



LESSON X.—SEPTEMBER 2, 1906.

## Bartimeus and Zaccheus.

Luke xviii., 35; xix., 10.

### Golden Text.

The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.—Luke xix., 10.

### Home Readings.

Monday, August 27.—Luke xviii., 35-19; x.

Tuesday, August 28.—Mark x., 32-45.

Wednesday, August 29.—Mark x., 46-52.

Thursday, August 30.—Is. xlii., 1-16.

Friday, August 31.—John ix., 1-12.

Saturday, September 1.—Matt. ix., 27-31.

Sunday, September 2.—Matt. xx., 29-34.

(By Davis W. Clark.)

(Note: For evident reason attention is confined to the latter part of the lesson prescribed.—D. W. C.)

Jericho!—what stirring scenes the name recalls: Rahab and the spies, all saved by a rope of significant color; Joshua meeting the angel with drawn sword; Israel's march about the city to ram's-horn accompaniment; Achan's troublesome wedge of gold and Babylonish garment; Elisha healing the spring of waters; the school of the prophets; not to speak of the Oriental splendor of Herod and his son Archelaus! But for ethical purposes, every other incident connected with this City of Palms must give place to Jesus' interview with Zaccheus.

It was a busy day in that commercial city, the revenues of which were esteemed a gift a Roman triumvir might appropriately bestow upon an Egyptian queen as a love-token. A singing pilgrim caravan from Galilee and Perea was in passage for the Passover at Jerusalem. The presence in it of the Wonder-worker who had so lately raised Lazarus gave an unusual interest to what was otherwise a familiar incident. As it was, the whole populace poured out, and hedged the street on either hand.

The chief collector of revenue heard that Jesus was passing. As he sat there at the receipts of customs, with accounts spread out before him, there was a tumult of conflicting emotions in his heart. We may almost hear his soliloquy, 'Jesus, who spoke the parable of the Pharisee and publican, who has eaten with publicans, who has ordained one to be His apostle; Jesus, so near, and for the last time, too, for the Jews will surely kill Him on this visit to Jerusalem—I will see Jesus!' On that resolution a soul's destiny turns. Daybook and ledger are closed, office locked, and Zaccheus sallies forth.

A less resolute soul, one less fertile in resource, would have retreated before such hindrances. An impenetrable human wall; nobody inclined to show the odious tax collector slightest courtesy; rather to improve the opportunity to elbow and jostle him. But Zaccheus remembers the Egyptian fig tree far down and in the middle of the thoroughfare. He runs and climbs into the low fork of the tree. Doing so, he violates the Eastern notion of decorum, and makes himself more than ever the target for gibe and epithet. But what does that amount to, so only he sees the Friend of Publicans? One smile from Him will repay all.

As the confused sounds of the approaching throng grow more distinct, so does a holy purpose in the heart of Zaccheus. It might express itself in the words, 'If Jesus

only calls me, I will forsake all to follow Him.' His master passion, avarice, most subtle and imperious of all, has received its death-blow.

Before he ever left the fork of the tree, Zaccheus was far beyond the young rich ruler. No need of Jesus testing him with the command, 'Go sell all, and give all.' Can this man, whose life has been one of social ostracism, believe his ears? In defiance of popular feeling and established etiquette, does Jesus invite Himself to his home? Will the great Rabbi actually enter a house, the threshold of which no self-respecting Hebrew has ever crossed? Fears He no ceremonial defilement?

It is no mistake. Jesus is looking up with smile of recognition and eyes of love. In a transport of joy this outcast son of Abraham descends, and embraces, in all the fervor of a new affection, his self-invited Guest. Arm in arm they walk toward his tabooed home, while the opprobrium that once rested on Zaccheus falls with augmented weight upon Jesus. Above the confused and threatening roar of general disapproval can be heard at times the clear and ringing indictment, 'He hath gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.'

In the portal of his lordly manor Zaccheus pauses. He is grieved at the imputation cast upon his new-found Master—grieved that he himself is cause of it. He stands forth, and, with a wave of hand, asks the attention of the ill-humored throng. In substance, he says: 'You call me sinner. I have been such. Having lost all prestige among you by accepting office under an alien government, having no longer any reputation to support, I have yielded to the insidious allurements of my odious position, and have at times made false depositions to increase my revenue. I call you to witness that in every such instance I will make fourfold restitution. When this is completed I will give the half of the remainder to the poor. You say Jesus is going to be guest of a sinner. Granted! But not of an unrepentent sinner revelling in ill-gotten gains. A sinner, yes; but one who brings forth fruits meet for repentance.'

As if to seal this protestation with Divine authority, Jesus lifts His hands and solemnly declares absolution. 'Saved! saved! Both he and his house; because he is a son of Abraham, not only by nature, but by grace through faith. He proves his lineage from the father of all the faithful. You have called him sinner. Well, the very end and aim of My mission is to seek and to save sinners. I call you to witness My success in this instance.'

### ANALYSIS AND KEY.

1. Zaccheus: His City, Office, Fortune.
2. A Desire, a Hindrance, an Expedient.
3. Jesus' Recognition and Request. Zaccheus' compliance.
4. Popular Disapprobation.
5. Changed Nature of Zaccheus. Evidenced by his pledge.
6. Jesus' Commendation.

### THE TEACHER'S LANTERN.

Zaccheus was the Benedict Arnold of Jericho and all that region. He was esteemed a traitor to his country, a renegade from his Church. This incident is full of cheer to social outcasts, whether such justly or unjustly; they are still sought of Jesus.

His Church is to be like Jesus' self in its obliviousness to public contempt of individuals. Whether that contempt has any foundation in fact or not, it is still an immortal soul, which Jesus loved, for which He died. Let Jesus' Church, like Jesus' self, still seek and save the lost. He resolutely ignored all distinctions of social caste when a soul was to be won.

We can enter into social relations with sinners when the end and aim of it is that we may save them. A single courtesy will do what an age of self-righteous disdain will not. It will sometimes convert a sinner from the error of his way.

Curiosity may be a means of grace. It is a good thing when the stolid indifference of a community can be broken up, and people inclined to say with Moses at the burn-

ing bush, 'I will turn aside and see what this thing is.'

Grace was magnified in the salvation of Zaccheus. He was a hardened, money-getting man of the world. As Vallings finely says: 'The corrupt child of an age of corruption and fraud; steeped in an atmosphere of oppression, social suspicion, national aversion; confronted, for the first time in his life, with absolute personal honesty, transparent truth, and singlemindedness—heart and life were changed at a stroke before the burning gaze of Incarnate Honor.'

Zaccheus drove the nails into the coffin of his dead vice when he made fourfold restitution and gave half to the poor. Sacred arithmetic, this; heavenly multiplication and division! The camel went through the needle's eye. A rich man got into the kingdom. A public extortioner became the free-handed alms-giver. And the cold heart of a rapacious publican glowed with a new affection.

After assignment—what Zaccheus's proposition reported on 'change to-day would produce a sensation. No debtor I know of proposes to revive outlawed accounts with a view to paying them. No assigner, as far as I know, having retrieved his fortune, now proposes to pay the balance on each dollar with interest. Yet does not the Christian principle of restitution carry a man beyond the line marked by the civil statutes? Does not the disciple of Christ recognize a law higher than that of the State?

Put yourself in the way of Christ's coming. Take some coign of vantage, some sycamore altitude. Get out of! get out of! the din and throng of the world. Jesus will surely note our effort and reward us. Zaccheus needs speak no word; his action speaks louder than any articulate sound.

Jesus is still in search of entertainment. He stands at the door and knocks. Alas that, of so many places, it must still be said, as of the Bethlehemite inn, 'There is no room!'

O, the solemn responsibility of heads of families! The household usually embraces the faith of its head. We shall measure the exemplary influence of one who establishes and maintains a home.

### C. E. Topic.

Sunday, September 2.—Topic—Spiritual blindness. John ix., 35-41; Acts xxvi., 12-19. (Consecration meeting.)

### Junior C. E. Topic.

#### A COVETOUS KING.

Monday, August 27.—A covetous king. I Kings xxi., 2.

Tuesday, August 28.—An unhappy king. I Kings xxi., 4.

Wednesday, August 29.—Coveting and lying. I Kings xl., 5-10.

Thursday, August 30.—Coveting and murdering. I Kings xxi., 11-14.

Friday, August 31.—Coveting and stealing. I Kings xxi., 15, 16.

Sunday, September 2.—Topic—How covetousness made Ahab unhappy. I Kings xxi., 1-4. (Consecration meeting.)

Saturday, September 1.—The punishment. I Kings xxi., 17-19.

### A Child's Thought.

A little boy watched the building of a new house across the street until his father asked him whether he meant to be a bricklayer. 'No, father, but I am thinking what small things bricks are, and yet what a big house they build out of them.' The boy had the true secret of constructing a beautiful or a powerful character. It is by a conscientious attention to the minute thoughts, words, and deeds of everyday life.—Cuyler.