

LESSON XI—March 17th, 1895.

Zacchæus the Publican. LUKE 19: 1-10.

(Commit to memory verses 8-10.)

GOLDEN TEXT.

"The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke 19: 10.

PROVE THAT

There is a present salvation. 2 Cor. 6: 2.

LESSON HYMNS.

CHILDREN'S HYMNAL, Nos. 22, 143, 133, 144.

SHORTER CATECHISM.

Quest. 13. *Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?* A. Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God,

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* Zacchæus the Publican; Luke 19: 1-10. *Tuesday.* Call of Matthew; Luke 5: 27-32. *Wednesday.* Christ's Care for the Lost; Luke 15: 1-10. *Thursday.* A Publican's Prayer; Luke 18: 9-14. *Friday.* Call to Repentance; Isa. 55: 1-7. *Saturday.* The Far-away Coming First; Matt. 21: 28-32. *Sabbath.* Sent to Save; 1 John 4: 7-14. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections.*)

NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS.

INTRODUCTORY. Jesus was now on his way to Jerusalem to be "offered up." The incident in our lesson occurred as he passed through Jericho (see map). The intervening history is found in Matt. 20.

LESSON PLAN. I. Seeking. vs. 1-4. II. Finding. vs. 5-7. III. Saved. vs. 8-10.

I. THE SINNER SEEKING. 1. *Jericho*—Jesus "was passing" (R. V.) through Jericho about a week before the crucifixion. Here it was necessary for him to rest for a little before beginning the arduous ascent of over 3,000 feet in twenty miles which lay between him and Jerusalem. "The small but rich plain, sloping gently upward from the level of the Dead Sea, 1,350 feet under the Mediterranean, to the stern background of the hills of Quarantania, had the climate of Lower Egypt, and displayed the vegetation of the tropics. Its fig-trees were famous; it was unique in its groves of palms of various kinds; its crops of dates were a proverb; the balsam plant, which grew principally here, furnished a costly perfume, and was in great repute in healing wounds; maize yielded a double harvest, and wheat ripened a whole month earlier than in Galilee. Rising like an amphitheatre from the midst of this luxuriant scene, lay Jericho, the chief place east of Jerusalem—at seven miles distance from the Jordan—on swelling slopes, seven hundred feet above the bed of the river." (Geikie.)

2. *Zacchæus*—The name is from a Hebrew word meaning "pure" (Ezra 2: 9; Neh. 7: 14). He was a Jew (verse 9). A chief publican (R. V.)—He was the agent, or steward, of the Roman "Receiver-general," of the province. The tribute, or taxes, imposed by the Romans on subject nations, was let by contract to wealthy Roman knights, who, for a certain sum agreed upon, obtained the right to collect them. These generally sub-let their contracts in smaller sections to "chief publi-

cans," who in the same manner paid a fixed sum for the right to exact the revenue within their assigned district. Zacchæus was one of these sub-contractors, and doubtless had many of the common "publicans" under him. While he might not be permitted to do anything illegal if it were known, yet irregularities would be overlooked very readily, and countless opportunities for "boodle" and "blackmail" would offer themselves to a dishonest man in his position. Jericho was a very important business centre. It was a halting-place for caravans from the east of the Jordan, and the great market for balsam. He was rich—Most of his wealth must have been gotten honestly, or he could not have carried out the proposal in verse 8. Riches will no more satisfy the heart than salt water will quench thirst.

3. *Sought to see*—The tense implies that he made repeated attempts. We can imagine that we see the little arch-publican running amongst the crowd, peering over taller shoulders, standing upon doorsteps, etc., as he tries to get a look at Jesus. *Who he was*—i. e. which of all the company was Jesus. His interest doubtless arose from more than mere curiosity. Had He not been called "the Friend of publicans?" (Compare others who wished to see Jesus. Luke 9: 9; John 12: 21.) *The press*—the crowd around Jesus.

4. *Sycamore tree*—should be spelled "sycomore." This is not the American "button-wood," called *sycamore* in the west, which is a species of plane tree. It was the Egyptian fig-tree, which bore worthless figs, and had leaves like the mulberry, or sycamine tree of