

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1877.

SUNDAY, September 23rd, 1877.—Paul at Miletus.—Acts xx. 17-32.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Vss. 22-27.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake.”—2 Cor. iv. 5.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, Acts xx. Tuesday, vs. 18; 1 Thess. ii. 1-12. Wednesday, vs. 19; Psalm cxxvi. Thursday, vs. 21; Revelation ii. 1-17. Friday, vs. 24; 2 Tim. iv. 1-8. Saturday, vs. 28; 1 Peter i. 18-25. Sunday, vs. 32; Ephesians ii. 13-22.

ANALYSIS.—Ephesian elders called to Miletus. Vs. 17. II. Appeal to their knowledge. Vss. 18-21. III. Forebodings of sufferings. Vss. 22-24. IV. Solemn counsel. Vss. 25-31. V. Commendation. Vs. 32.

QUESTIONS.—Trace Paul’s third missionary tour. Where is Miletus? How far is it from Ephesus? Why was it hazardous for Paul to go there?

Vs. 17. Whom does Paul wish to see? By what other name were they called?

Vs. 18. Where did Paul and these elders have their interview?

Vs. 20. How entirely did Paul devote himself to the cause of Christ?

Vs. 21. What truths did he emphatically teach?

Vs. 22. What does he mean by the words “I go bound in spirit to Jerusalem?” Of what was he ignorant?

Vs. 23. What points in his prospects were revealed to him?

Vs. 24. Instead of being disturbed by them, what does he care most to do?

Vs. 26. To what does he again appeal in regard to his fidelity?

Vs. 28. What is the chief business of a minister?

Vs. 29. What motive is given here?

Vs. 32. To what does Paul commend his Ephesian brethren? Why to these? With what words does Paul’s address close? Vss. 33-36. What affecting scene then follows? Vss. 36, 38.

HISTORICAL CONNECTION.—Paul finally leaves the church in Ephesus in peace (Chap. xx. 1); spends some time in revisiting and in extending the churches in Northern and Southern Greece, and then returns by way of Macedonia to Troas, on his way to Syria (2-6). At Troas he prolongs a farewell meeting until daybreak, and miraculously restores to life one of the congregation (7-12). Thence he sails down the Aegean Sea to Miletus (13-16), where he meets the elders of the Ephesian church, and takes leave of them in an affecting and impressive address. The distance between Miletus and Ephesus was hardly thirty miles, and a good road connected them together. “Thus, though Paul’s stay in Miletus would be short, and it might be hazardous to attempt the journey to Ephesus himself, considering the state of public feeling there, he could yet hope for one more interview—if not with the whole of the Ephesian church, at least with those members of it whose responsibility was the greatest.” Hence Paul’s sending for its elders to come and visit him. He had not seen them for one or two years. They at once started for Miletus, and reached it easily the day after receiving the summons. Then was Paul comforted by the sight of his disciples. 2 Cor. vii. 6. They were not long in gathering together, probably in some solitary spot upon the shore, to listen to Paul’s address. The meander on which Miletus is built meanders still to the sea. The vast theatres of Miletus are silent ruins. But the words of the wayworn apostle to a few despised Gentiles are among the words the living will not “willingly let die.” They give to Christianity a tenderness and an affection that remind us of the family in Bethany and of the tears of Olivet. Christianity is therefore, as truly human as it is truly divine.

EXPOSITION.—The “elders” of this verse are the “overseers”; that is, bishops, of vs. 28. In his address Paul reminds the elders of his ministry at Ephesus, predicts that the impending separation from them will be final, charges them to be faithful in their ministry, and commends them to God.

I. The Reminder. Verses 18-21.—Paul here refers to his own fidelity, not in the way of boasting, but as something well known to his hearers, and however others through malice might lie about him, they knew the facts to be as he states them.

The visit referred to in vs. 18, was the second (xix. 1; comp. xviii. 19), at all seasons, the whole time (vs. 31), shows the unremitting constancy of his labors.

The description characterizes his ministry (1) as a “service to the Lord,” as of one owned by the Lord, and hence having no business of his own, but that only of his Master. (Eph. v. 5), the service of sonship, and thus of complete freedom. (2) As performed in thorough humility, and in great tenderness of heart, as at once under and in Christ, Paul bowing to him, yet made like him. (3) As a difficult, perilous service, because of the plots of the Jews arising from the disposition described in xix. 9, especially noteworthy as enforcing his charge, as appears from vss. 29, 30. (4) As a thoroughly heroic and faithful service; no fear of personal danger restraining him from preaching in the public assembly (whether in synagogue or the hall of Tyrannus) and in private houses (whether to individuals or little gatherings) anything and everything which the interests of the disciples and of the cause required. (5) As radical in the substance of doctrine. Repentance is said to be “toward God” because sin of which and from which one repents is against God as the absolute Lawgiver; but in repenting, or turning, we turn in faith “toward (or into) our Lord Jesus Christ,” because in Jesus Christ the absolute God has come to us making atonement for sin, according to 2 Cor. v. 19; compare Rom. viii. 33, 34. The sin preceded the incarnation.

II. The Prediction. Verses 22-25.—Paul has dwelt with the most tender and profound interest on the past, and now he turns to the future. He feels deeply the contrast, and this comes out in the very words of transition, “and now behold” (vs. 22), as also in all that follows.

The painfulness of this separation comes first from its nature (vs. 23), and second, from its permanency (vs. 25).

He goes to “bonds and affliction”; that is, a persecution taking away his liberty, and hence his ability to preach, and render such help as heretofore. Afterward at Caesarea (xxi. 11), prophets under inspiration of the Holy Spirit so informed him.

His life he regarded as given him not for himself, but for Christ’s purpose, which in one view was a “calling,” but a calling to complete a “course,” or race as of one running at the games for a prize (2 Tim. iv. 6-8; Phil. ii. 16).

The second point, namely, the permanency of the separation, is mentioned in words of tearful love forced from him as he was looking into the faces of his fellow-laborers (vs. 25). Very impressive as thus read.

How naturally comes out next the one thought, that is, his solace; namely, that he had not wasted the opportunity which will not return.

III. The Charge. Verses 28-31.—This charge enjoins (1) watchful heed over their own persons, and over the flock, as holding an office infinitely sacred and important, conferred by the Holy Spirit himself. (2) To “act the shepherd”; “in” (not “over”) this flock, this being the aim and end of that heed, and that divine appointment to office. How much more is meant than simply to feed appears from John x. 1-18; Psalm xxiii. Two motives are added. (1) The relation of the flock to Christ as his by the purchase of his blood as the Great Shepherd. His “heed” was such as even to die, there-in an example. (2) The peculiar perils impending, coming partly from without and partly from within the very church or the very officers of the church. Wolves in contrast, and opposition to shepherds.

A repetition of the charge follows for emphasis, and is enforced by Paul’s example as being also an encouragement and inspiration.

IV. The Benediction. Verse 32.—The better authorities omit the word “brethren.” The words “and now,” express the painful feeling that the moment of final separation has come. God, and only he, had sustained Paul, could sustain them. They were commended also to his word of grace; that is, the gospel, as they were not only to preach it, but to enjoy God’s gracious support through it. Heirship goes with sonship, the peculiarity of gospel inheritance being that they who inherit come into full possession upon their

own, and not the Father’s death. The universality of inheritance, “the communion of saints,” is the grand closing thought—full of lofty and holy inspiration.

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, Sept. 30th, 1877.—Review of the past quarter.

The Story of the Lesson.

FOR THE PRIMARY CLASS.

On Thursday of the same week in which Paul and his company sailed from Troas, the ship stopped at Miletus, not thirty miles from Ephesus. Paul was in a hurry to get to Jerusalem, so that he had no time to go to Ephesus; but he sent for the elders of the church to meet him at Miletus. They gladly came at once, and Paul gave them some last words of advice and farewell. He called the past to their minds, and told them they knew what his life in Ephesus had been for the three years he had lived there—how in his own private life he served the Lord with the same humility which in his public preaching he had taught unto them. He spoke of the future. He was going to Jerusalem feeling as if he were bound in chains; for the Holy Spirit had made known to him that such things would happen to him there. But such danger did not move him, neither did he care for his life if he might have victory at last. Then he came back to the present, and said that they would never see him again: that he had done his duty to them, and now they must watch over the church. Then he committed them all to the care of God, and, kneeling down, prayed with them all. And they all wept and kissed Paul, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more.

Select Serial.

From The Day of Rest.
DORA’S BOY.

BY MRS. ELLEN ROSS.

Chap XXXVIII.—AN IRRETRIEVABLE LOSS.

“Don’t be afeared, my little chap! I have only had a bit of a slip,” exclaimed Matthew, cheerily, as he stepped out of the brougham after the doctor, and met Hugh’s gaze of astonishment and affright. But the troubled expression of Matthews’ white face belied his cheery tones, and had no reassuring effect on Hugh.

At Matthew’s request the boy took the key from his coat-pocket and unlocked the shop-door. “Just light the gases my lad,” said Matthew faintly, “and then you stop in the shop while the doctor looks to me in the kitchen.”

He would have liked Hugh beside him while his arm was being examined, but he did not know how he would bear it. So the kitchen-door was closed, and Hugh heard nothing but a muffled sound of talking, and a low moan now and then, which cut him to the heart. He could not stand still, but walked to and fro behind the counter with his hands in his pockets, feeling that all brightness had suddenly faded out of life.

After a long time the doctor came out, and as he passed through the shop, he said kindly, “Mr. Pedder tells me you are a good boy, so I shall expect you will do all you can for him, and have him kept very still and quiet.”

“Yes, sir,” answered Hugh, as he opened the shop-door for the doctor.

Hugh then went quietly to the kitchen and found Matthew sitting in his arm-chair, lookin’ very ill and dejected, with his arm bound up.

“Well, little chap,” he said, “this is a bad job, ain’t it? seems to me I’m done for; but I shan’t tell you what doctor says till he’ve bin tomorrow: he’s comin’ early in the mornin’, he says.”

“Do tell me all about it, please,” said Hugh, standing close beside him with his face full of sympathy. Matthew gave him an account of the accident and added, “The doctor wanted me to go to the hospital; but I’d rather stop here if you think you can do with me till I gets over this, little chap.”

“Oh yes!” exclaimed Hugh. “I shouldn’t like you to go to the hospital whatever. I’ll do everything I can for you.”

“I’m feared ye won’t be able to go to school again just yet,” said Matthew, re-

gretfully. “And it’s sech a pity, seein’ how near the holidays is.”

“Oh, never mind,” responded Hugh, though feeling far more deeply than Matthew that it was a pity.

“But I hope you’ll soon make up for it when school begins again,” said Matthew. “Eh me! don’t it seem queer to be feelin’ like this,—as if I’d got a blow as have took all the strength out of me! And I’ve scarcely had a bad feeling in my life.”

“And some poor creatures are always ill,” said Hugh, pleasantly. “You mustn’t expect to go scot-free, Mr. Pedder. You will soon get over this, I hope.”

Then Hugh attended to the fire, which had gone very low, and soon had a bright blaze, and the kettle set on for tea. Matthew sat leaning his head on his left hand, a picture of dejection. But when Hugh had presently got him to take a cup of tea and a bit of toast, he brightened up a little, and tried to be hopeful respecting the verdict he was to have from the doctor on the morrow.

But after the doctor’s visit early next morning, which lasted quite half-an-hour, Hugh went eagerly into the kitchen and to his great astonishment found Matthew actually crying like a child. He stood transfixed at the door, feeling that he ought not to have ventured there to be witness to this outburst of grief, without being called.

“Come in little chap,” called Matthew brokenly. “I’m that ashamed of myself that I could tear of the whips of hair what’s left at the back of my head! But I can’t help it, Hugh, and nobody but you’ll know that I’ve blubbered like a whipped schoolboy. It ain’t that I’m dreading the operation: I hope I’ve got enough pluck in me to bear that as is a common enough trouble on battle-fields, where the poor fellows ain’t got home, nor a little chap like you to comfort ‘em; but I don’t know how I’ll scriggle along without my good old right hand.”

Hugh’s eyes dilated, and he asked with fluttering breath, “What does the doctor say, then?”

“Why as I’ve got to lose my arm, lad: its that much smashed as nothing can be done with it! And there’ll be a brace of ‘em here by-and-by to do it.”

“Oh, no, no!” uttered Hugh, with a cry as of pain. “Surely it isn’t so bad as that, sir?”

“It’s just that bad; and I’d sooner have had the house burnt down over my head, and lost every farthing of my money, and bin turned out on the streets as bare as a scarecrow! Cos see what a useless old stump I shall be without my right hand. What’ll become o’ my birds, and all my beautiful stuffin’ and mountin’? It seems as if I’ve clean got to the end o’ my life and shan’t be no more use for nothin’!”

Hugh could have cried himself for very sympathy; but instead of doing so he put on a cheerful face and exclaimed, “Oh, wont you though! You don’t half know how clever you’ll get with your left; and I’ll be your right one for you. Yes,” he added with a little sinking of heart, “I’ll attend to your birds for you: I shan’t think of going to school any more, so you must feel that you’ve got a good shopman and workman on the premises.”

Matthew tried to reflect Hugh’s pleasant smile, but the effort proved a failure. Nevertheless he felt just a little bit cheered by the boy’s determination to devote himself to his business. He got his red handkerchief and mopped his face, saying with a little forced laugh, “Well who’d ha’ thought I should ha’ bin such a Betty as to be cut up like this about losin’ my arm! But, bless ye, little chap! it do go terrible against the grain! Ye see its a instinct with us to like to keep what natur’ have giv us for use and beauty. Why, you wouldn’t believe how I took it to heart when I was growin’ bald,—not that I’ve got a bit o’ vanity in me,—no, I’m dead certin I han’t; for I shouldn’t care a snap if all the world thought me as ugly as Old Harry! It ain’t that; but when you come to lose the gifts of natur’, yer hair or yer teeth, or yer good eyesight, why it ain’t neither comfortable nor comfortin’. But worse’n that, when it comes to a arm or a leg, it’s most de-pate unpleasant, Hugh, my boy.”

“Yes, it’s really dreadful!” exclaimed Hugh, with an expression of pain. “And it seems dreadful that you’ve got to lose yours, that I can scarcely believe it’s

true. Couldn’t anything else do, I wonder?”

“No; the doctor says no, and I guess he h’an’t made a mistake. If it was anything about my inside, I’d snap my fingers at him pretty quick, cos when they comes to doctorin’ yer innards, it’s all experiment and guessin’, and there ain’t two of ‘em what thinks alike. But when it comes to a outside job, and usin’ the knife, then I believe they know their work as well as a butcher; and so I ain’t goin’ to fly in the face o’ the doctor about this business. When the two of ‘em comes this afternoon, if they agree together that the arm must come off, off he shall come, be the consequence what it may; and the futur’ I’ll leave to Providence,—yes I will; though why ever the Lord have seen fit to bring me into this trouble, I can’t for the life of me tell. But, there, I s’pose I mustn’t grumble, cos as you says, there’s heaps o’ people always aillin’, while this is about the first upset I’ve had with my old carcass.”

“There must be some use in such trouble and pain, or else it wouldn’t be allowed to come upon us,” observed Hugh, philosophically. “But, oh, I can’t tell you how sorry I am for you. If you hadn’t to lose your arm, it would not matter so much to have to suffer for a time; or, if it had been the left one, it would not be quite so bad.”

“If, if,” said Matthew, smiling, “that’s how we always talk when anything happens: But no ifs ‘ll save me from goin’ through this trouble.”

“Well, I hope you’ll have strength to bear it bravely,” said Hugh: at the same time inwardly resolving to pray earnestly for him. “And don’t fret, Mr. Pedder, about how you’ll get along: you’ve got me, you know; and I’m getting big enough now to do some good for you. I’ve been your boy for five or six years, and now you must be my boy for a bit.”

“He-he-he!” laughed Matthew, excitedly, with tears in his eyes at the same time. “Now that sounds comical, but ‘pon my word I do feel uncommon like a helpless baby. God bless you, my lad: I guess we shall get along somehow. And p’raps it ain’t much further to the end o’ the journey, and then I shan’t be no bother to no body. I’m three or four years over sixty now.”

“Well, what’s that?” exclaimed Hugh. “You’re always talking about being old; but I don’t think you’re old; and see how strong and well you are. Besides you must please not talk about getting to the end of your journey. It would break my heart if you were to go, sir!”

Matthew looked up and met an affectionate gaze which he felt was more than a reward for all he had done for this boy.

“No, I won’t go if I can help it, lad!” he exclaimed. “I’ll hearten up and get over this trouble if I can, for your sake. Bless me! we’ve growed so fond o’ one another that if one was to go the world ‘ud look uncommon dark to the other, wouldn’t it now?”

“It would indeed, sir,” answered Hugh, earnestly. “But now you mustn’t talk to excite yourself: the doctor said I was to keep you very quiet.”

(To be continued.)

A NEW POWER TO SUPERSEDE STEAM.—Our English exchanges announce the death of Mr. William Wallwork, who was engaged maturing an invention which he styled “a new motive power, to supersede steam,” and which it is stated he completed about six days before his death took place. It is stated positively that the machine has been worked by Mr. Parr, and fully justified what Mr. Wallwork had stated to him it would do. Its power, he stated, was unlimited—of course increasing the strength of the material—and at a trial it blew off air at a pressure of 40 lb., as tested by a patent steam gauge. Mr. Mason (says the *Pendlebury Times*) is patenting the invention—which is extremely simple in construction, and is a wonder to those who have witnessed it how it has been kept so many years in abeyance—at a considerable cost in all countries. It will be put to a large engine and tried practically in the place of steam. Having no fire, of course it emits no smoke, works without noise, and the first machine, it is said, will do the work of a 50 horse power engine, yet it takes up so little room that a light cart and one horse carried all away, including the patterns. If all this turns out to be correct we may look for a revolution in the engineering and manufacturing world; and Mr. Mason, a practical man, is sanguine as to the results.

Ann Eliza Young, ex-wife of the Mormon prophet, has been baptised into the Baptist Church, at Lockport, N. Y.