

FOR THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

International S. S. Lesson.

LESSON XI.—ZACCHÆUS, THE PUBLICAN—MARCH 17.

Luke xix. : 1-10.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."—Luke xix : 10.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—The lost sought and saved.

Seeker

ANALYSIS.—Jesus the Finder of the lost.
Saviour

TIME AND PLACE.—A little more than a week before the crucifixion, in the City of Jericho, as Jesus passed through it on the way up to Jerusalem. Jericho (The City of Palm Trees) is on the inclined plane leading upwards from the Jordan to the high lands environing Jerusalem, from which city it lies some twenty-five miles to the north-east, and lying below Jerusalem about 3,000 feet or ten or twelve times the height of our highest church steeples.

Jericho was a Levitical City—many priests resided there—a most productive centre; with trade seaward to the west and landward to the east. It became the residence of many Publicans or Customs' Collectors and of whom Zaccheus was the chief.

INTRODUCTORY.—Jesus on His way up towards the rocky, hilly road leading to Jerusalem, needed preparatory rest and food and finding in the willing heart in the little body of Zaccheus an open door went in to eat with him and to rest and "abide" in his house for a time. Rev. iii. 20.

Received joyfully by His host, He takes occasion to assure Zaccheus and his house of their acceptance because of his faith as a son of Abraham, and to leave with him and for us the proclamation which has come ringing down the centuries that the Son of Man came to seek and to save the Lost.

JESUS AS SEEKER, v. 3 and 10.—Jesus seeks those who seek Him. Zaccheus sought to see Jesus, so anxious was he that, though a chief official, and a man of wealth and position, regardless of the ridicule or criticism of the unfriendly crowd to whom his business as chief Tax or Customs' Collector had made him as, we may suppose conspicuously odious, he, braving the scorn of the multitude, forgetting perhaps that he was incurring the ridicule of the populace, climbed up into a tree, seeking thereby to see Jesus "who He was." Hearing the knocking of Him "who stands at the door and knocks," he was aroused to enquire who knocked and what were His claims to entrance and hospitality. "Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." Ez. xxxiv. 11, 12. Contrast this seeking of Jesus with the seeking of Herod who sought out "the young child," this very same Jesus, to destroy Him, and with that of the other Herod who, later on, not to save but also with sinister purpose, having killed James, proceeded to take Peter also and after his miraculous escape, sought for him, and not finding him, commanded to put his keepers to death; and with that of Satan, who goes about seeking whom he may devour. Unlike those the Lord Jesus "the Good Shepherd," goes out, seeking His one lost sheep until He finds it and returns with it on His shoulders rejoicing. He is, indeed, the patient "Seeker" and rejoicing "Finder."

JESUS AS FINDER.—A Finder implies something lost or gone astray, and "We all like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way," but as this sin of straying away from God was laid on Jesus, so we are found by him and brought from the downward path in which we are wandering, to the fold of the Good Shepherd, there to abide with and to follow Him, walking in a new path even with God Himself as Enoch, Noah and Abraham did. Hagar fled away into the wilderness, but the Angel of the Lord found her and prevailed with her to return submissive to her mistress, leading her with promises. The Lord found His people Jacob, also "in the waste howling wilderness," and led him about. He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. So He alone did lead him, Deut. xxxii. 9, 10 and 12. The Angel of the Lord found the persecuted prophet Elijah, also in the wilderness, whither he had fled from the cruel Jezebel, and miraculously fed him with food which sustained him forty days in the mount of God, a figure to us of the heavenly inheritance reserved for those who have been found and fed by Jesus, I Kings xix. 7. The recollection of the Father's house with its love and plenty, prevailed for the finding of his prodigal son, who returned from the far famine-stricken country to his home, brought the rejoicing exclamation up out of the tender forgiving father's heart that, though dead, his son now lived again and though lost, he had been found. Jesus finds His poor persecuted ones.—The poor beggar born blind but now cured, having, owing to his confession of Him as "of God," been driven from the synagogue, was specially sought out and found by Jesus, and by His direct dealing with him, brought to his knees confessing "Lord I believe," and so, from beggary and blindness, to co-inheritance with Jesus and sight of things neither visible nor conceivable to the natural vision, I Cor. ii. 6-16. So the Lord finds the poor, the persecuted and the lost.

JESUS AS SAVIOUR.—The very name of "Jesus" means Saviour, "Thou shalt call his name 'Jesus' for He shall save His people from their sins," Matt. i. 21. "For unto you is born this day a Saviour which is Christ the Lord," Luke ii. 11. He is Saviour of the Needy "For He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the

poor also and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy." He is Saviour of the "Sick" not of the "Whole,"—of the "Publicans and Sinners" not of men minded like the Scribes and Pharisees, Luke v. 30, 31. He came not to destroy but to save men's lives, not to condemn nor to judge the world but to save it, and to save sinners, Jno. iii. 17, xii. 47; I Ti. i. 16. He is a Saviour for Eternity, "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood," i.e., whoso cometh to me and believeth in me "hath eternal life," Jno. vi. 54, and 56. He is the "Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him," He. v. 9. He is Saviour by His own voluntary act of Grace, "Through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved," Acts xv. 11. He is Saviour of all those who believe in Him, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son 'that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life,' John iii. 16. 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved,' Acts xvi. 31.

Application and Illustration.

WHAT CAN I DO?

"JESUS IS SEEKING YOU. He came to Jericho seeking Zaccheus that day; He comes to your house and heart very often seeking you. Can you not, as Zaccheus did, hurry and open the door of your little house and let the dear Saviour come into your heart and bring salvation to you? When? That is for you to say. Shall it be 'this day,' as Jesus said, or will you say, 'Some other day?' Let us bow our heads a moment, while every one says this little prayer, 'Dear Jesus, I am lost by sin; please come and seek and find me.'—Westminster Teacher.

Practical Helps, (Peloubet.)

No one ever sought Christ sincerely who did not find Him.

The proofs of conversion are repentance, confession, restitution and benevolence.

It is a great blessing to have Jesus abide in our homes. Out of great sinners Jesus can make great saints.

Courage is required in the service of God. Zaccheus showed courage in his way of seeking Jesus. Jesus showed great courage in going to Zaccheus house contrary to a strong popular prejudice.

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR.

Winning Others.

First Day—Christ and Zaccheus—Luke xix. 1-10.

Second Day—Christ and the Samaritan—John iv. 5-16.

Third Day—Christ and Saul—Acts ix. 1-9.

Fourth Day—Paul and the jailer—Acts xvi. 25-33.

Fifth Day—How Paul won men—I Cor. x. 24-33.

Sixth Day—Christ draws men—John iii. 14-21.

Seventh Day—WINNING OTHERS, FROM WHAT, TO WHAT, AND HOW?—Acts viii. 26-30.

PRAYER MEETING TOPIC, March 17.—"WINNING OTHERS, FROM WHAT, TO WHAT, AND HOW?" Acts viii. 26-30. Let us glance at our topic this week from the three points of view indicated above. Winning others, in the first place, *from what?* The Bible is very explicit as to the natural state of man, and his inevitable end if left to follow his own inclinations. The Psalmist tells us in unmistakable language that man is utterly evil, and can of himself do no good, (Ps. xiv. 1-3) a truth which some people to-day are in sad need of learning, while in other scriptures we read that the soul that sinneth is under the wrath and curse of God, and must surely die, unless some power outside of itself intervene to save, (Gal. iii. 10, Isa. xlii. 9, Eph. ii. 3.) This then is the awful state of affairs in which by nature man is, and from which it is the privilege, nay the bounden duty of you and me, who have been won, to win. Winning others, in the second place, *to what?* We have looked at the dark side of our topic, we may now look at its gloriously bright aspect, which is all the more so owing to the contrast. Man by nature corrupt, selfish and at enmity with God, may become holy, consecrated, self-denying and the friend of his Creator, through the atonement of Jesus Christ, and the work of the Holy Ghost. He may be won from the position of a rebel to the privileges of a son (John i. 12); from a place of condemnation, to one of complete justification, Rom. v. 1, viii. 1; and from a life of sin and self-pleasing, to a life of holiness and God-pleasing, (Rom. vi. 11-18, Heb. xi. 5.) Winning others, in the third place, *how?* This is the practical question, and we may learn something in answer from our topic passage. 1. *Be talking in God's way,* v. 20. Philip was in the path which God had indicated for him by His angel, when he won this soul. 2. *Have the Spirit and heed Him,* v. 29. This is an absolutely necessary qualification. Philip had the companionship of God's Holy Spirit, and was implicitly and immediately obedient to His leading. If you by earnest watchful waiting upon his guidance, cultivate the friendship of the Spirit, you may have as clear leading as the apostle. 3. *Be prompt,* v. 30. Philip ran. Many an opportunity of speaking a word for Christ has been lost just for lack of decisive, prompt action. 4. *Don't wait for an introduction where souls are at stake,* v. 30. Standing on ceremony when a man is drowning, would be criminal; how much more so when his soul is in danger of eternal perdition. 5. *Preach Jesus,* v. 35. If you do this you must win souls, for He has said "I, if I be lifted up will draw all men unto me." Oh, for more Jesus preaching, more of the cross, more of the Blood, more of the resurrection! It is the preaching that saves and builds up souls, and what other can we need?