

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1880.

FIRST QUARTER.

Lesson XI.—MARCH 14.

THE FALSE AND THE TRUE.
Matt. vii. 13-29.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 24-27.

The final application of the sermon is in vs. 24-27. Vs. 28, 29, and viii. 1, show the effect of the sermon.

Parallel, Luke vi. 44-49.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only."—James ii. 22.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. The False and the True, Matt. vii. 13-29.
T. Warnings from the King, Luke vi. 43-49.
W. Good Men and Evil, Psalm i. 1-6.
T. Fruitful Branches, John xv. 1-8.
F. The Shut Door, Luke xiii. 22-35.
S. Too Late, Matt. xxv. 1-13.
S. The Building Tested, 1 Cor. iii. 1-15.

PARALLEL TEXTS.

- With vs. 13: Luke xiii. 24; Eph. v. 11; John x. 2, 7, 9.
With vs. 14: Matt. xx. 16; Rom. ix. 27, 29.
With vs. 15: Deut. xiii. 1-3; Jer. xxiii. 16; Gal. i. 8; 1 John iv. 1.
With vs. 19: Matt. iii. 10; John xv. 2, 6.
With vs. 21: Matt. xxv. 11, 12; Luke xiii. 25-28.
With vs. 22: Num. xxiv. 3; 1 Kings xxii. 11; Jer. xxiii. 13; Acts xix. 13-15; 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

DECISIONS OF THE KING.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. The False Way and the True, Vss. 13, 14. II. False Teachers and the True, Vss. 15-23. III. The False Foundation and the True, Vss. 24-27.

QUESTIONS.—From what sermon of Jesus is this lesson taken? When he had ended his sermon what occurred? (Vs. 28, 29.) What is the topic of this lesson? On what points does he give decisions? (Outline.)

I. Vss. 13, 14.—Into what gate did Jesus call his hearers? What is this strait gate? What competing gate is there? What opposite characteristics of the strait gate are given? How may the strait gate be entered? (Luke xiii. 24.)

II. Vss. 15-23.—How does the Lord describe false prophets? How may such be known? How does the Lord illustrate this idea? What is the fate of trees which bear evil fruit? What of false teachers? (Vs. 21-23.) Could false teachers truly make the claim of v. 22? What does Jesus mean by "I never knew you"?

III. Vss. 24-27.—On what did the wise man build his house? On what did the foolish man build? What trials came upon each house? What was the result to the first? Why did it not fall? Like whom is the builder of that house? What happened to the other house? Why did it fall? Like whom is its builder?

Good things are often counterfeited. A sure test. "Their fruits" Ps. i. 3; Jer. xvii. 8.

Like produces like, in the nature of things. "Good works" (Matt. v. 16), the outgrowth of the spiritual nature; "dead works" (Heb. ix. 14), are the fruit of the natural heart (Matt. xv. 19).

The fruitless are classed with the evil. Negative virtues—*not* swearing, *not* cheating, etc.—are not recognized. See Matt. xxi. 19. Barren trees are cumberers of the ground (Luke xiii. 7); fit only for burning, symbolic of severest punishment, and there is no restoration. Sheep's clothing will not avail at the great day (Rom. iii. 19); by character, we shall be judged.

Receiving and serving Christ is doing the will of the Father.

Sincerity is not salvation. "Not every one" &c. (Rom. x. 2).

The awful doom.—Come, gives way to DEPART.

True piety is in obeying and doing the words of Jesus.

Building on the sand, not the result of ignorance, but of love of ease, etc.

Jesus is our rock (1 Cor. iii. 11).

The storms of trial, and of the judgment day, come to both the wise and the foolish.

The loss of the sinner—total, irretrievable, great. None can return to live life over again.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.—Verse 16.—*Be ware of false prophets.* Lying pretenders, we are to be on our guard against deceivers. This, too, as respects professed religious teachers. A fair outside is not to be trusted. Sheep's clothing may disguise a wolf.

Verse 16.—A practical rule for detecting false prophets is given. *By their fruits.* Whatever the appearance which they may assume, their character will remain the same. Consider what their conduct is. Their actions are their fruits. But not alone their actions. The consequences that follow their teaching—these also are the "fruits" of religious teachers.

Verses 17, 18.—There is a somewhat current notion that bad men may, notwithstanding their badness, do good work as ministers of Christ. Christ says that a bad man cannot do good. The apparent good, therefore, that bad men sometimes do, is apparent good only; it is not real good. It takes time, often for the true quality of work done to manifest itself. Hence, the great value of church-history to the church. Wisdom for judging is a thing to be sought from God in prayer. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God." James promises, too, a generous answer.

Verse 19.—It is simply imported that God, in his providential husbandry, will, and in fact does, do as men do in their husbandry of trees, bring to naught, destroy, abolish, ostensible teachers of truth, who really are teachers of falsehood.

Verses 20, 21, 22.—In verse 20, Jesus returns from what was incidental and suggested, to what was principal in his thought, namely, the practical method for us to adopt in judging of men claiming to be true religious teachers. We are to consider their fruits—what their life is, and what their influence. Not "Lord, Lord," in address from the lips, but "Lord, Lord," in doing the things commanded. They will appear, claiming recognition from Christ as true servants of his, only to be disowned and driven away from his presence.

Verses 24-27.—In these verses, we have the solemn conclusion of this solemn discourse. The discourse has all been practical—doctrine, which means teaching, for the sake of practice, which means doing—a model herein for all preaching and for all Sunday-school instruction. But, notwithstanding that at every point in the progress of this sermon our Lord has been so intently practical, still he will not omit at the very close of it to insist once more upon the necessity of men's *doing* something in view of what he has said. Hearken, he seems to say, hearken, but not simply hearken. Obey. Obedience is your safety. These sayings of mine, the very substance of truth as they are, will not save you. It will not save you to hear them. It will not save you to approve them. It will not save you to admire them. It will not save you to be touched by them. It will not save you to be alarmed by them. You must do them, or you will perish. Doing of them is the work on which to build the house of your hopes. No other foundation will stand, and hold your house standing. If you do them not, having heard them, then the house of your hopes, however beautifully built, is built upon sand. The stress of the elements in that impending day will overwhelm it. Your house will fall, and the fall will be great. Observe, obedience is the rock. The rock is not, in the present passage, Christ, though in other Scripture passages, Christ is represented as the rock. Here, obedience is the rock.

The imagery of this conclusion is suggested by the manner of building prevalent in Palestine, and by the dangers to which that manner of building exposed the structures. Villages were built on mountains and on hill-sides, where, on occasion of heavy storms, streams would swell suddenly to torrents.

Verses 28, 29.—The effect of this discourse was to astonish the throngs that listened to it. Perhaps while the Lord was speaking, the auditory increased, until it embraced many besides those called in the first verse of chapter fifth "his disciples," to whom it was begun. What created the astonishment does not seem to have been so much any novelty of matter in Christ's teaching, as the novelty of manner in it. Christ differed in style from the Scribes. The Scribes halted, hesitated, spoke under

their breath; referred and deferred to precedent, tradition; guessed, conjectured. Christ spoke with authority. There was a new tone of certainty, of mastery. And this, after all, was what we needed—not one more voice to teach us duty, but a PERSON for us to obey.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

We can easily tell who are in the right way by the fruit they bear, and by the kind of lives they lead. Peoples' words and actions are the fruit they bear. Illustrate. When people pretend that they belong to Jesus, and yet bear no fruit for him, he says, "I never knew you; depart from me, ye that do wickedly."

The fruit which Jesus wants us to bear, is to do the things which he taught. He told a story at the end of his sermon, to show what those who do his words and those who do them not are like. Read the story from the Bible; then tell the children that they are the builders. Every action you do, good or bad, is part of these character-houses you are building. What is the first thing to do when you build? For a foundation stone is the only sure thing. Which is surest, a number of small stones, or one large one? What is one very large stone called? A Rock.

Coming to Sunday-school, is a good brick to build into a character-house. *Pleasing Jesus is a right foundation.*—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Bible Enigma.

No. 62.

1. The kiss that Judas gave.
2. The swine's food.
3. Man's dwelling place.
4. What Abraham took to Mount Moriah.
5. That of which Ahab built a house.
6. Whence the cold weather comes.
7. Favor from God or man.
8. One of the heavenly constellations.
9. One of the hardest kind of stones.
10. An article of the Temple furniture.
11. A large unclean bird.
12. A name given to the chosen ones.
13. An office of Christ.
14. A place with nothing in it.
15. The best drink for man and beast.
16. The prince of this world.

The initials of the words here described (each containing but five letters) give the title of our Lord that was put on the cross.

CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

No. 35.

A PUZZLE-POEM.

Young folks will find a good deal of amusement in hunting up and writing down the proper last words for the lines of this poem:—

MISSING RHYMES.

The captain strode from fore to—,
As lordly on his simple—,
As though it were some noble—.

He shouted, shoved, and ordered—
The floating warehouse brought to—;
Then changing tone, from blunt to—.

He cried his cargo, tons of—,
Coals, linens, jewels, apples—,
Who'll buy my wares at any—?

And buyers came, with eye and—,
Bought large and little, pearl or—,
From book to barrel, spoon to—.

He sold by inch, and sold by—,
Sold plough and screw, sold type and—,
Sold clothing fit for any—.

Sold pipes of wine and casks of—,
Sold drums and fifes, the camp to—,
Sold game, from rabbit up to—.

Sold fish, from salmon down to—,
Lumber for pencils and for—,
Dishes from silver cup to—.

He sold to scribes and printers—,
To florists, lily buds and—,
Sold sparrows' cages filled with—.

He sold to sketchers India—,
Sold chains of gold, and many a—
That blacksmith's forge and teamsters—.

He sold to seedmen hemp and—,
To milliners sold silk and—,
To dentists tools that pull or—.

He sold to wear, to drink, to—,
He vendied coal and trafficked—,
The buyers voted him a—.

The sale was out, the tide was—,
The float, renewed by plank and—,
Again adown the stream did—.

The puzzle will be both easier and harder to read when you mind these rules:—

First—The rhyming word must have a meaning in keeping with the context, line and verse.

Second—After the missing word of

the first line is found, the missing word of the second line must be exactly the same, with the exception of having only one letter prefixed to it; and the missing word of the third line must be exactly the same as the second, with just one letter more prefixed to it; and all these must be English words, in unison with the whole poem.

As for instance, the first stanza will read:—

The captain strode from fore to—AFT
As lordly on his simple—RAFT
As though it were some noble—CRAFT

Now, it will be observed that these rhymes make good sense with what precedes them; and that the second is made from the first, by prefixing one letter; and the third from the second by prefixing one more letter; and all three rhyme and give sense to the whole stanza, which otherwise would be simply nonsense. The first rhyming word is AFT; the second is also aft with only the prefix of the letter R, which makes the word RAFT; and the third is also raft, with only another prefix of the letter C, which makes it CRAFT. And so it goes on down through the whole poem, which is richly worth the study of old and young, the preceptor and his pupil, as ingeniously showing of what wonderful combinations our language is capable.

Answer to Bible Enigma.

No. 61.

1. T homa S.
2. H anna H
3. E liah A
4. O phi R
5. D avi D
6. O mr I
7. R eube N
8. E x-kin G

THEODORE S. HARDING.

ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

No. 34.

ELIM
LADE
IDEA
MEAL

Select Serial.

Florence Walton,

A Question of Duty.

BY MAY F. MCKEAN.

CHAPTER V.—MRS. HARTFORD.

The glorious autumnal sun had completed his daily race, sinking in the western horizon, while the silvery moon shone down from almost mid-heaven, "weaving weird, fantastic shadows" through the branches around these four when we met just here on the porch one week ago—the two cousins, Dr. Ronselle, and Clifford Walraven.

A walk was proposed, and after light wrappings had been adjusted pursuant to the Doctor's orders, they started forth, and naturally enough they fell into pairs, Dr. Ronselle and Florence taking the lead, Mr. Walraven and Ethel following.

Disposition, you know, exerts an influence even upon one's walk, and so now the brisk pace which was so natural to both the Doctor and his companion soon placed them far in advance of the two whose ease-loving natures found a "stroll" more suited to their tastes.

"How did you enjoy your call upon the Hartfords?" the doctor asked when they were quite out of hearing from the others.

"Part of it a great deal, and part not at all," replied Florence quickly. "I was so glad you came just at the moment you did, for I did not know what to say to the poor woman. It seems to me that such strictly family matters are not to be spoken of to one so nearly a stranger as I; yet she really seemed distressed. What should I have done, Dr. Ronselle?"

"I think you did the very best thing to be done under the circumstances. Perhaps you knew there are some few, a very few, natures in this world with whom sympathy does not agree; they need constant urging forward, with never a moment to look back over the past and repine."

"We ought always, all of us, to forget those things which are behind and reach forth for those which are before. We ought to 'go on unto perfection,' ought we not?"

"Perhaps so but I am looking at

things at present from an extremely earthly point of view. I have heard much of Mrs. Hartford's history, and when I remember that the ruin of a once noble, useful life is due alone to her, I find very little sympathy in my heart for her. Besides, I think it would do her more harm than good than if I could; that is not what she most needs."

"Are you sure you are not judging her too harshly?" asked Florence. "You may have heard but one side of the statement."

"No, not too harshly. Let me tell you, Miss Walton; then you may judge for yourself. When Eben Hartford married his young wife she was a vain, spoiled girl, with no other recommendation than a pretty face, without the slightest idea of housekeeping or economy. He was young, spirited, talented, and proud of his pretty wife."

"They had only his salary as clerk in an art-store in the city, besides what he realized from the occasional sale of the paintings upon which he worked at odd times. But she was extravagant and careless. She did not seem to know, or care to know, how to manage a house; she would rather the work should remain undone than that she should spoil the whiteness of her hands in the doing; and, as they could not afford to hire help, you may very readily infer that their home was none of the neatest."

"He soon found his mistake. When, wearied from work, he returned home, he found not a loving wife and bright, cheerful fireside; no restful peace was there—nothing which renders home dear; that thoughtful attention which we expect from those we love was always wanting. You can scarcely blame him, then, for turning from such a home to find elsewhere the pleasure which was denied him there."

"He sought it in a gayly-lighted drinking-saloon. At first his object was but rest, then the merry companions by whom he was here surrounded, and finally the fiery beverage which proved his ruin, and for which, unfortunately, he had a hereditary predisposition. So long as he kept entirely free from it, he was safe, but the first glass aroused the taste which had so long been slumbering, and he seemed powerless to break his fetters; his downward course was rapid."

"Of course lost his situation in the city. He has now little encouragement to paint, so that for several years things have been going from bad to worse continually, until it is as you saw them to-day. And she is always complaining of her hard lot, as if it were not every whit brought on by her own carelessness." Dr. Ronselle ended in a tone of most thorough disgust.

"Yet, after all, may it not be more her misfortune than her fault? Perhaps her early training has aided her natural disposition until she can scarcely help it," returned Florence.

"Don't you believe it to be a wife's duty, Miss Walton, to at least render home pleasant?"

"Certainly Dr. Ronselle—most certainly she should be a 'helpmeet' for man; she should study his interests; she should incite him to higher and nobler aims; she should be a cheerful support, never a drag upon him; her influence should be such that he will go out from her presence stronger and better able to cope with the difficulties he needs must meet in life."

"Please tell me, then, how you can palliate Mrs. Hartford's negligence, as you were just doing?"

"I was only saying 'perhaps.' I do not excuse her entirely for not learning or at least trying to do better. But we do not know what influences have been brought to bear upon her in her earlier life; therefore we have no right to judge her too harshly."

"We have a right to judge any one whose mind is so weak and vain that she cannot or will not see and correct her faults, when those same faults are driving those around her to destruction."

From his lofty, self-reliant assurance Dr. Ronselle found it very easy to pronounce the doom of those whose weakness or carelessness or positive sinfulness rendered them liable to the penalty. He was not actuated by that highest, loftiest of all motives the love of God, and therefore the hatred of all things unholly; yet he held his own strict views of right and wrong, and before this bar he arraigned all transgres-