

A BRIEF BIBLICAL STUDY.

By Geo. W. Armstrong.

Luke xix:1-10.

The record of Christ's life is full of important lessons. His oral teachings are designed for all peoples in every age. "My words shall not pass away." "Never man spake like this man."

His wonderful words are also pregnant with lessons of infinite value if we read them aright—"Master we know that Thou art a teacher come from God for no man can do the miracles that Thou doest except God were with him."

The every day incidents in the form of narratives are also full of instruction, and none more so than this narrative of Zacchaeus. These ten verses contain in brief form the divine plan of salvation. They are the germ out of which we can gather the "Pilgrims Progress" from the city of destruction to the celestial city. What Bunyan took several hundred pages to narrate in verbal detail the Evangelist condenses into ten scriptural verses.

The narrative brings before us a man possessed with noble desires—He desired to see Jesus! All men have desires of one sort or another. Some desire fame, some learning, some commercial success and ambition—to sit in the world's highest seats.

All of which may or may not be good, but are certainly only transitory—of the earth, earthly. Not so with desires to know Christ, these are lasting and eternally abiding.

The character of Zacchaeus is implied in the narrative. He was a publican, as such despised and detested by the Jews because of his occupation, a tax collector; doubly loathsome to his own countrymen as he was a contractor with the Roman power. He was rich, made such by extortion. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God?" Few rich men were disciples of seeing Christ. Nicodemus; the young ruler; Zacchaeus are the only ones mentioned in the New Testament. Rich men usually "trust in uncertain riches" and devote their desires to acquiring wealth.

Zacchaeus, however, availed himself of a great opportunity. Christ on His way to Jerusalem and Calvary was passing through Jericho for the last time. Neglect at this time might have been his eternal undoing. "How shall we escape if we neglect?" Difficulties generally surround and try to thwart great achievements. The Christian career is beset with them—old championships, ridicule, prejudice, lack of sympathy. Zacchaeus found it so. His difficulties were twofold. Let the multitude; 2nd his own diminutive stature. Difficulties disappear like snow under the warmth of a noon-day sun. "Overcoming" has the promise of reward; "unto him that overcometh will I give." Zacchaeus overcame. "He ran before and climbed into a sycamore tree." In the Christian life faith and prayer overcome difficulties, and earnestness of purpose triumphs. What was Zacchaeus' reward? He desired to see, he secured a guest. With joyful obedience he obeyed the voice of Christ. He made haste and came down, and never man was so great and honored a host. "To-day I must abide at thy house." Wonderful condescension; glorious reward. Zacchaeus' joy created a murmuring multitude. The people murmured not because of their respect for Christ or because they appreciated his life and work; for they said of Him: "He casteth out devils by Beelzebub the prince of devils." "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them." True; this was the great purpose of His mission. "I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." A seeking sinner; a found Saviour, forms a good companionship and is consummated in a bestowed salvation. And what a testimony the converted sinner bears! Let us to bene-

volence—half of my goods I'll give to the poor. A niggardly Christian is an anomaly. A Christian should be like Christ—"He was rich yet for our sakes he became poor that we through his poverty might be made rich." 2nd He manifested the repentance of restitution. Restitution is the highest kind of repentance. It is repentance in action; and actions speak louder than words. Benevolence and restitution showed Zacchaeus' faith by his works. Salvation was not the reward of works but the works were the outcome of faith. Let Zacchaeus' conduct be an example to follow; and in every experience the same result will be realized.

London, Ont.

LIFE.

By Rev. Chester C. Thorne.

What is your earthly life?

A transient vapor, rising from the sea.

What is your life in God?

Newborn, and lasting as eternity.

This life all may possess;

As a free gift of love it was designed

For "whosoever will."

Of every race, and tribe, of human kind.

SPARKS FROM OTHER ANVILS.

Cumberland Presbyterian: Is it not possible that with churches as with individuals the explanation of failure will, at the last great day, be voiced in those familiar words, "Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these?"

Herald and Presbyterian: It is announced as a discovery that "there was graft in King Hammurabi's time." This is not news. The history of Asiatic nations from Hammurabi to the present has been a history of graft, intrigue and violence. Things were worse every way in Hammurabi's time than they are now.

Presbyterian Witness: There is a lesson which we have not yet fully learned as a church. There are congregations and preaching stations that make no contributions to help the church in her enterprises. We ought surely to hear from every living congregation and every living member, every true adherent, in every congregation. This is only right and fair and orderly; and if we can attain to this, there will no doubt to hamper our operations.

Lutheran Observer: We were made for a higher sphere of interests and activities than this earthly one. We are native to the realm of the unseen and spiritual and, shut out from it, we are homesick and forlorn. Created for God as well as by him, we are, as St. Augustine says, "restless till we rest in him." No culture of the mind and spirit is complete or able to satisfy the cravings of our immortal souls that ignores religion. He that drinketh of only earthly wells, even the purest and best, will thirst again. But he that drinketh of the water that Christ gives shall never thirst, for it shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

United Presbyterian: One way to make a critic of the Bible is to rule Christ out of his heart; but one hour in the bosom of Jesus will destroy the keenest critic of the holy Word. Meet Christ at the door of the tabernacle. "Let Christ precede criticism. Let the gaze precede the grammar. Let the love precede the learning. Let the song precede the science. Let the heart precede the history. Let the prayer precede the probing. Let the spirit precede the scrutiny. Ask by all means the way to Zion; but ask with your face thitherward."

REVIVALS AND DRINK DEMON.

By Ulster Pat.

Shakespeare calls the "spirit of wine" devil, and Sir Benjamin Ward Richardson rendered the name still more applicable as "the devil in solution." Now, this many years the people of God have been appealed to by the friends of those who suffer grievously from the malignity of this devil to cast it out. But they are as powerless in most cases as were the disciples to whom the distressed father brought his epileptic son. In these circumstances it becomes us to turn to Jesus and say: "Why cannot we cast it out?" And we need not wait for the reply. It is writ large in the scriptures. "Because of your little faith. This kind can come out by nothing save prayer." How difficult is the lesson of standing still waiting for the salvation of God. We are so convinced that we must "do something." And it is true we are not to be idle. But our "methods" are of our own devising. We offer the polluted bread of our own efforts upon God's altar. And when this is thrown down, we do not imitate the favour of God that He may be gracious unto us, but we set ourselves again to build the waste places—kindling and re-kindling the fire on God's altar in vain. Oh, that instead of saying, Behold what a weariness it is, the church of God, from the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same, would honour His name by offering unto Him, not our persons, our works, our devisings, "methods," and "attractions" to win the people, but the incense and pure oblation of persistent, believing prayer for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Our gracious Lord would not tarry in responding to such an appeal any more than He did in acceding to the prayer of the distressed parent for his afflicted son. Though the demon might cry out and tear, he must come out and, if only we have the faith to believe it, enter no more into the people. Then would Canada be indeed a delightful land, and all nations call her happy.

That a spiritual awakening is the most effective blow to the liquor traffic is shown by the records of all revivals of religion. Many of us read with pleasure and surprise that one of the first fruits of the Welsh revival a few years since was the falling off in the receipts of the liquor sellers from pounds to shillings. The same result has been observed in the case of every true revival, I believe. The Rev. Dr. Macfarlane, of Renfrew, Scotland, in his "revivals of the eighteenth century" quotes Turnbull, who says "that in two or three years thirty or forty thousand souls were born into the family of heaven in New England, besides great numbers in New York, New Jersey and the more southern provinces," and that eight or ten years after the religious excitement there was not a drunkard in the whole of his native parish, in "the town of Albany." By the way was the rebellion, with the troubles that preceded it, Satan's method of drawing away the minds of the colonists from the things pertaining to God? Certainly, the United Empire Loyalists included a large proportion of God-fearing men and women, many, no doubt, the fruit of that revival, and to whom Canadians owe a debt of gratitude for the heritage of righteousness and loyalty they handed down to their posterity.

To feel the eternal in the passing moment, to catch the rustle of God's garment now, not to be burdened with a vain regret, not to be peering forward through the curtain; all that, with the open eye and feeling heart, is to be childlike. And of such is the kingdom of heaven.—G. H. Morrison.