

# Lesson Word-Pictures.

A great King is to enter Jericho and dine with one of its favored inhabitants this very day.

A great King, a great King!

Hark!

Look down that road and listen!

Can you not hear the din of trumpets? Can you not catch the rumble of chariot wheels? Can you not see a host in sturdy armor and under brilliant flags?

That road is empty and dusty and hot and still.

No sign of the coming of this King, says someone.

But he is coming nevertheless.

He will be entertained by one of Jericho's citizens. Yes, under one of the goodly sycamore trees of Jericho the host and his kingly guest will meet, and then will go to the banquet room together.

Which fine sycamore is it? Before what great man's door does it throw out its honored branches? Hilkiah lives in that house over there behind a noble sycamore. He is the richest man in Jericho. He has the biggest banquet hall. He serves the finest dinners. The King will be likely to stop with Hilkiah. Then there is Amminadab, the ruler of the synagogue. He is a very influential man. Under the fine tree before his door may be this expected memorable conference.

"There is another sycamore worth noticing," says a proud son of Abraham, "but I just saw Zaccheus, the publican, the rascal, rogue, villain, squirming up into it. That dishonors it. The King coming, if not a Jew, ought to be. He ought to be the Messiah we have been expecting, and he will be a Jew, and no Jew would stop under a sycamore that bears a publican as fruit, and then go to his house as guest. Jews associate only with the sons of Abraham."

Yes, that other sycamore is a noble tree, and up its trunk something has just sprung, squirrel-like.

Zaccheus, was it? The little man! Lucky for him that there was a branch low down. He says a crowd is coming, coming by this very tree, and it is a crowd curious to see and follow one Jesus, and Zaccheus must give more to have a look at Jesus than to see great Caesar himself. He must, will have a look at Jesus. So up into the sycamore this publican-squirrel has leaped.

"Let him go!" says the haughty son of Abraham. "Squirrel? He is a fox, a wolf! Let him go!"

"Let him go! Don't notice him!" cries Hilkiah. "He is not a son of Abraham!" And Hilkiah is echoed by Amminadab. "Let him go! He is not a son of Abraham!"

And there he is, the publican-squirrel, up in the

tree, his bright, sharp, kindly eyes peering down. And there is the crowd coming nearer!

O, what if the King be in the crowd! But there are no chariots, no flags, no trumpets, only a great, curious crowd, eager to see that man walking at its head. But what a majestic, kingly gait he has!

O, Jericho, that is your King! It is Judea's King, the world's King!

Forward, Hilkiah! Stand under your sycamore! Let a Jew receive this greatest of Jews!

No, he goes by Hilkiah's tree.

Out then, Amminadab, and stand under your sycamore. A son of Abraham, receive Abraham's Lord!

No, he, the King, passes by this sycamore also. Where will he halt then?

There is only one other worthy sycamore, and Zaccheus, that publican-fruit, "rascal," "rogue," "villain," is hidden among its branches. And under that polluted tree halts the King!

He looks up.

He spies Zaccheus.

And now hear his kingly voice: "Zaccheus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house!"

O, how quickly Zaccheus slides down that sycamore trunk!

How joyfully he receives his guest! How gladly he makes ready the feast!

O wonderful day in the house of Zaccheus! What a long look at his Lord he had, and what joyful recognition he received as a true son of Abraham!

The King goes on, on to Jerusalem, there to die for Zaccheus, there to hang on a tree that sinners everywhere may have a look at their sacrifice and be saved.

## Orientalisms of the Lesson.

A very vivid picture of what oriental taxation is may be gotten from two or three pages (57-59 of vol. 2) of Schuyler's *Turkistan*, describing the method of raising revenue of the Khan of Khokand. The public works are first and foremost built and maintained by pressed labor, for which nothing is paid, not even food being supplied, and the parties who shrink are whipped, and sometimes whipped to death, while others have been buried alive. Even collectors of brushwood reeds and grass are obliged to deliver one half to the government. Then every cartload of reeds or brushwood must pay five cents on entering the town where the market is held, and add eleven cents at the market itself. Cattle, horses, asses, and other animals, when sold, must be taxed on the sale. Even leeches must pay a cent each. This is a tax on the right of selling in the bazaar, and extends to everything brought in or going out by sale. Even monkeys and other