set up for life; and I wish my little chap here had got as settled a prospect as you. I don't know what he's to be, I'm sure,” added Matthew, looking fondly at him: “he don't take kindly to my bird bisniss, I can see, though he don't say nothin' against it; and I'm sure I don't know what he's to be.”

“I'll do anything you like,” exclaimed Hugh, eagerly.

“No, no, little chap, that won't do!” answered Matthew. “It must be what you like, else you'll never get on. And I want ye to get on well at whatever you're goin' to do.”

“You must wait a bit longer,” said Lisa, sentimentally, “and see what Providence 'll turn up for him.”

(To be continued.)