
GOSPEL ADVOCATE SERIES

Teacher's Annual Lesson Commentary

ON

UNIFORM BIBLE LESSONS

FOR THE

CHURCHES OF CHRIST

1949

This commentary is based on the Uniform Bible Lessons for the churches of Christ, and is the fifth year of the new series of the seven-year cycle, 1945-1951

TWENTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL VOLUME

PRICE

Single copy, postpaid.....	95 cents
Five or more copies to same address, each, net.....	85 cents

ORDER FROM

GOSPEL ADVOCATE COMPANY
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

Copyright, 1948, by
GOSPEL ADVOCATE COMPANY
Nashville, Tennessee

P R E F A C E

This is the fourth volume of TEACHER'S ANNUAL LESSON COMMENTARY, and the twenty-eighth annual volume published by the Gospel Advocate Company on Bible School Lessons since it was started by Brother E. A. Elam.

This year the entire volume is devoted to a study of the first four books of the New Testament. The general aims of the book are to learn more about Jesus and his life and death for us; to learn more about the kingdom he came to establish and how to become citizens in that kingdom; and to lead all into a greater appreciation of Jesus and the church, into a richer and fuller service in the church, and into a closer fellowship and communion with Jesus and with the Father. Both teachers and students should keep these aims in view, and study and work with a fervent prayer that these ends may be accomplished.

Special attention is directed to three features of the book this year. First the work is primarily a commentary on the lesson text. The material has been divided and arranged so as to make the thought clear, and to make it easy for the inexperienced to handle with ease. Second, the Golden Texts have been treated in such a way as to teach and apply the lessons intended by the Lord, and to serve as helps to young preachers and those who need material for talks before prayer meeting audiences. They will also find much good material of this kind in the body of the lessons. Third, the topics for discussion will also provide material for building sermons, though no effort has been made here to arrange the material in sermonic form.

To study the life and teachings of our Lord is of supreme importance; and no division of the Bible could be selected for study which would yield more lessons of greater value than that which is covered by this volume. It is the fervent prayer of this writer that both teachers and students will make the most of the opportunities afforded in these studies, and it is his hope that this book may make a contribution to the accomplishment of the aims set forth herein.

THE AUTHOR.

LESSONS FOR 1949

FIRST QUARTER

Studies in Matthew

Lesson I—January 2

The Infancy of Jesus..... Matt. 2: 1-8, 13, 16, 19, 20, 23

Lesson II—January 9

The Temptation of Jesus..... Matt. 4: 1-11

Lesson III—January 16

The Beatitudes..... Matt. 5:1-5

Lesson IV—January 23

Righteousness in the Kingdom..... Matt. 5: 17-20, 38-45; 6: 1-4

Lesson V—January 30

God's Kingdom First..... Matt. 6: 19-34

Lesson VI—February 6

Jesus Teaches His Disciples to Pray..... Matt. 6: 5-15

Lesson VII—February 13

The Two Builders..... Matt. 7: 21-29

Lesson VIII—February 20

The Limited Commission..... Matt. 10: 5-15, 40-42

Lesson IX—February 27

Jesus Promises to Build His Church..... Matt. 16: 13-20

Lesson X—March 6

Jesus and Children..... Matt. 18: 1-6; 19: 13-15

Lesson XI—March 13

Jesus Teaches Forgiveness..... Matt. 18: 21-35

Lesson XII—March 20

The Parable of the Talents..... Matt. 25: 13-30

Lesson XIII—March 27

The Great Commission..... Matt. 28: 16-20; Mark 16: 15, 16; Luke 24: 44-47

SECOND QUARTER

Studies in Mark

Lesson I—April 3

Ministry of John the Baptist..... Mark 1: 1-11

Lesson II—April 10

The Ministry of Healing..... Mark 2: 1-12

Lesson III—April 17

Jesus and the Sabbath..... Mark 2: 23-28; Col. 2: 14-16

Lesson IV—April 24

Jesus Feeds the Multitudes..... Mark 6: 35-44; 8: 1-9

Lesson V—May 1

Jesus Heals the Demoniack..... Mark 5: 1-17

Lesson VI—May 8

The Standard of Authority in Religion..... Mark 7: 1-13

Lesson VII—May 15

Jesus and Other Races Mark 7: 24-37

Lesson VIII—May 22

The Transfiguration of Jesus..... Mark 9: 2-13

Lesson IX—May 29

Jesus Protects the Home..... Mark 10: 2-12

Lesson X—June 5

Jesus and the Rich Young Ruler..... Mark 10: 17-31

Lesson XI—June 12

The Parable of the Husbandman..... Mark 12: 1-12

Lesson XII—June 19

Jesus Teaches in the Temple..... Mark 12: 35-44

Lesson XIII—June 26

Jesus Anointed in Bethany..... Mark 14: 1-9

THIRD QUARTER

Studies in Luke

Lesson I—July 3

The Boyhood of Jesus..... Luke 2: 40-52

Lesson II—July 10

Jesus Announces His Mission..... Luke 4: 16-30

Lesson III—July 17

Parable of the Good Samaritan..... Luke 10: 25-37

Lesson IV—July 24

Jesus Teaches True Values..... Luke 12: 22-34

Lesson V—July 31

Jesus Explains the Kingdom..... Luke 13: 18-30

Lesson VI—August 7

The Great Invitation..... Luke 14: 15-24

Lesson VII—August 14

Parable of the Prodigal Son..... Luke 15: 11-24

Lesson VIII—August 21

The Rich Man and Lazarus..... Luke 16: 19-31

Lesson IX—August 28

The Grateful Samaritan..... Luke 17: 11-21

Lesson X—September 4

The Triumphal Entry..... Luke 19: 29-40

Lesson XI—September 11

Jesus in Gethsemane Luke 22:39-53

Lesson XII—September 18

Jesus Condemned and Crucified..... Luke 23: 13-25, 32-34

Lesson XIII—September 25

Jesus Rises from the Dead..... Luke 24: 13-17, 25-35

FOURTH QUARTER

Studies in John

Lesson I—October 2

The First Disciples..... John 1: 35-49

Lesson II—October 9

Jesus and Nicodemus..... John 3: 1-17

Lesson III—October 16

Jesus and the Samaritan Woman..... John 4: 9-26

Lesson IV—October 23

Jesus the Bread of Life..... John 6: 25-40

Lesson V—October 30

Jesus the Light of the World..... John 8: 12, 31, 32; 9: 1-11

Lesson VI—November 6

Jesus the Good Shepherd..... John 10: 1-16

Lesson VII—November 13

Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead..... John 11: 1-5; 38-44

Lesson VIII—November 20

Jesus and the New Commandment..... John 12: 20-30; 13: 34, 35

Lesson IX—November 27

Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet..... John 13: 1-15

Lesson X—December 4

Jesus Comforts His Disciples..... John 14: 1-18

Lesson XI—December 11

Christian Fruitfulness..... John 15: 1-16

Lesson XII—December 18

Jesus Prays for His Disciples..... John 17: 5-7, 14-23

Lesson XIII—December 25

Peter Declares His Love..... John 21: 5-19

BIBLE DICTIONARY OF PROPER NAMES

Compiled by ROY H. LANIER

A

- Aar-on (enlightened), Heb. 7: 11. Brother of Moses, and first high priest of the Levitical order.
- A-bi-a-thar (The great one is Father), Mark 2: 26. High priest in the time of David, and the eleventh from Aaron.
- A-bib (sprouting), Ex. 13: 4. First month of the sacred year and seventh month of the civil year of the Hebrew calendar, corresponding with our April.
- A-bra-ham (father of a multitude), Gen. 18: 6. Founder of the Hebrew people, and the father of the faithful.
- A-haz (possessor), Isa. 7: 10. Eleventh king of Judah.
- A-him-e-lech (brother of the king), 1 Sam. 21: 1. The son of Ahitub, and high priest at Nob in the days of Saul and David. He gave David the shewbread to eat, and gave him the sword of Goliath.
- Al-Phae-us (exchange). 1. The father of Levi, or Matthew, Mark 2: 14. 2. Father of James (the less), one of the apostles. Mark 3: 18.
- An-drew (?), Matt. 10: 2. Son of Zebedee, who brought his brother, Peter, to the Lord.
- An-nas (merciful), John 18: 3. Jewish high priest before whom Jesus was first tried.
- A-pol-los (belonging to Apollo), Acts 18: 24. An eloquent preacher who knew only the baptism of John until taught more accurately by Aquila and Priscilla.
- Aq-ui-la (an eagle), Acts 18: 26. A tent maker who left Rome on account of persecution; a collaborer with Paul, and a teacher of Apollos.
- Ar-che-la-us (ruler of the people), Matt. 2: 22. Son of Herod the Great who ruled over Judea and Samaria when Joseph took Jesus to Galilee on his return from Egypt.
- As-syr-i-a, 2 Kings 17: 24. A powerful nation in the region of the Tigris River, with Nineveh as capital, that took the kingdom of Israel into captivity.

B

- Bab-y-lon (confusion), 2 Kings 24: 1. Capital of Chaldea; place of captivity of the kingdom of Judah for seventy years.
- Bar-thol-o-mew (son of Talmi), Matt. 10: 3. One of the twelve apostles, and probably the same as Nathanael.
- Be-el-ze-bub (lord of the dwelling), Matt. 12: 24. A heathen deity to whom the Jews ascribed the sovereignty of the evil spirits, and by whom they charged that Jesus cast out demons.
- Beth-a-ny (house of dates), Mark 14: 3. Home of Lazarus and his sisters, about two miles east of Jerusalem.
- Beth-le-hem (house of bread), Matt. 2: 5. The birthplace of Jesus, a village a few miles south of Jerusalem.
- Beth-pha-ge (house of unripe figs), Luke 19: 29. A village on the eastern slope of Mount of Olives, and near Bethany.
- Beth-sa-i-da (house of fish), John 1: 44. Home of Andrew, Peter, and Philip, in Galilee, on the western side of the Sea of Galilee.

C

- Caes-a-re-a Phi-lip-pi, Matt. 16: 13. The northernmost point of the travels of Jesus, and the place where Peter confessed Jesus as the Christ, the son of God.
- Ca-ia-phas (depression), John 18: 13. The son-in-law of Annas, and the high priest who condemned Jesus.
- Ca-na (reed), John 2: 1. A town in Galilee, where Jesus performed his first miracle.
- Ca-na-an (low, flat), Gen. 10: 6. Home of the Jews after their deliverance from bondage in Egypt.
- Ca-per-na-um (town of Nahum), Matt. 17: 24. A city on the western shore of Sea of Galilee, and center of activities of Jesus in Galilee.
- Cle-o-pas, Luke 24: 18. One of the two disciples to whom Jesus appeared on the way to Emmaus.
- Clo-pas, John 19: 25. Same as Alphaeus, and father of James the less, one of the apostles.
- Cor-inth, 1 Cor. 1: 2. A city of Greece, where Paul established a church.

D

- Da-vid (beloved), Matt. 1: 6. Youngest son of Jesse; second king of Israel; and prominent ancestor of Jesus.
- Deb-o-rah (bee, wasp), Judges 4: 4. A prominent woman in time of the judges, who led a successful military expedition.

De-cap-o-lis (the ten cities), Mark 7: 31. A section of country to the south and east of the Sea of Galilee in which were located ten cities.
 Did-y-mus (the twin), John 21: 2. A surname of the apostle Thomas.
 Dis-per-sion (scattered). A term applied to the Jews who did not return from the captivity.

E

E-gypt, Ex. 12: 41. The northeastern part of Africa, and the place where Jesus was taken for safety from Herod.
 E-li-jah (Jehovah is my God), Mark 9: 4. A prophet in the time of Ahab, and one who was with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration.
 E-lis-a-beth (God is an oath), Luke 1: 5. Mother of John the Baptist.
 E-li-sha (God is salvation), 2 Kings 5: 8. Successor to Elijah, and the prophet who cured the leprosy of Naaman.
 Em-ma-us (warm spring), Luke 24: 13. A village northwest of Jerusalem, where Jesus appeared to two disciples after his resurrection.
 Eph-e-sus, Acts 19: 1. Capital of Asia, and a city where Paul established the church.
 E-phra-im (double fruitfulness), John 11: 54. A city sixteen miles northeast of Jerusalem where Jesus went into retirement.
 Eph-rath (fruitful), Gen. 35: 19; Micah 5: 2. Another name for Bethlehem, and the birthplace of Jesus.

F

First-born, Ex. 13: 13. The first son born to a family, who succeeded the father as head of the family, and received a double portion of the father's property.
 First-fruits, 1 Cor. 15: 20. The first ripe fruits offered to Jehovah as a token that the whole will be devoted to him. Christ the first-fruits of the dead, and his resurrection a proof that all will be raised.

G

Gad-a-ra. Not mentioned in the Bible, but often used by writers to refer to the country of the Gadarenes.
 Gad-a-renes, Matt. 8: 28. People of Gadara, known also as Gerasenes.
 Gal-i-lee (circuit), Luke 4: 14. The northern division of Palestine west of Jordan River.
 Gen-n-es-a-ret (princes' garden), Mark 6: 53. Another name for the Sea of Galilee. Also the name of a section of country on the western shore of the lake.
 Gen-tiles (nations, foreigners). Matt. 10: 5. A Hebrew word including all except Jews, and used to the exclusion of Jews and Samaritans in some texts.
 Ger-a-sa. The land of the Gerasenes; also known as Gadara.
 Ger-a-senes, Mark 5: 1. The people of Gerasa; the Gadarenes.
 Ger-i-zim (waste places), Deut. 11: 29. The mountain where Samaritans worshipped.
 Geth-sem-a-ne (oil-press). Matt. 26: 36. A place, or garden, on the western slope of Mount of Olives, across Kidron from Jerusalem.
 Go-mor-rah (submersion). Matt. 10: 14. One of the cities of the plain destroyed by fire and brimstone in the days of Abraham.

H

Ha-des (not to be seen), Luke 16: 23. Unseen abode of departed spirits between death and the resurrection.
 He-brew (belonging to Eber), Jer. 34: 9. A name given to Abraham and his descendants.
 Her-od. The name of an Idumaeen family given the rule over Palestine by

1. Herod the Great, Matt. 2: 3. The king who attempted to kill Jesus.
 2. Herod Antipas, Matt. 14: 1. The king who beheaded John the Baptist.
 3. Herod Agrippa I, Acts 12: 1. The king who killed James.
 4. Herod Agrippa II, Acts 26: 13. The king before whom Paul was tried.
- Hil-l-el (rich in praise). A great teacher in Israel who differed from Shammai on the question of divorce.

I

Im-man-u-el (God with us). Matt. 1: 23. A name Isaiah said would be given Jesus, the son of the virgin.
 I-saac (laughter), Gen. 26: 1. The son of Abraham by Sarah.
 I-sa-iah (Jehovah is salvation), Isa. 1: 1. The first of the major prophets.
 Is-ra-el (he who striveth with God), Gen. 32: 28. A name given to Jacob and his posterity.

J

- Ja-cob (supplanter), John 4: 12. Son of Isaac, and father of the twelve tribes.
 James (same as Jacob), 1. Son of Zebedee, and an apostle. Matt. 10: 2. 2. Son of Alphaeus, and one of the apostles. 3. The brother of Jesus. Matt. 13: 55.
 Je-ho-vah (the self-existent), Psalm 23: 1. A name for God, the meaning and derivation of which is very uncertain.
 Jer-e-miah (whom Jehovah exalts), Jer. 1: 1. The second of the major prophets.
 Jer-i-cho (place of fragrance), Matt. 20: 29. A city between Jerusalem and the Jordan River, the home of Zacchaeus the publican.
 Je-ru-sa-lem (foundation of peace), Matt. 21: 1. Religious and political center of the Jews.
 Jo-an-na (God-given), Luke 8: 3. The wife of Chuzas, Herod's steward.
 John (whom Jehovah has graciously given). 1. Son of Zebedee, and brother of James. Matt. 10: 2. 2. John Mark, companion of Paul, and writer of the gospel by Mark. Acts 12: 12. 3. The father of Peter, also called Jonas. John 1: 42. 4. John the Baptist. The forerunner of Jesus. Matt. 3: 1.
 Jor-dan (descender), Mark 1: 5. The principal river of Palestine, where Jesus was baptized.
 Jo-seph (increaser), Matt. 2: 19. 1. The husband of Mary, and foster-father of Jesus. 2. Joseph of Ar-i-ma-thae-a, John 19: 28. A secret disciple of Jesus.
 Ju-das Is-car-i-ot (Judas means "praise," and Is-car-i-ot means "man of Kerioth"), Matt. 10: 4. One of the twelve apostles, and the betrayer of Jesus.

K

- Kid-ron. A torrent, or valley, between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives. It is also called the "Valley of Jehoshaphat."

L

- Lawyer, Luke 11: 45. A term used of those scribes who were well versed in the law, and capable of teaching it.
 Laz-a-rus (God has helped). 1. A beggar at the rich man's gate. Luke 16: 20.
 2. Brother of Mary and Martha, of Bethany. John 11: 1.
 Leb-a-non (white). Two ranges of mountains about ninety miles long with a valley of five to eight miles wide between. The western range is the "Libanus," or Lebanon, where Solomon got his timber; the eastern range is called "Anti-Libanus," or Lebanon, toward the sun rising.
 Le-vites, Luke 10: 32. The tribe from which all priests were selected, and who took care of the tabernacle and temple. They were divided into three families, the Kohathites, the Merarites, and the Gershonites, from the three sons of Levi.

M

- Magi, Matt. 2: 1. "Wise men" in King James and American Standard versions. Some good, worthy to be counsellors of kings (Dan. 2: 2, 10-13), other evil, as Simon Magus (Acts 8: 9), and Elymas (Acts 13: 8).
 Mary (Greek form of Hebrew Miriam, which means their rebellion).
 1. The mother of Jesus. Matt. 1: 18.
 2. Mag-da-le-ne. Luke 8: 2.
 3. Sister of Lazarus. John 11: 1.
 4. Wife of Clopas. John 19: 25.
 5. The mother of John Mark. Acts 12: 12.
 Mat-thew (God's gift), Matt. 10: 3. Also called Levi; a publican; called to be an apostle; and the writer of one of the gospel records.
 Mat-thi-as (Greek form of the Hebrew Matthew), Acts 1: 26. The one chosen to the apostleship in the place of Judas.
 Mir-i-am (their rebellion), Ex. 15: 20. Sister of Moses and Aaron, and a leader among the women during the wilderness wandering.
 Mel-chi-z-ek (king of righteousness), Heb. 7: 1. King and priest of Salem (later called Jerusalem) in the days of Abraham.
 Mo-ses (drawn out), Mark 9: 4. Prophet, lawgiver, and deliverer of Israel from Egyptian bondage.
 Mount Hermon (prominent, lofty). A mountain on the northeast border of Palestine, at the southern end of the Anti-Libanus range; thought by some to be the mount of transfiguration.
 Mount of Olives, Matt. 26: 30. A mountain one mile east of Jerusalem.
 Mount Tabor (height). A mountain rising 1,000 feet above the plain of Es-draelon, and six or eight miles due east of Nazareth.

N

- Na-a-man (pleasantness, grace), 2 Kings 5: 1. A Syrian general who came to Elisha to be cured of leprosy.

Na-than-a-el (gift of God), John 1: 45. An early disciple of the Lord, and thought to be the same as Bartholomew, one of the apostles.
 Naz-a-rene, Matt. 2: 23. An inhabitant of Nazareth.
 Naz-a-reth (branch), Luke 4: 16. A town in Galilee, where Jesus grew up.
 Nic-o-de-mus (conqueror of the people), John 3: 1. A ruler of the Jews who visited Jesus at night, and who helped Joseph of Arimathaea bury the body of Jesus.

O

Ol-i-vet, Luke 19: 29. Same as the Mount of Olives.

P

Pal-es-tine (land of strangers). The word occurs four times in the King James Version, but not at all in the American Standard Version, which has Philistia. It is used to mean only a part of Canaan along the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. But common usage today applies it to all of Canaan, the holy land.
 Par-a-dise (orchard of pleasure), Luke 23: 43. Place of rest for the departed spirits of the righteous.
 Pe-kah (open-eyed), Isa. 7: 1. Eighteenth king of Israel.
 Pe-rae-a. A term not found in the Bible, but used of all the land east of the Jordan River between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea.
 Pe-ter (stone, rock), Matt. 10: 2. One of the twelve apostles, and an outstanding leader in the early days of the church.
 Phar-i-sees (separated), Matt. 23: 13. A religious sect among the Jews who believed in angels, spirits, and the resurrection.
 Philip (lover of horses). 1. One of the apostles. Matt. 10: 3. 2. The deacon and evangelist. Acts 6: 5.
 Phoe-ni-ci-ans. People inhabiting a narrow strip of country running one hundred miles along the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, beginning at Mount Carmel. Tyre and Sidon were the principal cities.
 Pi-late (armed with a javelin), Luke 23: 1. The Roman ruler before whom Jesus was tried and condemned.
 Pot-i-phar (belonging to the sun), Gen. 39: 1. Pharaoh's chief officer in the time of Joseph.
 Pris-cil-la (diminutive of Prisca, ancient), Acts 18: 26. The wife of Aquila from Rome, and who helped to teach Apollos the gospel.
 Pub-li-can, Luke 18: 10. One who gathered taxes for the Roman government.

R

Rab-bi (master), Mark 9: 5. A title of respect given teachers.
 Rab-bo-ni (my master). John 20: 16. This seems to have been a more formal title than Rabbi.
 Re-zin (stable, firm), Isa. 7: 4. A Syrian king.

S

Sad-du-cees, Matt. 22: 23. A religious sect, thought to be followers of one Zadok, who denied the existence of angels and spirits, and the resurrection.
 Sa-lo-me (peaceful), Mark 15: 40. The wife of Zebedee. Matt. 27: 56; Mark 15: 40.
 Sa-ma-ri-a (Shemer's watch-mountain), John 4: 4. Name of a city thirty miles north of Jerusalem, and of the district of Palestine between Galilee and Judaea.
 Sa-mar-i-tans, Matt. 10: 5. The people of Samaria, sometimes distinguished from Jews and Gentiles.
 Sarah (princess), Gen. 21: 10. The wife of Abraham, and mother of Isaac.
 Sa-tan (adversary), 2 Cor. 4: 4. The god of this world, and the accuser of the saints.
 Scribes (writers), Matt. 23: 15. Public writers, transcribers; specialists at transcribing and teaching the law of Moses.
 Sep-tu-a-gint. A Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament in common use in the time of Christ.
 Sham-ma-i. A great teacher among the Jews who disagreed with Hillel on the subject of divorce.
 Si-don (a fishery), Mark 7: 31. One of the chief cities of the Phoenicians, and northwest of Jerusalem.
 Si-mon (hearer). 1. Another name for Peter. John 1: 42. 2. The leper. Mark 14: 3. 3. The Pharisee. Luke 7: 36, 40. 4. The Cananaean, the Zealot. Acts 1: 13.
 So-dom (place of lime), Matt. 11: 23. The home of Lot, destroyed by the Lord.
 Sol-o-mon (peaceful), Matt. 6: 29. Son of David, and third king of Israel.

Su-san-na (a lily), Luke 8: 3. One of the women who ministered to Jesus.
 Sy-char (prob. drunken), John 4: 5. A town in Samaria near Mt. Gerizim.
 Sy-ro-phoe-ni-cian, Mark 7: 26. A Phoenician who lived in Syria.

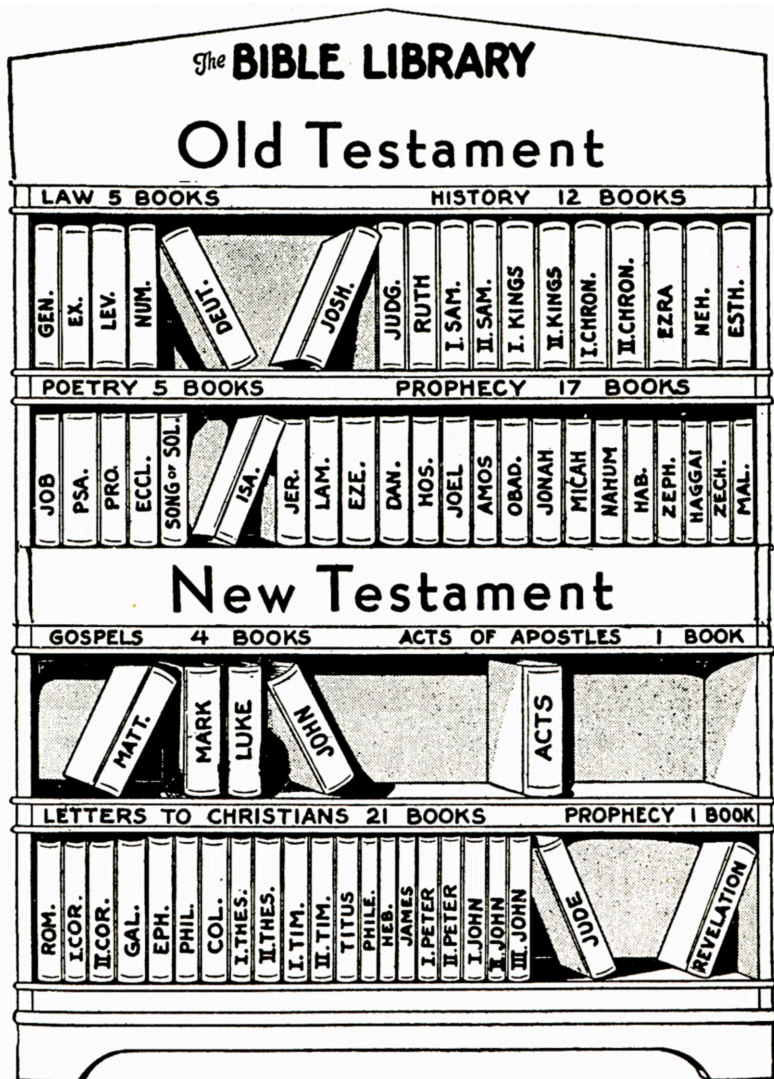
T

Tabernacle, Feast of, John 7: 2. An annual feast of the Jews held on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, Tisri, our October, during which feast they lived in booths in memory of their wilderness wanderings.
 Thad-dae-us, Matt. 10: 3. One of the apostles, called Judas the son of James in Luke 6: 16.
 Thomas (twin), Matt. 10: 3. One of the twelve apostles.
 Ti-be-ri-as, Sea of, John 6: 1. Another name for the Sea of Galilee.
 Tis-ri. The seventh month of the Jewish calendar, corresponding to our October.
 Tyre (a rock), Mark 7: 31. One of the chief cities of the Phoenicians, and the home of King Hiram.

Z

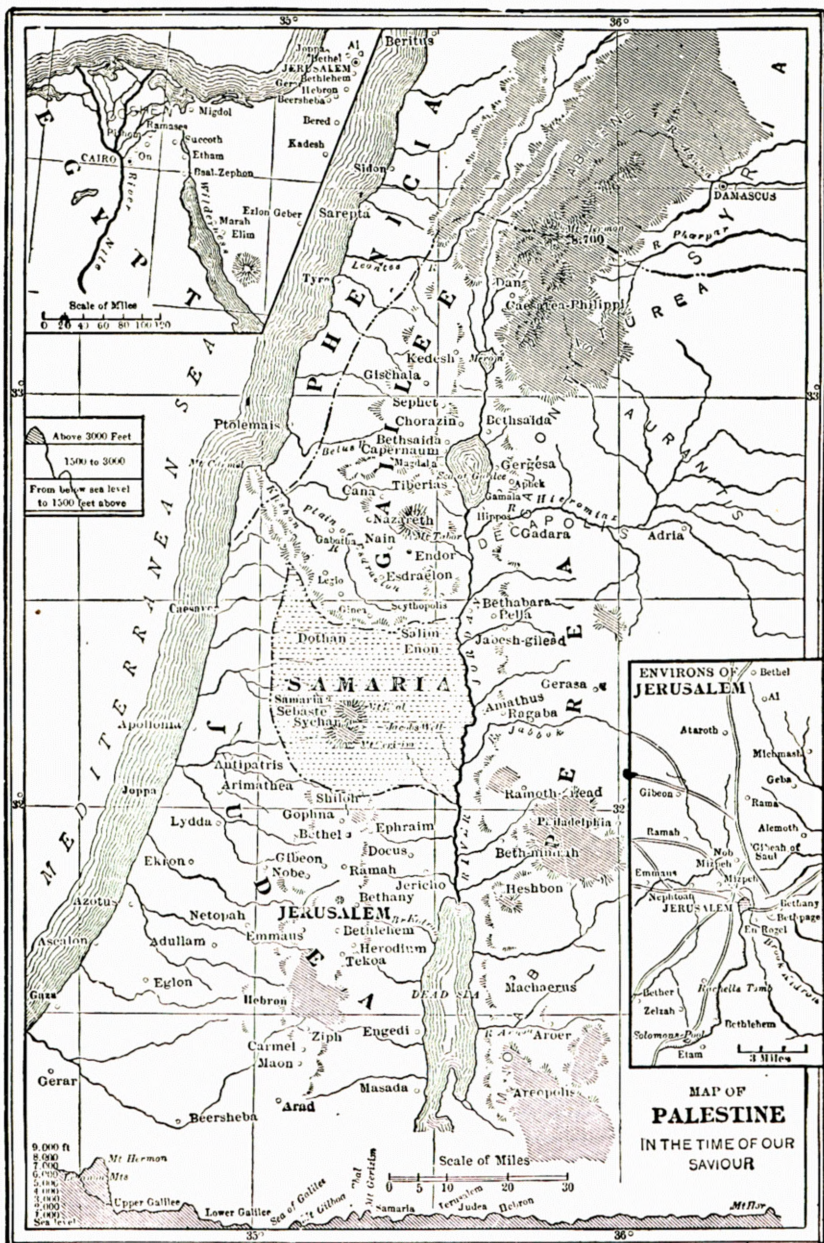
Zach-a-ri-as (Jehovah has remembered), Luke 1: 5. The father of John the Baptist.
 Zar-e-phath (smelting house), 1 Kings 17: 8. A town in which Elijah lived during the drouth, and near to Tyre and Sidon.
 Zeb-e-dee (Jehovah's gift), Mark 1: 19. The father of James and John, and the husband of Salome.

"And books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works." — Rev. 20: 12.



"Handling aright the word of truth." — 2 Tim. 2: 15.

"For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." — John 1: 17



FIRST QUARTER

STUDIES IN MATTHEW

Aim:—To present a clear and comprehensive view of the entire Gospel of Matthew; and to learn from this study the teaching of Jesus concerning the kingdom of heaven and to ascertain the significance of this teaching for the life of today, both in personal character and in social relationships.

Lesson I—January 2, 1949

THE INFANCY OF JESUS

The Lesson Text

Matt. 2: 1-8, 13, 16, 19, 20, 23

1 Now when Je'-sus was born in Beth'-le-hem of Ju'-dea-a in the days of Her'-od the king, behold, Wise-men from the east came to Je'-ru'-sa-lem, saying,

2 Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we saw his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

3 And when Her'-od the king heard it, he was troubled, and all Je'-ru'-sa-lem with him.

4 And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ should be born.

5 And they said unto him, In Beth'-le-hem of Ju'-dea-a: for thus it is written through the prophet,

6 And thou Beth'-le-hem, land of Ju'-dah,
Art in no wise least among the princes of Ju'-dah:
For out of thee shall come forth a governor,
Who shall be shepherd of my people Is'-ra-el.

7 Then Her'-od privily called the Wise-men, and learned of them exactly what time the star appeared.

8 And he sent them to Beth'-le-hem, and said, Go and search out exactly concerning the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word, that I also may come and worship him.

13 Now when they were departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother, and flee into E'-gypt, and be thou there until I tell thee: for Her'-od

will seek the young child to destroy him.

16 Then Her'-od, when he saw that he was mocked of the Wise-men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the male children that were in Beth'-le-hem, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old

and under, according to the time which he had exactly learned of the Wise-men.

19 But when Her'-od was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth

in a dream to Joseph in E'-gypt, saying,

20 Arise and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Is'-ra-el: for they are dead that sought the young child's life.

23 And came and dwelt in a city called Naz'-a-reth; that it might be ful-

filled which was spoken through the prophets, that he should be called a

Naz-a-rene'.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And they shall call his name Immanuel; which

Daily Bible Readings

December 27.	M.....	The Promise of a King (Jer. 23: 5-8)
December 28.	T.....	A King of the House of David (2 Sam. 7: 12-29)
December 29.	W.....	An Angel Visits Mary (Luke 1: 26-37)
December 30.	T.....	An Angel Visits Joseph (Matt. 1: 18-25)
December 31.	F.....	Jesus Born in Bethlehem (Luke 2: 1-20)
January 1. S.....		Prophets Speak of Jesus (Luke 2: 22-39)
January 2. S.....		Jesus Visits the Temple (Luke 2: 40-52)

TIME.—

PLACES.—Bethlehem, Egypt, and Nazareth.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his parents, Herod and the Wise-men.

Introduction

The birth and infancy of Jesus are of unusual interest to all humanity. The birth story of no other person has been told so many times with such absorbing interest to both young and old as that of Jesus. Heaven as well as all the earth had an unusual interest in the birth of Jesus. Four thousand years were used in preparation for his birth. When man sinned God said to the tempter, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Gen. 3: 15.) Prophets, priests, and kings as well as nations, armies, and individuals were used in the onward march of mighty events to prepare the world for the entrance of the seed of the woman upon the stage of action. Some of the preparation was so obvious that many people were in expectation, and they began to ask John whether he was the promised one. (Luke 3: 15.) "But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal. 4:4, 5.)

Angels were interested in the birth of Jesus, and they announced his birth to the lowly shepherds as they watched their flocks by night, saying, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2: 10, 11.)

Shepherds left their flocks to see him; the prophet Simeon was ready to die since he had seen the salvation God had prepared before the face of all peoples; and Anna, the prophetess, thanked God for his birth and spoke of him to all who looked for redemption.

Since the birth of our Lord held such great interest for all both in heaven and on earth, it should be of great interest to us both as teachers and students. Teachers should read as widely as possible of the political and social conditions, and certainly of the religious conditions, of the time of his birth. It will be well for them to know that all the world was under the rule of Rome, and that the world was at peace. People were at liberty to travel all over the then known world, and devout Jews were citizens of every nation on earth, ready to take the gospel of Christ back home with them when it was God's good pleasure to reveal it. In further preparation for teaching this lesson teachers should know what the prophets said about the birth of Christ; and it would be well for them to be familiar with the arguments pro and con concerning the virgin birth of Jesus, especially is this true in classes of college students. A good religious

encyclopedia or Bible dictionary should be consulted for such material. Such background material will give courage to the teacher and confidence to the student.

Golden Text Explained

The setting of the text. A part of our Golden Text comes from Isa. 7: 14. In that passage Isaiah was telling Ahaz, king of Judah, not to fear his enemies, Pekah of Israel and Rezin of Syria. And as a sign to Ahaz, Isaiah told him that a virgin would conceive and bear a son, and before that son was old enough to know right from wrong the land would be rid of these enemies. Rezin was killed in the third year of the reign of Ahaz, and Pekah was slain in the fourth year (2 Kings 15: 30; 16: 9), only two or three years after Isaiah delivered this prophecy. This was its immediate fulfillment, but the birth of Jesus of a virgin in the house of David to bring everlasting peace was the remote fulfillment of the prophecy.

Immanuel—God with us. The word *Immanuel* is a Hebrew word which literally means God *with us*. That Jesus Christ was God in the flesh is a cardinal doctrine which must be believed by all who wish to be saved. The miracles of Jesus were performed in order to prove this very thing. (John 20: 30, 31.) Jesus said, "The works that I do in my Father's name, these bear witness of me. . . . If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do them, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father." (John 10: 25, 37, 38.) Again we read, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth." (John 1: 1, 14.)

Paul declares that Christ is over all, and God blessed forever. (Rom. 9: 5.) And John speaks of the eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us. (1 John 1: 2.) Notice the word *eternal*. Again he says, "We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." (1 John 5: 20.)

Our blessings in him. The word that was God became flesh—took upon him our nature—first, that he might destroy the devil and his works. (Heb. 2: 14; 1 John 3: 8b.)

Next, God was manifest in the flesh that he might deliver us who, through fear of death, were subject to bondage. (Heb. 2: 15.)

Again God partook of our nature that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest, and might make propitiation for the sins of the whole world. (Heb. 2: 17; 1 John 2: 2.)

Last, God was manifested in the flesh to give us an example of living right and overcoming temptations. When Philip asked to be shown the Father, Jesus said, "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father." (John 14: 8, 9.) Jesus, being God in the flesh, so perfectly manifested the life of the Father, and did the will of the Father, that we have a perfect example of how God would have us live, and how he wants us to live. (1 Pet. 2: 21-25.)

Exposition of the Text

The Birthplace of Jesus. (Matt. 2: 1, 6.) The prophet Micah said that Bethlehem would be the birthplace of him who was to be ruler in Israel. (Micah 5: 2.) Bethlehem was situated about six or seven miles south of Jerusalem. It is one of the oldest towns in Palestine, being known first as Ephrath. (Gen. 35: 19.) The two names are combined in Micah 5: 2. The word Bethlehem means *house of bread*. It was the place where Rachel, Jacob's beloved wife, was buried. There David was born and anointed by Samuel. (1 Sam. 17: 12.) And David's parents lived there until he moved them to Moab because he was afraid Saul might do them harm. (1 Sam. 22: 3, 4.) It is significant that Jesus, who was the "Bread of life" (John 6: 35), was born in a city called by a name which means house of bread. The town was never large, nor did it figure prominently in the affairs of the Jews, and would hardly be remembered at all if it were not for the fact that Jesus was born there. Those who wish to learn more about it may read with profit what Brother McGarvey says about it in his book, *Lands of the Bible*, p. 217.

People interested in the birth of Jesus. (Matt. 2: 1-8.) The first people mentioned by Matthew as being interested in the birth of Jesus are the Wise-men. Who these men were, how many of them, or where they came from cannot be determined. "The etymology of *Magi* is quite uncertain. It may come from the same Indo-European root as (*megas*) *magnus*, though some find it of Babylonian origin . . . But here in Matthew the idea seems to be rather that of astrologers. Babylon was the home of astrology, but we only know that the men were from the east, whether Arabia, Babylon, Persia, or elsewhere. The notion that they were kings arose from an interpretation of Isa. 60: 3; Rev. 21: 24. The idea that they were three in number is due to the mention of three kinds of gifts (gold, frankincense, myrrh), but that is no proof at all. The word for east means 'from the risings' of the sun." (A. T. Robertson.)

These men said they saw his star in the east. This does not mean that the star was east of them; it was west of them if they followed it. The sense of the statement is, We in the east saw his star. Or as another puts it, "We saw his star at its rising." But how they knew it was the star of the Messiah, or one born to be king, we do not know. Nor do we know how they followed his star by day.

Herod the Great is another person mentioned as being interested in the birth of Jesus. The Wise-men worshiped Jesus, but Herod sought how he might kill him. He was not opposed to killing members of his own family for trivial reasons, hence he did not hesitate to kill one who was born to be king. "He massacred priests and nobles; he slew the members of the Sanhedrin; he caused the high priests to be drowned before his eyes; he put to death two learned doctors of the law and about fifty of their pupils; he strangled his own wife, Miriamme, the only being he ever seemed to have loved; he slew three of his sons, the uncle and father of his wife, his mother-in-law, his uncle his nearest friends, and thousands who had less claim upon him." (Boles.) On his deathbed he called all the prominent men of his kingdom, under threat of death, to convene at Jericho. They were kept under guard. He called his sister and her husband and made them swear that at the hour of his death, and before it was known, they would have the soldiers kill all these

men so there would be great mourning over the nation at the time of his death. A man of this type surely could have no righteous motives for being interested in the birth of Jesus. But he called together the chief priests and scribes to learn where the Christ was to be born. When they told him it was to be in Bethlehem, he asked the Wise-Men to bring him word when they had found him. He made as if he would worship the babe, but surely there could be no intention of worship in the heart of so cruel a murderer as Herod.

A Place of Safety for Jesus. (Matt. 2: 13, 16.) When the Wise-men had worshiped Jesus, and had lavished their costly gifts upon him, they, being warned of God, departed for their own country by a route which led them around Jerusalem, and they left the country without telling Herod where Jesus was. Then an angel of the Lord told Joseph, in a dream, to take the child and his mother into Egypt. His obedience in this matter was immediate and unquestioning; it was 'wise in that he went by night so no one would know even the direction he traveled; and it was in fulfillment of prophecy. (Hosea 11: 1.) Egypt was about sixty miles southwest of Bethlehem, and it was at that time a Roman province. There were many Jews in that section, so Joseph and Mary would not be conspicuous. But since Herod had no jurisdiction in that province the babe would be perfectly safe. It is worthy of note that Egypt saved our Lord's forefathers from famine in the days of Joseph and Jacob, and oppressed them in the days of Moses.

This move on the part of Joseph saved the life of Jesus, for when Herod saw he was deceived by the Wise-men he had all the male children under two years of age slain in the city of Bethlehem. Josephus makes no mention of the slaying of the children, and critics have used this fact to discredit the story of Matthew. But Barnes accounts for Josephus being silent on this for three reasons. 1. Josephus being a Jewish historian was not likely to record anything which would confirm the truth of Christianity. 2. Herod slew so many people that the slaying of a few children would hardly be worthy of notice. Prof. A. T. Robertson suggests that Bethlehem was so small that there were probably not more than twenty children between the ages of six months and two years. 3. The order to slay the children likely was given in secret, and no reasons given the parents, so it is possible that Josephus did not know of the incident.

Jesus becomes a Nazarene. (Matt. 2: 19-23.) How long Joseph and his family stayed in Egypt is not known, but certainly until it was safe for him to return, or until God told him to return, for so was his instruction. (Matt. 5: 13.) It is said that *they* are dead who sought the child's life. Some take the plural to mean that both Herod and his son Antipater are meant. It is a fact that Antipater died, at the command of his father, just five days before Herod died. But Robertson says the plural here is to be taken in the same sense as the expression "they say," and need not be made to include any other than Herod the Great.

But fearing to go into Judaea, the territory of another son of Herod, Archelaus, Joseph went into Galilee. This Archelaus was almost as cruel as his father, for he slew three thousand Jews at one Passover Feast. (Barnes.) But Galilee was at this time under the rule of Herod Antipas, "Who was a comparatively mild prince, and in his dominions Joseph might find safety." (Barnes.) This is

the Herod who slew John the Baptist. (Matt. 14.) Matthew makes no mention of the fact that Joseph and Mary had formerly dwelt in Nazareth, but Luke does. (Luke 1: 26.) So they were simply returning home.

But Matthew says this residence at Nazareth was in fulfillment of the prophecies. It will be noted that he does not say any certain prophet said Jesus would be a Nazarene, but says it was spoken through the prophets. There is no one statement of any prophet which says Jesus would live in Nazareth, so this is a rather difficult statement. The name Nazareth means a *shoot* or *branch*, and since these words are used with reference to the Messiah in Isaiah 53, where it is predicted that Jesus will be "despised, and rejected of men: a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised; and we esteemed him not"; and further, since Nazareth had a bad reputation, it is possible such prophecies are referred to by Matthew. Nazareth was not only despised, but it was off the highway, and so an ideal locality in which our Lord might grow up in obscurity until the day of his showing when baptized by John.

Topics for Discussion

1. The Wise-men traveled hundreds of miles to worship Jesus and give him gifts when they had little knowledge of him and what he could do for them. Many people today neglect to go short distances to worship, and refuse to give their money and time in spite of the fact they have greater knowledge of Jesus and his power to bless them.

2. Herod was the enemy of Jesus and wished to destroy him, yet outwardly he professed to be anxious to worship him. It is significant that some of the Lord's greatest enemies today are those who profess to worship him. Men who deny his divinity as manifested in his virgin birth, miracles, and resurrection would destroy the saving, redeeming Jesus, while they profess to worship him as a great good man.

3. The promptness with which Joseph obeyed God's commands in protecting Jesus indicates that he was a pious man, one in every way worthy to be the father of a great son. Parents who neglect or refuse to obey God encourage their children to do the same. What a fearful thing it is for parents to bring children into the world and then take them to hell.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Give the time, places, and persons of the lesson.

What is the Golden Text?

Introduction ·

What preparation was made for the birth of Jesus?

How did angels show their interest in his birth?

Tell how the shepherds, Simeon, and Anna reacted to the news of his birth.

The Golden Text

Discuss the Old Testament setting of the text.

What does the word Immanuel mean?

What evidence did Jesus give that he was God manifested in the flesh?

What proof do the apostles offer for the divinity of Jesus?

Discuss the blessings which come to us on account of the birth of Jesus.

The Birthplace of Jesus

What prophet foretold the place of his birth?

What do you know about Bethlehem?

What does the word Bethlehem mean?

People Interested in the

Birth of Jesus

What do you know about the Wise-men?

Where did they see the star? What direction from them?

What do you know about Herod the Great? What of his motives?

How did he make sure there would be mourning at the time of his death?

A Place of Safety

How was Herod prevented from killing Jesus?

What can you say for Joseph's obedience in this matter?

What country sheltered Jesus? and what happened to his forefathers there?

What cruel measure did Herod take to destroy Jesus?

How do Bible critics discredit this story? and how may they be answered?

Jesus Becomes a Nazarene

How long was Joseph to stay in Egypt?

Is it possible that more than one sought the life of Jesus?

Why did not Joseph settle in Bethlehem?

Who was the ruler in Galilee? and what do you know of him?

What is the meaning of the word Nazareth?

What reputation did that city have?

Close the lesson with topics for discussion.

Lesson II—January 9, 1949

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

The Lesson Text

Matt. 4: 1-11

1 Then was Je'-sus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he afterward hungered.

3 And the tempter came and said unto him. If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.

4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

5 Then the devil taketh him into the holy city; and he set him on the pinnacle of the temple,

6 And saith unto him, If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written,

He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and.

On their hands they shall bear thee up,
Lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone.

7 Je'-sus said unto him, Again it is written, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God.

8 Again, the devil taketh him unto an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

9 And he said unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

10 Then saith Je'-sus unto him. Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

11 Then the devil leaveth him; and behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

Golden Text.—*"We have not a high priest . . . one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."* (Heb. 4: 15.)

Devotional Reading.—James 1: 12-18.

Daily Bible Readings

January 3.	M.....	Luke's Account of the Temptation (Luke 4: 1-13)
January 4.	T.....	Temptation Renewed Through Peter (Matt. 16: 21-28)
January 5.	W.....	Same Methods Used on Eve (Gen. 3: 1-8)
January 6.	T.....	Jesus Sympathizes with the Tempted (Heb. 4: 12-16)
January 7.	F.....	Jesus Intercedes for the Tempted (Luke 22: 31-38)
January 8.	S.....	Help Promised for the Tempted (Heb. 2: 11-18)
January 9.	S.....	The Purpose of Trials (Heb. 12: 3-13)

Time.—A. D. 27.

Place.—The exact place is not known, but thought to be in the wilderness between Jerusalem and Jericho; and the temple in Jerusalem.

Persons.—The Spirit, Jesus, the devil, and angels.

Introduction

The words *tempt* and *temptation* are used in the Bible to mean (1) trials, as in James 1: 2; and (2) inducement to sin, as in James 1: 13, 14. God tempts us in the first sense, but never in the latter. However, God does allow us to be tempted by Satan in the latter sense, though not beyond our power to resist. (1 Cor. 10: 13.) God allowed his Son to be tempted on these, and other occasions, for it is said that he was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

What was God's purpose in these temptations? Jesus came that he might destroy the works of the devil. (Heb. 2: 14; 1 John 3: 8b.) It was inevitable that the two should clash, and that our Lord might build in confidence during his personal ministry the contest was staged at the beginning of his ministry. Next, Jesus proposed to build a kingdom which would overthrow the rule of Satan. To do so he must have more power than Satan, and he must demonstrate that power. Again, in Adam humanity had its chance to live in happiness, and failed when tempted by the devil; now the second Adam proposes to lift humanity out of their failure and misery, and he must do it by overcoming temptations of the devil. Another purpose of this temptation was to set humanity an example of how to overcome in time of temptation. And last, these temptations were to prepare Jesus for his work among men as their priest and mediator, to enable him to sympathize with us, and to succor us. (Heb. 2: 18; 4: 15.)

How the devil appeared, to Jesus, whether there was actual audible conversation between Jesus and the devil, and whether they were bodily on the pinnacle of the temple and on a high mountain, where he could see with his physical eyes the kingdoms of the world, are questions difficult to be answered. It is perhaps best to admit that these are matters not clearly revealed, that a knowledge of these matters is not necessary to an understanding of the lessons the Lord intends for us to get; so each person may hold such views of these matters as seems most reasonable to himself but should not be dogmatic nor insist that all others hold his views.

How could Jesus be tempted? Is it a sin to feel the force of temptation? In the act of sin there are two distinct steps. 1. The desire, which is a part of man's physical makeup. 2. The satisfying of that desire in unlawful relations or circumstances. It was no sin for Jesus to be hungry after a forty days' fast, but to satisfy that natural desire in an unlawful way would have been sin. It was not sinful in Jesus to desire to be accepted and acclaimed by the people as the Messiah and Son of God, but it would have been sinful for him to gain those ends in the way Satan suggested. Jesus did not sin in that he wished to rule over all men, but to accept that rule at the fearful price of worshipping the devil would have been most sinful. The temptations of Jesus were not ugly desires, but righteous desires, which the devil tried to get him to satisfy in unlawful ways. Though

he had these desires there is no intimation anywhere that he had any inclination whatsoever to satisfy his desires in the ways suggested by the devil.

Golden Text Explained

Advantages of having a high priest. The work of a priest is from the people toward God; the work of a prophet is from God toward the people. As we need a prophet to teach us the will of God, so we need a priest to intercede for us when we fail to obey that will of God. Not only does he act as intercessor, but he offers sacrifices for our sins; he atones for our sins; he makes propitiation for our sins. No one can approach God directly; the only way to God is through Christ. (John 14: 6.) Our sacrifices must be offered through him. (Heb. 13: 15.) As people of old could not make use of the priesthood of Aaron unless they were members of the covenant which authorized his priesthood, so no one now can make use of the priesthood of Jesus Christ unless and until that one has become a member of the new covenant which authorizes the priesthood of Christ. Jesus is high priest over the house of God. (Heb. 10: 21.) The house of God is the church. (1 Tim. 3: 15.) Therefore Jesus is high priest over the church. It follows that all who are members of the church Jesus built have the privileges of his priesthood, but those not in the church are denied those advantages.

Advantages of a tempted high priest. Jesus was tempted in all points in which we are tempted. John says that the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life are all there is in the world. (1 John 2: 16.) When the devil tempted Eve he used these three approaches; he used nothing more in his temptation of Jesus. The lust of the flesh to Eve was, It is good for food; and to Jesus it was, Turn the stones to bread. The lust of the eyes to Eve was, It is a delight to the eyes; to Jesus it was, Cast yourself down before the people. The vainglory of life to Eve was, It will make you wise; and to Jesus it was, I'll give you the kingdoms of the world with the glory thereof.

Being so tempted our high priest can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities. He knows by experience the strength of the temptation; he knows the weakness of the flesh; he knows how difficult it is for us to obey in spite of these things, for he learned obedience by the things which he suffered. His temptation was the first of a series of trials and sufferings which climaxed in his death on Calvary that made him perfect as the author of eternal salvation to all who obey him. (Heb. 5: 7-10.)

Advantages of a sinless high priest. If Jesus had sinned in either way the devil suggested, he would have been unfit to be our Savior and high priest. "For such a high priest became us, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." (Heb. 7: 26.) If he had sinned, he would not have been a good example for us. We are told he left us an "example, that ye should follow in his steps: who did no sin." (1 Pet. 2: 22.) And since he did no sin he becomes a standard for all men for all time. No one can surpass him. Regardless of how good we become, Jesus, by his sinless example, still says, Come up higher. His life therefore urges all men of all time to still greater accomplishments.

Exposition of the Text

Temptation through bodily appetites. (Matt. 4: 1-4.) *Jesus led of the Spirit.* There was nothing accidental about this temptation. He had been honored by the Father at his baptism, now he is to be tried. Nor was it a matter of reckless daring to show his superior power on the part of Jesus. He went willingly. The Spirit did not have to pull him; he was led of the Spirit.

To be tempted of the devil The Greek word translated *devil* means *slanderer, accuser*. He is represented in the Bible as being a person, a created being of a higher order than man (Jude 6); the father of all that is false (John 8: 44); the enemy of God and humanity, determined to carry all he can into destruction to which he is doomed; and that he uses his angels and men to do his work, and that he is ceaseless and untiring in his efforts to accomplish his purposes.

Fasted forty days and nights. Moses fasted as long (Ex. 34: 28), and so did Elijah. (1 Kings 19: 8.) Then it is said, *he afterward hungered*. Some suppose he was so absorbed in his meditations, or in a struggle with the devil, that he was not concerned about food until the forty days and nights were passed. Luke indicates that a temptation was going on during that time. (Luke 4: 2.) That seems to be about as long as it is possible for human beings to go without food, and that the sense of hunger is at its highest degree at that time. So this afforded the devil his best opportunity to tempt Jesus through bodily appetites.

1. The inducement to sin. *If thou be the Son of God.* Some think Satan meant to plant a doubt in the mind of Jesus concerning his sonship. But this is hardly the point. Rather admitting the fact that he was the Son of God, as declared at his baptism, now use the power of the Son of God to relieve your hunger. As the Son of God you have the power, and being the Son of God it is not right that you hunger.

2. The suggested sin. *Command these stones become bread.* Since Jesus had become man he was to submit to the providence of God as a man. To use miraculous powers to sustain his human form and bring about his happiness and relieve the suffering incident to his humanity would have been to lift himself out of the human plane of living by the providence of God. And to do so at the suggestion of the devil, rather than depend upon God to care for him in his faithfulness, would be to sin.

3. How he overcame. *It is written.* Jesus met temptation in such way as to set an example for the weakest of humanity. He had laid up the word of God in his heart that he might not sin against him. (Psalm 119: 11.) *Man shall not live by bread alone.* Bread is used here to mean the temporal things of life. Man is not wholly physical. He is a dual being composed of flesh and spirit. To provide for the physical man only is to be a fool. (Luke 12: 13-21.) *But by every word.* The spiritual part of man must have food of similar nature. We grow thereby unto salvation. (1 Pet. 2: 1-3.) To go without this food is to become weak and worthless to the Lord. (Heb. 5: 11-14.)

Temptation to gain holy ends by unholy means. (Matt. 4: 5-7.)

1. Situation. *Taketh him to the holy city.* Surely this was a good place to be; in the city where God was to be worshipped, a city of so many sacred memories to God and man. *On the pinnacle of the temple.* The margin says *on the wing*. Edersheim thinks it was "on

the lofty pinnacle of the Tower, or of the Temple-porch, presumably on which every day a priest was stationed to watch, as the pale morning light passed over the hills of Judaea far off to Hebron, to announce it as the signal for the offering of the morning sacrifice." And he suggests that the time was just after the priest had made announcement of the morning sacrifice, and when people would be thronging into the temple area.

2. The inducement to sin. *Cast thyself down.* Jesus wanted people to be attracted to himself; he wished to impress them with the fact that he was the Son of God. The devil suggested this is the time, place, and manner in which to do it most effectively. *He will give his angels charge. . . . to bear thee up.* The devil quoted scripture to prove to Jesus that no harm could come to him; or maybe in the hope that Jesus would jump to his own destruction. Would God fulfill his promise? People who, in the ordinary round of duties, found themselves in trouble could surely look to God for deliverance; those involved in danger by the providence of God can surely look to God to carry them through safely. But the promise does not apply to people who recklessly expose themselves to danger, and who expect God to deliver them from dangers brought upon themselves by their own foolishness.

3. The suggested sin. This is revealed in the answer Jesus gave Satan. It was to make trial of God by needlessly and recklessly bringing on a situation where he would need God's help. It was a suggestion to gain a holy end by a cheap and unholy grandiose showman's trick, a thing wholly out of harmony with our Lord's character and nature.

4. How he overcame. *Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God.* Again Jesus resorted to the use of the sword of the Spirit. (Eph. 6: 17.) This is a means within the reach of each one of us, provided we have equipped ourselves with it. To make trial of God in this instance was to needlessly expose himself to danger of destruction, to dare God to fail him; it was to test the promise of God only for the sake of seeing if God would do what he said. And this at the suggestion of the devil would surely be wrong. "The first temptation, like that addressed to Eve in Eden, had been intended to awake distrust in the Father. The second temptation goes to the opposite extreme and asks for such an excess of trust as to provoke rashness. One extreme of sin is to distrust God, while the opposite extreme is to refuse to employ the proper industry and precautions and tempt God. One sin is to distrust God; the other is to presume on God's providence." (Boles.)

Temptation to gain success at the cost of self. (Matt. 4: 8-10.)

1. Situation. *Devil taketh him.* Some suppose the devil carried him bodily, but the word *taketh* does not necessarily imply this. Jesus took three apostles up a mountain. (Matt. 17: 1.) *An exceeding high mountain.* Mount Quarantania, near Jericho, is the place supposed for the first temptation, but it is not *exceeding high*, so could hardly be the place for this temptation. Barnes suggests a mountain near Jerusalem. But why guess? *Showeth him all the kingdoms of the world.* No mountain was high enough for him to see over all the earth, so the word *world* must be taken in a limited sense, and the vision must not be taken as literal sight with physical eyes. But it was enough, with suggestions from the devil, to impress Jesus with the magnitude of the offer.

2. The inducement to sin. *All these will I give thee.* What an offer to a poor carpenter boy! What an inducement to one who plans to be a ruler of men! Did the devil possess these things? and could he actually give what he offered to Jesus? If not, there was no temptation in the offer, or Jesus was too ignorant to know any better. The latter we cannot allow, so we must admit that the devil could have fulfilled his promise. Otherwise there would have been absolutely no temptation in the offer. They were his by usurpation not by right.

3. The suggested sin. *If thou wilt fall down and worship me.* Some have suggested that Satan did not mean a physical prostration at that time, but a promise to love him and obey him in preference to God; to take orders from him as to how to rule, and the principles on which the government of the world would be conducted. Some think the devil appeared in brighter forms for the first two temptations, but that in this one he came out in his true colors; this was a person to person contact between the prince of death and the prince of life.

4. How he overcame. *Get thee hence.* Such a suggestion was repulsive. To gain his objective in this way meant that he would sell himself and all the souls of men for an easy way to the throne. If he took the devil's suggestion there would be no cross, hence no salvation for the lost; and it would be to gain the throne only in name, for to worship Satan would be to be his servant, his slave, and no slave is a ruler. *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* Three times tempted; three times he resorts to the Scriptures. How important it is that we know them. Our safety in time of temptation depends upon our use of them. God is the sole object of our worship, for only he is worthy. We partake of the nature of the object of our worship. The world and the devil have natures opposite to that of God. Hence to worship either the world or the devil is to partake of a nature opposite to that of God. For this reason one cannot worship both God and the devil; to do so would be to cultivate two opposite natures at the same time.

Topics for Discussion

1. Satan takes advantage of our physical circumstances in tempting us.

2. Success in great undertakings usually follows patient endurance of great trials.

3. Solitude and separation from the world are no guarantee of freedom from trials and temptations. The monk in a monastery is as liable to temptation as the man in a city.

4. "The Bible is the Christian's armory of defense. He should so thoroughly learn his Bible as to be prepared for every attack. The Christian ignorant of the Bible is always in danger."

5. "Satan lies most when he promises most." And any promise the devil can and will fulfill is not for our good, but for our destruction, though we may not now see how.

6. Those who sell out to Satan, regardless of how big the reward, sell for less than the price Jesus refused. Why allow the devil to cheat you?

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?
Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.
What is the Golden Text?

Introduction

What is the meaning of the words tempt and temptation?
What were God's purposes in the temptation of Jesus?
What two distinct steps in the act of sin?
How did Satan use the desires of Jesus in this temptation?

The Golden Text

What advantage is there in having a high priest?
What advantage is derived from having a tempted high priest?
Show the parallel between the temptations of Eve and Jesus.
What proof do we have that we are not tempted in other ways?
What are the advantages to us in having a sinless high priest?

Temptation Through Bodily Appetites

What do you learn from the fact that the Spirit led Jesus to temptation?
What do you know about the devil?

Name three Bible characters who fasted forty days.

In what was Jesus engaged during these forty days?

Discuss the inducement to sin in the first temptation.

How did the devil suggest that Jesus sin?

How did he overcome the temptation?

Temptation to Gain Holy Ends

What was the situation? and how did it figure in the temptation?

What was the inducement this time to sin?

How did the devil use Scripture?

How did the devil suggest that Jesus sin this time?

Why would this constitute a trial of God?

Temptation to Gain Success

Discuss the situation as related to the temptation.

What was the inducement to sin this time?

In what did the suggested sin consist?

Discuss his victory over this third temptation.

Read and discuss the topics for discussion.

Lesson III—January 16, 1949

THE BEATITUDES

The Lesson Text

Matt. 5: 1-12

1 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into the mountain: and when he had sat down, his disciples came unto him:

2 And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying,

3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

6 Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God.

10 Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 Blessed are ye when *men* shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you.

Golden Text.—*"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."* (Matt. 5: 8.)

Devotional Reading.—Psalm 15: 1-5.

Daily Bible Readings

January 10. M..... Jesus Our Example of Humility (Phil. 2: 1-11)
January 11. T..... The Bible a Source of Comfort (1 Thess. 4: 13-18)
January 12. W..... Jesus Our Example of Meekness (Matt. 11: 8-30)

January 13. T.....	Jesus Our Example of Doing Right (Matt. 3: 13-17)
January 14. F.....	Jesus Our Example of Showing Mercy (Matt. 20: 29-34)
January 15. S.....	Jesus Not Convicted of Sin (John 8: 45-55)
January 16. S.....	Jesus the Great Peacemaker (Eph. 2: 11-22)

TIME.—A.D. 28.

Place.—A mountain near Capernaum, probably Horns of Hattin.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, and the multitude.

Introduction

"It was not the purpose of either Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John to record everything Jesus said and did. Between his temptation and the Sermon on the Mount Jesus did many things which Matthew passes over. It seems that immediately after his temptation he returned to the place where John was baptizing, and there gathered a few disciples. He then attended a marriage at Cana of Galilee, made a short visit to Capernaum, attended the Passover at Jerusalem, cleansed the temple, conversed with Nicodemus, through his disciples baptized many in Judaea, conversed with the woman of Samaria on his way to Nazareth, was rejected at Nazareth, and then went to Capernaum." (Whiteside.) The latter half of Matthew 4 suggests some of these things, and a Harmony of the Gospels should be consulted.

It has been thought by some that the Sermon on the Mount was spoken only to his disciples and some passages, such as Matt. 6: 25-34, have been explained as applying to the apostles only on the ground that the sermon was preached to them alone. But this idea is obviously false. In Matt. 5: 1 a multitude is suggested as being with him. The fact that his disciples gathered near him as he sat down is in keeping with the custom of the day for the pupils of great teachers to sit at their feet. Then in Luke's account of the Sermon on the Mount we read that he had spent the night in prayer; came to a great crowd of his disciples and selected twelve of them to be his apostles; then he came on down the mountain and stood on a level place before a "great multitude of his disciples, and a great number of people" from all over Palestine and preached to them. (Luke 6: 12-19.) And finally, we have positive proof that the multitude heard him in Matt. 7: 28, 29, where it is said when he finished the sermon "the multitudes were astonished at his teaching." How could they have been astonished if he had not preached to them and if they had not heard the sermon?

The teaching of Jesus on this occasion was not a compilation of the work of great men either before his day or of contemporaries. It was utterly different from anything that had ever been taught. His teaching was not within the reach of any other man, or any set of men, in his day. It was so far beyond and above the learning and development of his day that this teaching is usually accepted as evidence of his divinity. He quoted no one as authority for his teaching. He often used the phrase, Moses said . . . but I say unto you; and. It has been said of old . . . but I say unto you. No scribe or doctor of the law dared to demand obedience on his own authority, but quoted several greatly respected teachers and traditions as his authority. But when Jesus made such demands as are in this sermon without quoting a single authority the multitude were astonished.

Golden Text Explained

What the heart is and does. "It is the seat of intelligence, reason, and understanding. It is the inner man. The Bible heart thinks, (Matt. 9: 4); it studies, (Prov. 15: 28); it reasons, (Mark 2: 8); it meditates, (Psalm 19: 14); it imagines, (Gen. 6: 5); it intends, (Heb. 4: 12); it understands, (Matt. 13: 15); it loves, (Matt. 22: 37); out of it proceeds all sorts of evil (Matt. 15: 19, 20); out of it proceeds good. (Matt. 12: 35); it contains the issues of life, (Prov. 4: 23)." (Boles.)

How to purify the heart. Peter says our hearts are cleansed by faith (Acts 15: 9), and he says also that our souls are purified by obedience to the truth. (1 Pet. 1: 22.) So we conclude that the heart is purified by a faith that works by love. (Gal. 5: 6.) And the works which we must do to purify the heart are the works God commands us to do, obedience to gospel commandments.

The prophet said, "O Jerusalem, wash thy heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thine evil thoughts lodge within thee?" (Jer. 4: 14.) This shows that it is up to us to decide whether we shall be pure in heart or not. God will not purify us against our will. Next, it is suggested in this verse that evil thoughts lodged within the people was the cause of their impurity. If they would put the evil out of their hearts God would forgive them, and they would be clean. And last, it is suggested that their salvation depended upon their purity. "Wash thy heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved." No washing, no salvation. The pure in heart shall see God.

How to keep the heart pure. Since the heart does the thinking, loving, purposing, desiring, it follows that we can keep the heart pure by thinking on such things as God recommends. (Phil. 4: 8.) Set your minds on the things that are above. (Col. 3: 2.) Love not the world, nor the things of the world. (1 John 2: 15.) Let no evil thing be the subject of your conversation. (Eph. 4: 29; 5: 3, 4.)

Reward for purity of heart. The pure in heart shall see God. Some contend that this means that people whose hearts are pure will see God in the sense of appreciating God and his work among men, while the impure in heart do not. It is true that the pure in heart do appreciate things clean and heavenly, and the impure in heart do not. For this reason we ought to be careful to keep our hearts pure. But surely the promise looks into the beyond, and gives the pure in heart the promise of seeing him face to face, and enjoying all that his omniscience can plan and his omnipotence can provide for their pleasure forever. Nothing unclean will enter heaven. (Rev. 21: 27.) Those who practice uncleanness either in thought, word, or deed are guilty of doing the "works of the flesh," and Paul says they shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (Gal. 5: 19-21.)

Exposition of the Text

The Sermon Setting. (Matt. 5: 1, 2.) *Seeing the multitudes.* These were the people from several parts of Palestine, even as far away as Tyre and Sidon. (Luke 6: 17.)

He went tip into the mountain. Luke says he *came down* and stood on a level place. However Luke says he went up into the mountain the night preceding and continued all night in prayer. (Luke 6: 12.) So in this we may find agreement in the two records.

His disciples came unto him. Matthew makes no mention of the number of these disciples. Some understand this to mean his apostles. But Luke tells us there was a "great multitude of his disciples." And from this multitude of disciples he selected twelve whom he named apostles. (Luke 6: 13, 17.) No doubt these twelve took their places immediately before him, at his feet, and the others, according to their degree of interest, stood or sat back of the twelve and listened.

First division of the Sermon. (Matt. 5: 3-12.) *Blessed.* This is a word which means happy. It is descriptive of the highest state of happiness man can know, and higher than any state of happiness that can be derived from the possession and use of material things. "It is a happiness that grows out of consciousness of having been lifted up above the strife for earthly things to a communion and union with God. It is not meant that either of the conditions stated separate from the others brings one into this state of blessedness, but the sum total of all of them."

The poor in spirit. The word poor means a beggar. The poor in spirit are the humble; those who recognize their destitution of all that is necessary to atone for their sins, and who see in God the wisdom and power to save them, and who are not too proud or ashamed to call upon him in his appointed way for salvation from their own folly. The proud and high-minded of the earth who feel no need of God, and who can see neither sense nor efficacy in God's way are not of this group.

Theirs is the kingdom of heaven. In this is seen the blessedness of the poor in spirit. Were it not for this reward there would be no happiness for the poor in spirit. Of such is the kingdom composed. These humble and dependent willing creatures are the people whose citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3: 20), and who will inhabit that eternal place.

They that mourn. Some have suggested that there is a connection between these beatitudes, and that the meaning here is that the poor in spirit will mourn over their destitution of spiritual strength and value, and this mourning will be heard by the Lord, and that he will comfort them by bringing about their deliverance from that condition. But poverty of spirit is not a condition from which we are to be delivered. It is humility which is to characterize us all through our earthly pilgrimage, and for which we are to be rewarded by citizenship in Christ's kingdom here and with eternal life in the world to come. This mourning is, however, certainly on account of sin. We should mourn over the sins of our past; we should mourn because we are so prone to sin every day we live; and we should mourn on account of the sins of the people among whom we live. Lot was "sore distressed by the lascivious life of the wicked" about him. (3 Pet. 2: 7.)

They shall be comforted. We are comforted as to our past sins because he died for the remission of them. (Matt. 26: 28.) We may be comforted concerning our temptations in that he will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear (1 Cor. 10: 13), and that he will deliver us out of this present evil world. (Gal. 1: 4.) The meaning here is that he died for us to make it possible for us to escape the evil of this world in which we live. And we are comforted with reference to the wicked among whom we live that our Lord is coming to take us from among the wicked to give us a dwelling place

with the righteous of all ages, where the wicked are not known, not allowed to enter.

Blessed are the meek. Meekness is gentleness and submissiveness while bearing injuries inflicted by others. Meekness does not prevent the use of lawful means to escape harm which may be inflicted. Paul was no doubt a meek man under trials, yet he used the means at his command to escape injuries. (Acts 22: 25.) Jesus was meek, yet he insisted that they had no right to smite him. (John 18: 23.) However when they insisted on beating and crucifying him, he was submissive without reviling and threatening.

Shall inherit the earth. This is a paradox. Shall the meek who does not insist on his rights with force actually get ahead in this world? At first thought nothing seems more remote from the truth. But when we look deeper we wonder if people who use force have prospered. Caesar, Napoleon, the Kaiser, and Hitler were the opposite of meekness; they knew what they wanted, and they went after it with mighty earthly forces. Did they actually possess with any degree of satisfaction what they wanted? "Having title to a thing is not really to possess it; in fact it may really possess us. In a higher sense we really possess only that which we use and enjoy. The meek now really possess the earth in a sense that the selfish and arrogant cannot comprehend." The meek under the care of God have all that is necessary to life and happiness in this world, and all that will contribute to their eternal welfare in the next world. Can the proud and arrogant have anything of greater value in this life than this? Some think Jesus meant to say the meek shall inherit the new earth. (2 Pet. 3: 13.) Perhaps we may view this as a remote fulfillment.

Hunger and thirst after righteousness. Hunger and thirst are, in extreme degrees, the most compelling passions known to man. If people would work as hard and long to gain righteousness as they will to relieve their desire for food and water, they would be saved. The Greek says the righteousness, meaning that which is of the gospel, a just and holy relationship before both God and man.

They shall be filled. As surely as God fills the needs of the birds and all creation dependent upon him, so those who look to him with hungering and thirsting shall not be denied this righteousness. If any man willeth to do his will he shall know of his teaching. (John 7: 17.) The eunuch was a sincere man hungering after a knowledge of God's will, and his hunger was satisfied. (Acts 8.)

Blessed are the merciful. The word does not suggest the almost negative quality usually thought of, as not dealing harshly, not inflicting punishment when due, sparing an animal some unnecessary suffering, but it suggests an active kindness to the destitute and those in trouble. "It seems to lay more stress on the feeling of pity showing itself in action and not only existing in thought."

They shall obtain mercy. Paul teaches that one will find mercy of God in the day of judgment on account of mercy shown here. (2 Tim. 1: 16-18.) And Jesus teaches that one who refuses to show mercy will be shown no mercy. (Matt. 18: 23-35.)

Blessed are the peacemakers. People who try to convert others are peacemakers; they are making peace between God and man, leading man to become reconciled to God, and they are blessed. (Dan. 12: 3.) And people who live so as to promote peace among their neighbors are called peacemakers. There are some who seem

unable to get along smoothly with other people; they gender strife with every word and act; they "rub people the wrong way." We must cultivate the ability to get along with people.

They shall be called the sons of God. God is the God of peace. (Phil. 4: 9.) To be a peacemaker is to partake of the nature of God, so as to be his child. (2 Pet. 1: 4.)

Persecuted for righteousness' sake. Those who suffer for their wrongs are not included in this blessing. (1 Pet. 4: 12-16.) Those who suffer because they have hungered for righteousness and have been filled are those included.

When men revile you, and persecute you. This is very little added to the former statement, except this is said to be *for my sake*. People who suffer for the sake of Jesus are blessed. *Rejoice and be exceeding glad.* James tells us to count it a joy when we are in manifold trials. (James 1:2.) *Great is your reward.* Jesus says we shall have a hundredfold here and in the world to come eternal life for all we sacrifice for him. (Mark 10: 29, 30.)

Topics for Discussion

1. If a person possesses all the characteristics suggested in these beatitudes, will he be subjected to persecution for Christ's sake to-day? (2 Tim. 3: 12.)

2. "The earnestness of our hunger after the things of God is the measure of our attainment of them. Every man drinks as deeply from salvation's wells as will satisfy his thirst."

3. If we hungered after the word of God like a new-born baby hungers for food, we would know more, be better, and do more for the Lord. (1 Pet. 2: 1-4.)

4. It is not enough to learn to bear burdens and suffer persecution; we must cultivate an enjoyment of these things; sacrifices and self-denials are not burdens and inconveniences to be tolerated for a few years, but are sanctifying exercises through which the Lord leads us to bring us into the likeness of Christ.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What are some of the events in Christ's life between the temptation and this lesson?

To whom was the Sermon on the Mount preached? Give the proof.

In what did the teaching of Jesus differ from his contemporaries?

What is there about this sermon which proves the divinity of the preacher?

The Golden Text

What is the heart of our text? Read the passages.

What did Peter say about purifying the heart?

What three things did Jeremiah teach about the heart?

How can one keep his heart pure?

What is the reward for purity of heart?

Exposition of the Text

What sections of Palestine were represented in the audience?

From what direction did Jesus arrive at the place of preaching?

How was the audience arranged for the sermon?

What is the meaning of the word blessed?

Who are the poor in spirit? and describe their opposites.

What is the reward for being poor in spirit?

Over what are we to mourn? Give a man as an example.

How are we comforted in temptations and our sins?

What is meekness? How do the meek inherit the earth?

Are God's people deprived of anything good in this life?

What is meant by hungering and thirsting after righteousness?
 What is promised? and give an example of the promise fulfilled.
 What is the meaning of merciful.
 Give an illustration of both the merciful and the unmerciful.
 Name two classes of peacemakers, and tell their reward.

What are the blessings of the persecuted?
 What of those who suffer for their wrongs or folly?
 Where do we get our reward for sacrifices and sufferings?
 What interested you in the topics for discussion?

Lesson IV—January 23, 1949

RIGHTEOUSNESS IN THE KINGDOM

The Lesson Text

Matt. 5: 17-20, 38-45; 6: 1-4

17 Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil.

18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished.

19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

20 For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

38 Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

39 But I say unto you. Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

40 And if any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him two.

42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

43 Ye have heard that it was said. Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy.

44 But I say unto you. Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you;

45 That ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust.

1 Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them: else ye have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.

2 When therefore thou doest alms, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you. They have received their reward.

3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

4 That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee.

Golden Text.—“Ye *therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*” (Matt. 5: 48.)

Devotional Reading.—Matthew 6: 9-15.

Daily Bible Readings

January 17. M.....	Law Given Until Seed Should Come (Gal. 3: 15-22)
January 18. T.....	Law to Bring Jews to Christ (Gal. 3: 23-29)
January 19. W.....	Change of Law Necessary Under Christ (Heb. 7: 11-25)
January 20. T.....	The Law on Punishment (Lev. 24: 13-23)
January 21. F.....	The Gospel on Going to Law (1 Cor. 6: 1-9)
January 22. S.....	Overcome Evil With Good (Rom. 12: 9-21)
January 23. S.....	Alms of the Early Church (Acts 4: 32-35)

TIME.—A.D. 28.

PLACE.—Hill near Capernaum, probably Horns of Hattin.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, and the multitude.

Introduction

In our lesson on the Beatitudes we learned the requirements of citizenship in the kingdom of Christ so far as the disposition is concerned. In this lesson Jesus talks about righteousness which exceeds that of the Pharisees, refraining from swearing and from taking vengeance on those who are harmful and overbearing, and doing good to them and praying for them. The Beatitudes dealt with the inner man, this one deals with the outward man.

The Sermon on the Mount is not an exposition of the law of Moses, in spite of the fact that many denominational commentators make the statement. There are too many contrasts too sharply drawn between the teaching of the law and that of Jesus for us to accept one as the exposition of the other. Six times in this fifth chapter Jesus says, Ye have heard it said—meaning in the law of Moses—and then quotes a statement from that law; and six times this is followed by an emphatic opposite, I say unto you. The law says that, but I say this. And in these contrasts one is deeply impressed with the superiority of the gospel over the law as given by Moses.

It is interesting to note how many of these contrasts between the law and the gospel of the kingdom deal with social conditions. All six of them affect directly our social life. Do not be angry with your brother; agree with your adversary; do not lust; do not put away your wife (or husband); do not swear; do not resist him who would do you evil; lend to the poor; love your enemies, do good to them and pray for them. And if these teachings were obeyed by any respectable portion of humanity we would have a much better place in which to live. Of all people on earth women should appreciate the gospel of Christ because it gives them a protection they never enjoyed before, and attaches a value and importance to them which the world had never recognized, and elevates them to a station they could never have enjoyed without such teaching.

Golden Text Explained

Be Mature. The word perfect must not be taken in the absolute sense either of possessing all the perfections of Jehovah, or of attaining to sinless perfection; to claim the former is blasphemy, and to claim the latter is to make God a liar. (1 John 1: 8, 10.) The word may be taken in the sense of maturity. It is the will of God that we grow to maturity, not physically, but spiritually. "Brethren, be not children in mind: yet in malice be ye babes, but in mind be men." (1 Cor. 14: 20.) And God has provided the means for our perfection that we may grow unto maturity. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers were given for our perfection, that we may become full-grown men, and be no longer children. (Eph. 4: 11-14.) The fact that we should be no longer children, but grow to full manhood proves that the word perfection means maturity.

Lacking no essential quality. Perfection may be viewed in the light of possessing all the qualities which go to make a person Christ-like. It is not essential that a person possess all, or any, of these qualities to the degree of absolute perfection; but he should have

them to such a degree and in such proportion that his character will be well balanced. Noah was perfect in his generation (Gen. 6: 9.) and so was Job. (Job 1: 1.) Neither of them was sinless, for both are charged with wrongdoing, but their characters were so well balanced that no quality needed to be added. Their sins were chargeable to human frailty, and not to the fact that they were lacking in some essential characteristic. A person who has the nine elements which compose the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5: 22, 23) may be said to be perfect in that respect, though he possesses neither to a degree where improvement is impossible. But if he lacks one or more of them, though all the others are very highly developed, he would be imperfect. So that person who has learned from the gospel all the Christlike qualities and has built them into his character to such a degree and in such proportion as will fairly represent Jesus in his every walk of life is a perfect man, though he may continue to develop and make fewer mistakes chargeable to human frailty as years go by.

God *our pattern of perfection*. The word *therefore* in the text suggests that this is a conclusion, so in determining its meaning we will have to give consideration to what has been said before. In the preceding verses God is pictured as making the sun to shine on the evil as well as the good, and as sending rain to fall on the unjust as well as on the just. God does good to those who hate him and do evil. The publicans and Gentiles do good only to people who love them. In this respect they are unlike God; they are not perfect. But Jesus demands that his disciples be like God in this respect. God is to be their example, not the lowest classes of people, nor even the Pharisees. (Verse 20.)

So God in human form, the man Jesus, is our example. He showed us how the Father would live if he were in our circumstances and surroundings. And we are to live before the world in such way as to manifest his life in our mortal bodies. (2 Cor. 4: 10, 11.) We are his epistles, known and read by all men. (2 Cor. 3: 2, 3.) He who so walks may rightly claim that the love of God is perfected in him. (1 John 2: 4-6.) Truly this is the perfect, the full-grown man.

Exposition of the Text

Jesus and the Law. (Matt. 5: 17-20.) *I came not to destroy*. The *law and the prophets* is an expression which was used to refer to the Old Testament. Sometimes the Psalms was added. (Luke 24: 44.) And other times it was simply spoken of as *the law*. (Verse 18.) Jesus wished the Jews to know that he respected the Old Testament, that he had no intention of setting it aside or ignoring its teaching. His mission was to fulfill rather than to destroy. Some get the idea that if we say the law is not binding today as it was then, we must say that Jesus destroyed the law. But to destroy was to take it away before its time and before it had accomplished its purpose; while to fulfill it was to allow it to serve its purpose, fulfill its mission, and give place to a better law, a more perfect law. But it is no more binding on us today than it would be if it had actually been destroyed.

One *jot or one tittle*. The word *jot* is the name of the Hebrew letter I, the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet. (Barnes.) And according to the same source the word *tittle* is from a word which

means little *horn*, which refers to what, in Hebrew writing, is called a point. This too is very small compared to the size of the letter in connection with which it is used. So the term jot *or* *tittle* means the very smallest part of teaching of the law. Heaven and earth are not as sure of remaining as the law is sure to remain until it is fulfilled is the idea Jesus expressed.

Till all things be accomplished. In verse 17 we find the expression of fulfilling, but here the same idea is expressed in the word accomplished. So when the law accomplishes all the Lord intended, it will have been fulfilled. It was our tutor to bring us to Christ, said Paul (Gal. 3: 24, 25), and since that has been done, we are no longer under the tutor.

Least in the kingdom of heaven. If a person break one of these commandments Jesus gives, or teaches others to do so, he shall be least. Certainly Jesus does not refer to the commandments of the law of Moses, for if a man teaches them today Christ becomes of no effect to him and he has fallen from grace. (Gal. 5: 2-4.) The Jews divided their law into greater and lesser commandments, and thought little of breaking a lesser commandment. But Jesus taught the importance of his law in that even the least commandment was important and not to be violated. People today speak of *essential* and *non-essential* commandments about the same way the Jews spoke of greater and lesser commandments.

Called great in the kingdom. According to this if one wishes to be great in the kingdom of heaven he must obey, and teach others to obey, all the commandments of God. In the eyes of the world this is not great. There must be pomp and show, something new and untried by any other, bigger and better than anybody ever did before—this is what the world calls great. But humble submission to the Lord's way is true greatness.

Righteousness exceed that of scribes and Pharisees. The righteousness of the Jews was formal. They were exact in keeping forms, but justice, mercy, and faith were unknown to them. (Matt. 23: 23, 24.) We too must hold the form of sound doctrine (2 Tim. 1: 13), but that form must be filled with sincerity and truth. If we only hold to forms we are no better than the Pharisees who were hypocrites; but if we sincerely and humbly submit to the will of the Lord our righteousness will exceed theirs.

Our attitude toward others. (Matt. 5: 38-45.) *Resist not him that is evil.* The law said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but Jesus says if one smite you on the right cheek, turn the other to him. This is not to be taken as forbidding the governments to punish evildoers, for they are ordained of God for this very purpose. (Rom. 13: 1-7.) Certainly the idea of wreaking personal vengeance to satisfy our lust for revenge is positively forbidden.

To take away thy coat. The coat was a garment usually of linen which came down to the knees, and under this were loose fitting trousers. If more was needed a square garment was used called here a cloak, thrown about the shoulders and held in place at the bottom by the girdle much like the Indians wore blankets. If an evil man sues you for an item of small value it will be better, and cheaper, to let him have it, and even more, rather than run the risk of losing the case in court and being liable for the costs. Paul rebuked the brethren at Corinth for going to law with each other instead of settling their differences among themselves. Surely there is one wise

enough to judge such matters without disgracing the church by going to law before the unbelievers. (1 Cor. 6.)

Compel thee to go one mile. Officers of the government had the right to require the services of men in emergencies in much the same way as policemen do today. And evil men took advantage of this and compelled others to help them. If such a demand was made it was better to go a mile, or even more, than to resist and maybe have a fight and get hurt or hurt the other man. Jesus taught that his disciples were to pay quite a price to live in peace with the world.

Give to him that asketh. All of these statements must be taken with reasonable limitations, but as to this one we have some teaching by Paul. He tells us we are not to feed a man who will not work. (2 Thess. 3: 7-12.) Men who beg and then run to the "beer joint" as soon as they get enough to buy a bottle are not to be encouraged. Neither are we to give to worthy people until our families are in the street begging. (1 Tim. 5: 8.) But not many of us need warning against doing this; we need to be warned lest we become hardhearted and let worthy, needy people go hungry while we enjoy the fat of the land.

Good deeds not for show. (Matt. 6: 1-4.) Do *not your righteousness before men*. This statement is the principle which all the balance of the chapter is used to illustrate. The word *therefore* of verse 2 shows that the alms spoken of is one form of that righteousness which is not to be done before men to be seen of them. Prayer (verse 5), is the next; fasting (verse 16), is the next; and laying up treasures in heaven (verse 20), is the last mentioned in this chapter. These are the acts of righteousness which we are not to do just to be seen of men. However we are not to go out of our way, nor are we to refuse to do such things, if we cannot keep men from seeing us. There is no sin in doing good when people are looking at you. Jesus says when people see your good works they will glorify the Father in heaven. (Matt. 5: 16.) But there is a world of difference between doing good while people are looking at us, and doing good solely because they are looking. In the former we are going to do the good whether people see us or not, but in the latter case we will do the good if people see us and will not do it if they are not looking. All the reward such people get is what the world gives. They have no reward from the Father in heaven.

Sound not a trumpet. The sounding of the trumpet was ostensibly to call the poor to get the alms, but in reality it was done to attract the attention of people to the fact the rich man was giving alms. This Jesus called hypocrisy.

That thine alms may be in secret. Notice the contrast between the hypocritical way of the Pharisee and that which Jesus demands in his disciple. In this way the left hand would not know what the right hand was doing. This was a proverbial expression which meant reasonable secrecy. Jesus did not mean that it is a sin to let people know you are doing good. And some people refuse to promise a certain amount of money for the work of the church because they are not to let their left hand know what the right hand does. In some cases the left hand would wither for shame if it learned how little the right hand does, yet some sincere people think this is the meaning of the teaching. If one does not do things for show, he

has obeyed the teaching to let not his left hand know what his right hand does.

The Father will recompense thee. The world may never know of this kind of good, and knowing of it will not sing your praises. But God sees things done in secret as well as those done openly and for show. He who suffers not the guilty to go unpunished takes greater delight in seeing that the sincere do not go unrewarded. (Gal. 6: 9, 10.)

Topics for Discussion

1. Jesus said the law and the prophets were until John (Luke 16: 16), but from that time the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached. When did the law and the prophets cease to be in force? (See Commentary on Luke by Boles.)

2. Study the six contrasts Jesus made between the law and his gospel in Matthew 5, and show how society is bettered by each one of them.

3. Are we to love our enemies with the same tender affection we love our families?

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

How does this lesson differ from that on the Beatitudes?

Can you prove that the Sermon on the Mount is not an exposition of the law of Moses?

Why should women especially appreciate the teaching of Jesus?

Golden Text

What is the meaning of the word perfect in our text?

What provision has God made for our perfection?

In what way were Noah and Job perfect?

How may we attain this kind of perfection?

How is the perfection of God illustrated in our lesson?

Can we so love our enemies and our friends?

What do Paul and John teach us about taking the Lord for our pattern?

Exposition of the Text

For what purpose did Jesus not come? and why did he come?

If he did not destroy the law, is it still binding? Why?

What is the meaning of jot and tittle?

Show why fulfill and accomplish mean the same thing in our text.

For what purpose was the law given? and when was that accomplished?

Who is least and greatest in the kingdom?

What does this teach about the importance of all God's commandments?

How does our righteousness exceed that of the Pharisees?

Is it necessary for us to be careful about proper forms?

What did Jesus teach about resisting evil?

How did he illustrate his lesson?

What do you learn from this lesson about garments worn by the Jews?

What did you learn about lawsuits?

Are we to give to everyone regardless of what he will do with it?

What four things are mentioned in Matthew 6 as acts of righteousness?

Is it wrong to let people see you do good? Why?

How did the Pharisees act the hypocrite when they gave alms?

What is meant by not letting your left hand know what the right hand does?

What lessons are suggested in topics for discussion?

Lesson V—January 30, 1949

GOD'S KINGDOM FIRST

The Lesson Text

Matt. 6: 19-34

19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal:

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

21 For where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also.

22 The lamp of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness!

24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

25 Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment?

26 Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they?

27 And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto the measure of his life?

28 And why are ye anxious concerning raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29 Yet I say unto you, that even Sol-o-mon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith?

31 Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 For after all these things do the Gen'-tiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

34 Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Golden Text.—*"But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."* (Matt. 6: 33.)

Devotional Reading.—Luke 5: 1-11.

Daily Bible Readings

January 24. M.....Solomon's Choice of Treasures (1 Kings 3: 4-12)

January 25. T.....An Unwise Choice of Treasures (Matt. 19: 16-22)

January 26. W.....Paul Teaches on Riches (1 Tim. 6: 6-10, 17-19)

January 27. T.....Putting God First in Prayer (1 Tim. 2: 1-5)

January 28. F.....Putting God First in Affection (Luke 14: 25-35)

January 29. S.....Putting God First in Life (Luke 14: 36-40)

January 30. S.....God Provides for His Own (Matt. 7: 7-12)

Time.—A.D. 28.

Place.—A mountain in Galilee, probably Horns of Hattin.

Persons.—Jesus, his disciples, and the multitude.

Introduction

The religion of the Jews in the time of Jesus consisted wholly of forms and ceremonies. And the more formal religion becomes the more is it dependent upon an audience for its life. Beautiful ceremonies and long prayers are made to be seen and heard, and if there is no audience to applaud, the forms and prayers will cease. The Pharisee who thanked God he was not like other men would spend no time in prayer if there was no one to see him. But the lowly publican would still kneel and beg for mercy on account of his sins if no one ever heard or saw him pray. (Luke 18: 9-14.) Hypocritical worshipers must have an audience, but sincere worshipers seek only to be heard by the Lord.

Much of the Sermon on the Mount was aimed at leading the disciples away from the religion of forms and ceremonies and into a religion of the heart. Jesus wants his disciples to love God supremely, with an undivided love; and he wants their worship to be an expression of that love in their hearts whether before an audience or in the closet. Ceremonialism in worship is no more devastating to the soul than love of material wealth, so Jesus warns against hoarding and trusting in wealth of every form. Both of these things are but varying forms of materialism. The world is afflicted today with such materialism. The religious world is as guilty today of formalism as were the Jews; and the church of our Lord is far from being free from it. There is danger of some of our city churches putting too much money in big expensive houses of worship, and spending too much money to maintain an "office force"; while smaller churches are liable to lapse into formalism by meeting only once a week to take communion with no interest in taking the gospel to the lost of the community. And perhaps in no period of the world's history has there ever been so much reaching after, gaining, and hoarding of wealth and all forms of material possessions as is to be found among us today.

Golden Text Explained

Seek kingdom and righteousness. Since this was spoken to his disciples who had made preparation for the coming of the kingdom, it is not likely that Jesus meant by this phrase that they were to seek to enter the kingdom. But certainly it may well be used to suggest that idea to men today. The first duty of every person is to seek to enter the kingdom, to put themselves under the rule of God. To fail to do so is to continue under the rule of Satan, to be a helper of the devil, and finally to suffer the punishment reserved for him, and to spend eternity in a place prepared for him and his angels. (Matt. 25: 41.) But certainly the disciples who heard this sermon were to seek to keep themselves under the rule of God, and this may be the sense in which the word kingdom was used by Jesus.

The righteousness of God in this use means the character of God. We are to seek to become like God in that we love our enemies and do good to them; we are to be like him in that we are merciful to those in less fortunate circumstances than we; and we are to be like God in that we will do our best to save the lost of this world. God gave his only Son that he might save the lost. How much are we willing to give? Would you be willing to give up an expensive habit and use that money to send the gospel to the lost? Would you give up a certain pleasure or form of recreation and give the time and money you usually spend to send the gospel to the lost of China or Germany? If we are seeking God's righteousness very diligently we will be willing to do something more than wish and pray for the salvation of the lost.

Seek these things first. We should seek them first in point of time of life; seek them in youth. The wise man said, "Remember also thy Creator in the days of thy youth." (Eccles. 12: 1.) First impressions are lasting impressions. Habits formed in youth are easy to keep, and hard to root out of the life. If we form Christian habits early in life we will likely practice them to the end. Not many

people have the courage to renounce a course they have followed from youth, and begin over when they are old.

We should seek these things first from the viewpoint of interest and effort. Though one may be a salesman or work in an office, his greatest interest should be to submit to the rule of God and to become like God. Being a farmer or a schoolteacher is a means of providing for our earthly welfare, but seeking God and his righteousness are the means of providing for our eternal welfare. As eternity is longer than this life, so providing for eternity is more important than providing for this earth life. This means that we will make spiritual matters supreme in our lives.

Blessing Promised the Seeker. All these things—the material things of life that are needful. The best way in the world to assure one's self of food, raiment, and shelter is to seek God and his righteousness first. Just as surely as God's promise is true, just that surely will we always have these things added, or supplied, to us. We may not have enough to "keep up with the Joneses," but we will have what is best for us. This is a hard promise to believe, and it is difficult for most of us to trust the Lord long enough to see whether or not it will actually work. But David said he had observed it. (Psalm 37: 25.) And Paul teaches us to be content with such things as God sees fit to supply. (Phil. 4: 11, 12; 1 Tim. 6: 6-8.) So why worry about material things when we have a sure way of getting all we need?

Exposition of the Text

Treasures in Heaven. (Matt. 6: 19-21.) *Lay not up treasures on earth.* Jesus had just condemned the material-mindedness of the Pharisees in doing alms, praying, and fasting to be seen of men; now he warns his disciples against another form of materialism. He suggests that treasures laid up here waste away without doing anybody any good. **Moth and rust consume.** Moth is an insect that eats clothing, and rust eats metal, so in whatever form your wealth may exist there is an agent capable of destroying it. **Thieves break through.** The word translated *break through* is literally *dig through*. The Greeks called a burglar a mud-digger. (Robertson.) Houses were made of mud or sun-dried bricks and were easy to dig into. Steel safes are just as easy for thieves with their present day high-powered tools.

Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. Notice that treasures laid up in heaven are said to be for *yourselves*. We are prone to think of money laid up here for ourselves, but of that which we use for others as not being laid up for ourselves. This is the only place of absolute safety for one's wealth. It is beyond the reach of moth and rust, and thieves can't get there. Treasures are laid up in heaven by doing good to others. The rich ruler was promised treasures in heaven if he would sell his goods and give to the poor. (Matt. 19: 21.) Bearing afflictions work for us a weight in glory. (2 Cor. 4: 17.) This is something by which we will be enriched in the next life, so a treasure in heaven.

Where thy treasure is. This statement is given as a reason why we should lay up treasures in heaven. It is our duty to set our affection on things above. (Col. 3: 2.) But our affection cannot be on heavenly things unless our treasure is there. Again, we are told to love not the world nor the things of this world. (1 John 2: 16.)

But if we lay up treasures on this earth our hearts, our affection, will be here. People who put much time, effort, and money into the church and its work can truthfully say they love the church; their treasure is there, so we cannot deny that their heart is there also. But if one gives neither time, effort, nor money to the church we can be sure he does not love it. The man who has put both his treasure and his heart upon this earth will be a poor man indeed when he stands before the Lord in judgment. The treasure will perish with this earth, and his affections have been misspent and prostituted to no good purpose.

Single eye service. (Matt. 6: 22-24.) *If therefore thine eye be single.* The lamp of the body is the eye. All the light that reaches the body comes through the eye. So the understanding is the lamp of the soul. The word *single* is used in a peculiar sense; it means *without folds*, like a piece of cloth unfolded. (Robertson.) Robertson further says, "If our eyes are healthy we see clearly and with a single focus (without astigmatism). If the eyes are diseased (bad, evil), they may even be cross-eyed or cockeyed. We see double and confuse our vision. We keep one eye on the hoarded treasures of earth and roll the other proudly up to heaven." It is bad to have a diseased eye, or to lose our eyes. So it is bad to have a debased, degraded understanding. *The whole body is full of darkness.* This is the result of the evil, or diseased eye. The illustration and the application are somewhat mixed in this passage, but the meaning is clear. When the eyes are good, the body has plenty of light, but when the eyes are diseased the body is in partial or total, darkness; so when the understanding is enlightened the soul is in good health, but when the understanding is darkened the soul is in bad condition. (Eph. 4: 17-24.)

Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Man is not capable of two supreme affections at the same time; no two objects of different nature can claim first place in man's heart. He may be divided in his affection, and undecided as to whom he should love, but there is no such thing as loving God and mammon both supremely. And since God will not take a second place, we may say with John, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John 2: 15.) *He will hate the one, and love the other.* Does the word *hate* mean to *abhor* or *love less*? Brother Whiteside suggests that it means *love less*, "For no one would voluntarily seek to serve a master toward whom he had bitter feelings." This suggests a divided love, and do we not find ourselves, like Balaam, trying to love and serve God while in other ways and on other days we love money and the things money can buy?

Anxiety about earthly things. (Matt. 6: 25-34.) *Be not anxious for your life.* The word *life* here is from a word which means the "life principle common to man and beast," that which man can kill. (Mark 3: 4.) It is the life which is sustained by what we eat and drink, and about it we are not to worry. For this Jesus proceeds to give us a number of reasons.

The life is more than food. This is reason number one Life is more important than the food which sustains it; ii God gives you the greater, will he not give you things necessary to sustain it? It would be a waste of energy on God's part to give us life and then fail to provide things necessary to sustain that life. Worry about

food and clothing is to distrust God to provide for the life he has given us.

Behold the birds of the heaven. As reason number two Jesus cites the birds of the heaven. God gave them life, and now he continues to provide the necessities of life. True they have to go out after their food, but they neither sow nor reap, nor gather into barns. Each year God provides a bountiful harvest of seeds and other things necessary to bird life. *Are not ye of much more value than they?* If God provides for the birds, surely he will provide for creatures made in his likeness which imparts our superior value. To worry about necessities of life is to charge God with failing to care for us in spite of the fact that he cares for birds which are not of as much value as we.

Anxiety adds not to the measure of life. This is reason number three why we are not to be anxious about our life. Can a man add one cubit to the measure (or stature) of his life? Instead of the word *measure* the margin has *stature*. Scholars differ as to which word to use. Not many would wish to be taller, at least as much as a cubit, which is eighteen to twenty-two inches. But who would not like to lengthen his life? But worry about food, raiment, and shelter will not add an hour or a day to the length of life. It could possibly shorten life if carried to the extreme.

Consider the lilies of the field. As reason number four Jesus offers the lilies, or grass, of the field which are arrayed in more splendor and glory than Solomon, Israel's greatest and grandest king so far as worldly standards are concerned. They neither toil nor spin, yet they are clothed. To worry about the necessities of life is to charge God with the folly of caring for the grass of the field which lives for a day, but refusing to care for those made in his image and who live on forever.

After all these things the Gentiles seek. The word Gentiles is used here of all who do not know God and are not the children of God. It is proper for such as are without God to seek such material things, for they have no heavenly Father to provide for them. But for God's children to be anxious about such things is to doubt their Father's love or ability to provide for them. It is to act like we are orphans.

But seek ye first his kingdom. This is offered as an alternative to anxiety. Be not anxious, but seek his kingdom and righteousness. If you will do this God will add all the necessities of life. This suggests that such heavenly care is conditional. Those who seek first God's kingdom and righteousness have the promise of this care, while those who put earthly interests first need not expect to enjoy this providential care.

The morrow will be anxious for itself. This is given as the reason why we are not to be anxious about what will be tomorrow. If people would dismiss all worry about things future, they would have very little about which to worry. To worry today about the things of tomorrow is to double our worries; it is to worry twice where common sense says once is plenty, and where Jesus says once is too much. Take care of today's responsibilities today, and care for the things of tomorrow on the morrow—if it ever gets here.

Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Each day has plenty of its own cares without borrowing some of the cares of tomorrow

and adding them to the load of today. Your load today is heavier because you borrow from tomorrow; but your load tomorrow is no lighter for the borrowing. Some people worry over the past. Drop the dead past. Worrying about it will not improve it, but such worry may weaken you for the duties of today. So forget the worries of yesterday, don't borrow any from tomorrow; give yourself wholly to seeking God's righteousness and kingdom today. Only in this way can you fulfill your God-given mission in life and stand before him with his approval in the day of judgment.

Topics for Discussion

1. It will be well for the teacher to ask one of the class to prepare and read before the class a paper on what Solomon learned about material wealth and its value as compared to heavenly riches. (See Eccles. 5 and 6.)

2. It is reported that Andrew Carnegie said, "I would give two hundred millions of dollars right now, if I could be absolutely assured of ten more years of life." How much is a year of life worth to you? What would Dives (Luke 16: 19) have given for one more year to live on this earth? What we do with our time determines its value. If we use it for God its value cannot be measured, but if we use it for the devil it is worse than worthless. What are you doing with your life now?

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What is characteristic of formal religion?

Discuss the materialism of the Jews, and that of today.

Golden Text

What is the first duty of people today?

What is meant by seeking God's righteousness?

In what ways are we to become like God?

At what time in life are we to seek these things?

In what other way are we to seek these things first?

What blessings are promised those who seek these things first?

What did David say about God's care over us?

What did Paul teach about such things?

Exposition of the Text

Why is it wrong to lay up treasures on earth?

For whom do we lay up treasures in heaven?

How do we lay up treasures in heaven?

What determines where our affections are?

How can we be sure of loving heavenly things?

Who can prove that he loves the church?

What is meant by a single eye? and by an evil eye?

If the eye is the lamp of the body, what is the lamp of the soul?

Why can we not serve God and mammon, and what is divided love?

Anxiety About Earthly Things

What is the meaning of the word life?

Why did Jesus say that life is more than food?

Why did Jesus refer to the birds of heaven?

How did Jesus use our inability to add to the measure of our life?

What argument did Jesus make from the lilies of the field?

What lesson did Jesus teach by his reference to the Gentiles?

How can we act like spiritual orphans?

What alternative does Jesus offer for anxiety?

Is such heavenly care conditional, if so, upon what?

What did Jesus mean when he said the morrow will be anxious for itself?

What is the meaning of "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof"?

Lesson VI—February 6, 1949

JESUS TEACHES HIS DISCIPLES TO PRAY

The Lesson Text

Matt. 6: 5-15

5 And when ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites: for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward.

6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee.

7 And in praying use not vain repetitions, as the Gen'-tiles do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

8 Be not therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil *one*.

14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Golden Text.—*"Pray without ceasing."* (1 Thess. 5: 17.)

Devotional Reading.—Matt. 6: 1-4.

Daily Bible Readings

January 31. M..... The Prayer of a Hypocrite (Luke 18: 9-14)
 February 1. T..... The Prayer of a Penitent Man (Psalm
 February 2. W..... Pray for Laborers in Harvest (Luke 10: 1-12)
 February 3. T..... Our Food Sanctified Through Prayer (1 Tim. 4: 1-5)
 February 4. F..... Prayers to Be Made for All Men (1 Tim. 2: 1-8)
 February 5. S..... Prayers to Be Offered in Faith (James 1: 5-8)
 February 6. S..... Prayers of the Righteous Availeth (James 5: 13-18)

TIME.—A.D. 28.

PLACE.—A mountain in Galilee, probably Horns of Hattin.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, and the multitude.

Introduction

It is a question among Bible scholars whether verses 9-13 of our lesson which contain the model prayer belong in the Sermon on the Mount. It is generally thought that Matthew took this prayer from a later lesson and gave it here in connection with what our Lord taught with reference to prayer. In Luke 11: 1-4, at a later period in his ministry, one of his disciples came to Jesus with this request, Teach us how to pray. If Jesus gave the model prayer in the Sermon on the Mount, why would one of the disciples ask him later to teach them how to pray? We cannot be sure, but this looks like good evidence that this model prayer belongs to a later period than the Sermon on the Mount. However it is no reflection on Matthew to record it in this connection.

Jesus stressed sincerity as much as any other one thing. He condemned hypocrisy in every form, and in all classes of people. The Jews hated him for his exposition of their hypocrisy. (John 7: 7.) The hardest language Jesus used during his ministry was that di-

rected against the hypocritical practices of the Pharisees and scribes. (Matt. 23.) Anybody can be sincere. Being poor is no excuse for being a hypocrite. Rich or poor, sick or well, high or low in social circles, in the church or out of the church, hypocrisy is inexcusable. No one can enjoy the respect of honorable people and persist in hypocrisy. And if there is ever a time when we should strive to be free from it, surely it is when we are praying to God. He knows every thought of our hearts, every purpose, intention and motive we entertain. We cannot deceive God. It is said that no one can fool all the people all the time, and no one can fool God at any time.

Golden Text Explained

The teaching of our text. Pray without ceasing. Surely our Lord did not mean for us to be uttering words of supplication, thanksgiving, and entreaties twenty-four hours of every day we live. This would be an unreasonable interpretation to put on his words. If he required that of us he would be requiring us to do something he did not do himself. So we reject that as the teaching of the text.

If we take Jesus as an example of praying without ceasing we will conclude that we are to be much at prayer; that we are to spend some time each day in prayer; and that on special occasions, such as trials and important decisions of life to be made, we will give extra time to prayer and meditation. Before Jesus selected and appointed twelve of his disciples to be apostles he spent a night in prayer. (Luke 6: 12-16.) Just before his arrest in Gethsemane he prayed. (Matt. 26: 36-46.) There was never a time in his life that he was not in proper attitude of mind to pray. He never went to a place where prayer would have been out of place. He was never in such company that would make it either embarrassing or impossible for him to pray. Being always ready and in the position and attitude of prayer, it can be said that he prayed without ceasing; he continued steadfastly in prayer. If we follow his example and pray as much as he did we will be pleasing to him.

Application of our text. It has already been suggested that we follow our Lord's example in prayer if we wish to obey the teaching which says for us to pray without ceasing. It may be suggested that in applying the teaching in our everyday life, we should pray for our daily bread and then give thanks for it when we eat. To pray for our daily bread shows that we recognize God as the giver of all good things, and is an expression of our dependence upon him; while to give thanks for it when we eat is to show our appreciation of his goodness to us. To fail in either of these things is to sin grievously. Jesus gave thanks before eating. (John 6: 11, 23.) He was recognized by his disciples after his resurrection by this practice. (Luke 24: 30, 31.) And Paul teaches that this is the will of God. (1 Thess. 5: 18; 1 Tim. 4: 3, 4.)

Families ought to pray together. And in these periods of worship the children are to be taught to pray, and how to pray. In the home circle is where boys ought to learn their first lessons on how to pray before the public. It is a sad situation where boys must depend on some one other than their parents to teach them how to pray. And many men say they cannot pray because their parents neglected to teach them when they were young.

How to pray acceptably. First, one must be a child of God if he wishes to pray to God for the things his children are to receive. Jesus is high priest over the house (family, or church) of God. (Heb. 10: 21.) We cannot approach God except as we do so through the high priest. (John 14: 6.) The children of the devil cannot use Jesus as high priest, for he is not a priest over the house of the devil, only over the house of God. So to pray through Christ one must be a child of God.

Next, one must ask in faith. (James 1: 6; Mark 11: 22-25.)

And, one must be obedient to God if he expects to receive. (1 John 3: 21, 22.) The prayers of a righteous man availeth much. (James 5: 16.)

Next, our prayers must be unselfish. (James 4: 3.)

David said the man who had clean hands and a pure heart (Psalm 24) would be acceptable to God. And Paul taught the same lesson when he said we are to lift up holy hands without wrath and disputing. (1 Tim. 2: 8.) This means that we are to be clean inwardly and outwardly if we expect to be heard when we pray.

Exposition of the Text

How not to pray. (Matt. 6: 5-8.) *Ye shall not be as the hypocrites.* The thing which Jesus criticized, and the thing which characterized these men as hypocrites, was the fact that they loved to be seen of men when they prayed. From this statement of Jesus some have thought he condemned standing to pray, but the emphasis is to be placed on *that they may be seen of men*. Is it wrong to pray in the corner of the streets? Is it wrong to pray in the synagogue? Jesus was not condemning the people for praying either in the streets or in the synagogues. But he was condemning them for praying anywhere that they might be seen of men. *They have their reward.* And what is their reward? They are seen of men. What an empty worthless reward! But when men pray with that in view, it is all the reward they will ever get.

Enter into thine inner chamber. Instead of trying to be seen of men it is better to make an effort to pray unseen by men. It is not wrong to pray when men are looking and listening, if it is an occasion of public worship. But if the occasion is one of private worship, we are to make an effort to be private. To enter a closet and pray loudly enough to be heard a block away is a good sign of hypocrisy. Entering a room and leaving the door half open in the hope some one will see us at prayer is good evidence of hypocrisy. Jesus said enter the private room and close the door. We are told that most houses had a room to one side, or on the roof, which was made for private devotions. It would compare well with the den of modern housing. *Thy Father shall recompense thee.* The Father is in secret, that is, not seen of men; and he sees in secret—he observes things which are secrets from men, unknown to men. A thing does not have to be done publicly to be seen and rewarded by him. He who notes the fall of the sparrow, and counts the hairs of our head, will listen to us when we pray though we may be in a dark room behind closed doors. Sparrows fall in the dark, but he takes note of them; so prayers uttered in the dark are heard.

Use not vain repetitions. The Jews thought they would be heard for much speaking when they would not be heard if their prayer was

short, so they repeated when there was no need to do so. Is it wrong to pray the same prayer several times in a day? Jesus prayed the same prayer three times in less than a day. (Matt. 26: 44.) So repetition is not wrong. But *vain*, needless, repetition, for the sake of lengthening a prayer is wrong. The use of many adjectives, and the quoting of long passages of scripture in prayer, if done just to take up time, may be classed with vain repetitions condemned by the Lord.

How to pray. (Matt. 6: 9-13.) *After this manner.* Not by the use of these very words, but after this manner. This prayer was to be used as a pattern, a model. They were to pray for the same things, but not necessarily in the same words, nor for these things in the same order Jesus used. But there was no sin in repeating the prayer word for word if a disciple cared to do so.

Our Father in heaven. Notice the simplicity of this prayer. There is no multiplying of adjectives as some do today. When Jesus prayed he said simply, Father, or my Father. (Matt. 26: 39, 42; John 17: 1.) And in John 17: 11 he said, Holy Father. But it is not unusual to hear men say, Our dear kind, loving, and adorable heavenly Father. There is no more dignified or appropriate address than simply, Our Father who art in heaven.

Hallowed be thy name. "The word *hallowed* means to render or pronounce holy. God's name is essentially holy; and the meaning of this petition is, 'Let thy name be celebrated, venerated, and *esteemed as holy* everywhere, and receive from all men proper honor.'" (Barnes.)

Thy kingdom come. The primary thought here is of the kingdom promised by prophets of old, for which preparation was made by John the Baptist, and to be established by Christ. We could not include this idea in a prayer today without denying that Jesus established that kingdom. He established it on Pentecost after his death (Acts 2), and since that time no informed disciple has included this in his prayer. But since it is proper to desire the second coming of Jesus and entrance into his everlasting kingdom (2 Pet. 1: 11), it would in that sense be fitting to pray for that kingdom to come, or more properly for the time to come when we can be ushered into that eternal kingdom.

Thy will be done. If everybody would pray for the Lord's will to be done, and then live in such way as to bring about the answer to his prayer, this would be a better world. God's will is done to perfection in heaven. It will never be that way on this earth, but it is right to strive and pray toward that end. This closes the first part of the prayer, which has to do with God; the second part deals with man. This prayer is like the Ten Commandments in respect to its divisions.

Give us this day. Luke says *day by day*. Does this not suggest that we are to pray daily? Daily bread is a term which includes all our temporal needs. Some have tried to see in the expression our spiritual needs also, but the idea seems strained.

Forgive us our debts. Luke has *sins* instead of debts. Some doubt that the word "debt" can be used correctly with reference to our sins, but this use of it by our Lord will settle the question with all who respect him. Jesus used the words "debts" and "debtor" to teach us lessons with reference to sin. (Matt. 18: 28, 30.) The

Greek "word *opheile* for moral obligation was once supposed to be peculiar to the New Testament. But it is common in that sense in the papyri." (Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament.) Sin puts us in debt to God, so far in debt that we can never pay; so we must depend upon his mercy to forgive us our debts.

As we have forgiven our debtors. Forgiving others is a condition upon which God will forgive us. "How terrible a prayer this may become! If we pray it, keeping an unforgiving temper, we shall be ourselves blocking up the way by which our prayers should have ascended; not merely failing to extricate ourselves from the hands of our sins, but with our own hands drawing the cords of them more closely around us than before." (Trench.)

Bring us not into temptation. The only way it can be said that God brings us into temptations is in the sense of trials, and James tells us to rejoice in that. (James 1:2.) This use of the word temptation seems to be *to induce to sin*, and God never tempts us in that way. (James 1: 13.) But God does permit us to be so tempted, though not beyond our power to resist. (1 Cor. 1: 13.) The idea here is, "Do not allow us to be led into temptation." Jesus said to his disciples, "Pray that ye enter not into temptation." (Luke 22: 40.)

Deliver us from the evil one. The devil is wise and powerful enough to get every person and take all into destruction if it were not for God's restraining power exercised over him. As God allowed the devil to go only so far with Job (1: 12; 2: 6), so he does not allow him to tempt us beyond our power to resist. Christians should pray every morning for the Lord to deliver them from the evil one, and thank the Lord every evening that he has guarded them from him. (2 Thess. 2: 3.)

God's fair treatment. (Matt. 6: 14, 15.) *If ye forgive men their trespasses.* The word trespass is used here instead of debt. Adam Clarke suggests that debt is a stronger word than trespass, and that our debts (sins) against God are much worse than men's trespasses against us. But this is pressing the meaning of the words too far. Trespass means *falling to one side*, or *missing the mark*. And this word is used of both our sins against God and men's sins against us in verse 14.

Neither will your Father forgive you. This is a *take it or leave it* proposition. Yet nothing could be more fair and just. The man who is unwilling to forgive should not expect God to forgive him. Especially is this true when our sins against God are more grievous, because of the dignity and holiness of his person and his goodness towards us, than are man's sins against us. Jesus illustrated this very lesson in Matt. 18: 23-35.

Topics for Discussion

1. Men have been known to pray while standing, sitting, kneeling, lying upon the face on the ground, while walking and running. Does the Lord legislate on the matter of the posture of the body while praying?

2. What about the propriety of having a congregation repeat in unison this model prayer? Do we have an example of such praying? From Paul's teaching in 1 Cor. 14: 15-17 and 1 Tim. 2: 8-10 do you think praying in unison was in his mind?

3. What place should prayer have in the home? Does it have that place in the majority of church homes? How much would the church and community be benefited if every home represented in this class would begin today to give prayer its proper place? Is there any reason why this group of people should not do this? Think about it!

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

Do you think this model prayer was originally a part of the Sermon on the Mount?

What one thing did Jesus stress in his teaching?

Why should we be sincere, especially in prayer?

Golden Text

What is not meant by this text?

Did Jesus pray without ceasing?

At what special times did Jesus pray?

In what way could it be said Jesus prayed without ceasing?

How did Jesus set us an example of giving thanks?

What did Paul teach us about giving thanks before eating?

Is there any home where this cannot be practiced?

What is the value of family worship?

Is it practiced in the average home?

Who can pray acceptably to God?

Name the conditions of acceptable prayer.

Exposition of the Text

Did Jesus criticize the Jews for standing when they prayed?

Did he criticize them for the places where they prayed?

What is the hypocrite's reward for praying?

Is it wrong for us to pray in public?

Why the inner chamber?

What of one who enters the secret room and then prays extra loudly?

What assurance do we have of being heard and rewarded?

What is meant by vain repetitions?

How many times did Jesus pray the same thing?

What is the meaning of *after this manner*?

How did Jesus address God in prayer? How should we?

How does this simple address compare with some you hear?

What is the meaning of *hallowed be thy name*?

Can we pray *thy kingdom come*? In what sense may we so pray?

Why pray for God's will to be done on earth as in heaven?

What is suggested by the expression *give us this day*? What is daily bread?

Discuss the word debts as refers to our sins.

On what condition will God forgive us our debts?

Will God tempt us?

Will he allow us to be tempted? To what extent?

Why pray for God to deliver us from the devil?

What is the meaning of the word trespass? Does it differ from debts?

Illustrate the fairness of God in forgiving, or not forgiving.

Notice especially No 3 under topics for discussion.

Lesson VII—February 13, 1949

THE TWO BUILDERS

The Lesson Text

Matt. 7: 21-29

21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

24 Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock:

25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock.

26 And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand:

27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall thereof.

28 And it came to pass, when Je'-sus had finished these words, the multitudes were astonished at his teaching:

29 For he taught them as *one* having authority, and not as their scribes.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only." (James 1: 22a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Cor. 3: 10-15.

Daily Bible Readings

February 7. M. How to Distinguish Between Good and Bad (Matt. 7: 13-20)
 February 8. T. Works of the Flesh and Fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5: 16-24)
 February 9. W. The Walk of the World Versus Christian (Eph. 4: 17-32)
 February 10. T. Things to Put Off and Things to Put On (Col. 3: 1-11)
 February 11. F. The Christian, an Example to Others (1 Tim. 4: 6-16)
 February 12. S. Christ an Example to All (1 Pet. 2: 18-25)
 February 13. S. The Two Destinies of Mankind (Rev. 21: 1-8)

TIME.—A.D. 28.

PLACE.—A mountain in Galilee, perhaps Horns of Hattin.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, and the multitude.

Introduction

It is much easier to preach than it is to practice. It is also a lot easier to hear a sermon than it is to put it into practice. And as long as these things are true there will always be a lot of people who are not doing as well as they hear and preach. It is easy to drift down stream with the tide, but it takes effort to go up stream against the current. The majority of people are inclined to be lazy or indifferent, or at least to procrastinate. Many know what they should do, and they really intend to do what is right, but they never seem able to get around actually to doing the things they know. This is true not only with people who have never become Christians, but it is true with many who have obeyed the gospel. They intend to do church work; they intend to be more regular in church attendance; and they intend to be more prayerful in their daily lives. But when asked to do it now, they say, Tomorrow. So our lesson today deals with a subject of almost universal interest. Nearly all of us can find something in this lesson to remind us of ourselves in one way or another. We are continually hearing good sermons which convict us of indifference, neglect, and lack of zealous, courageous activity in the Lord's kingdom, and we resolve to do better. But before the week is half gone our good resolutions have melted away; they have all leaked out and we are left holding the empty bucket of broken resolutions. We are hearers only and not doers of the word.

Golden Text Explained

Be Ye Doers. Everybody admires a doer, one who really gets things done. The man of action is usually the best and first citizen in any community. The doer is a useful man. We need thinkers too, but if no one ever went any farther with a project than the thinking stage no benefit would come from it. The church needs doers; without them there would be no church activity, no missionaries, and no souls saved; without doers the hungry would go unfed, the naked unclothed, and the sick not visited.

Doers of God's will are not self-willed. They are willing to lose their will in that of the Lord and be satisfied to do the things he commands in the way he directs. So a doer of the word is a humble person, seeking only to know the Lord's will. He stands ready to go or do, saying, Command me, Lord, and I will obey.

Doers of the word are not seeking their own honor; they are not seeking the praise of men. No man can do the Lord's will and at the same time be seeking the praise of men. One may do a thing the Lord commands, such as giving money for a worthy cause, and do it to gain the praise of men, but he has not done the Lord's will. One must give humbly and for the glory of God in order to do God's will in that matter. If he gives to gain the praise of men, he has done his own will and not the Lord's will.

Be Doers of God's word. Let us place the emphasis, not on doing this time, but on *God's word*. Be doers of God's word. This makes it necessary for us to know what is the will of God. No one can do God's will in ignorance; we do not obey God by accident. We must study to show ourselves approved of God. (2 Tim. 2: 15.)

There are many who live and worship after the traditions of men; they have not been careful to see that their work and worship are directed by God's word. Paul told Timothy to "Abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them." (2 Tim. 3: 14.) Timothy had learned his work and worship from the inspired apostle Paul, so he was safe in continuing in them. But people who have received their teaching from men, and are following traditions of men, are not safe in continuing in the things they have learned. Others are inclined to follow their opinions instead of plain statements of the Bible. They believe it will be pleasing to God for them to do certain things; they can't see why God would be displeased if they do certain things; and they hold the opinion that God will not send them to hell just because they did not do certain things plainly commanded. They are doers of their own opinions, not of God's word.

Hearers only. Hearing the word of God increases one's responsibility. Jesus said of the Jews, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no excuse for their sin." (John 15: 22.) By hearing our duty to God and to our fellow man preached every week we learn many things we should be doing. If we are hearers only, and not doers of these things, we sin. "To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4: 17.) True happiness comes only by doing the things we know to be our duty, never from being hearers only. "If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them." (John 13: 17.)

We have examples of hearers only in Felix and Agrippa. Felix called Paul to him "and heard him concerning the faith." (Acts 24: 24.) But when Paul pressed him to accept the truth and obey it in view of the judgment to come, though he trembled, he said, "Go thy way for this time; and when I have a convenient season, I will call thee unto me." But the sad thing about it is that the *convenient season* never comes. Agrippa, though almost persuaded, decided to be a hearer only, not a doer, and died out of Christ without God and without hope in the judgment. "But he that looketh into the perfect

law, the law of liberty, . . . being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing." (James 1: 25.)

Exposition of the Text

False worshipers condemned. (Matt. 7: 21-23.) *Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord.* There are worshipers almost without number. Daily they call Jesus Lord, but in so many things they fail, either through neglect or refusal, to do his commandments. Luke's record reads, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6: 46.) The word Lord means *ruler*, and there is no need to call Jesus ruler unless we are willing to be ruled by him. It is hypocrisy to call him ruler and then refuse to obey him.

Enter into the kingdom of heaven. Does this mean the church, which is the kingdom on earth (Matt. 16: 18, 19), or does it mean the everlasting kingdom into which we will be received after the judgment? (2 Pet. 1: 11.) It happens to be true that one cannot enter either kingdom by merely saying, Lord, Lord, and not doing what Jesus commands; but it is obvious that Jesus means the eternal kingdom, for he immediately speaks of shutting out of that kingdom those who have been false worshipers.

He that doeth the will of my Father. From this verse we learn that eternal life is conditioned upon our obedience to God's will. Paul taught the same thing when he said Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him. (Heb. 5: 9.) Some think that since eternal life is a gift we do not have to do anything to obtain it. Their idea is that if we *must do* something we would earn it, and therefore not a gift. But the things we do are not of sufficient value to merit eternal life. Only the death of Christ has any merit in it to save us. Nothing we can do has any meritorious value, not even our obedience to gospel commandments. But God promises to give us eternal life provided we obey him. And by this obedience we signify our submission to him, and our eagerness to live with him.

In that day. This refers to the day of judgment. Some think they are saved because they feel safe and satisfied; some think their loved ones are saved because they died happy and said they felt sure they were going to heaven; and from this passage we learn that there will be some in the judgment who think they should be allowed to go to heaven. If some are going to feel that way about it in the judgment, why should we think that such feeling here is any evidence that we are saved? The best evidence in the world that we are saved, and that we are on the road to heaven, is the fact that we have learned the will of God and are humbly doing it to the best of our ability, and wherein we make mistakes we repent and try again.

Did we not prophesy by thy name? The word prophesy here is to be taken in the sense of preaching. (1 Cor. 14: 3.) They also make the claim of casting out demons, whether true or false we have no way of knowing; however there is no reason to doubt their sincerity; they thought they had cast them out. And they had done many mighty works. (Heb. 2: 4.) Sincerity is not enough. The fact that preachers have stirred audiences to reformation of life is not enough. To be lacking in that love which brings one to obedience to God's will is to lack the one thing needful to be saved. (1 Cor. 13: 1-3; John 14: 15.)

I *never knew you*. The word know is to be taken to mean *approved*. Jesus did not approve of their work because they did not do the will of his Father. Albert Barnes uses this verse to prove his doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy, emphasizing the word *never*, saying that Jesus never did know these false preachers. This interpretation is strained, but even so it does not prove that there will be none in the judgment who were known at one time by the Lord, and who fell away so as to do things which the Lord could not approve. (Ezek. 18: 24; Heb. 6: 4-6.) To all who are not approved he will say, Depart from me. In Matt. 25: 41 we learn to what an awful place they will depart. (See Rev. 20: 10, 14.)

Warning to hearers. (Matt. 7: 24-27.) *Every one that heareth and doeth.* There are two classes of hearers, those who do what they hear, and those that hear and do not. They are still with us, and as in the days of our Lord, those who hear and do are much in the minority.

Likened unto a wise man. This man was wise because he built his house on a rock. People built along the water courses for convenience. If they built in the dry season they could easily get too close to the course of the stream and be in its path in the rainy season when the streams were swollen with heavy rainfall. The man who looked to the future and made provision against the possibility of things unseen was wise. Rock was good foundation both in the dry and rainy season. Sand might be sufficient in the dry season, but it was not good in the rainy season. Doing God's will is a good foundation for this life and for the storm of judgment; doing man's will is enough to get the praise of men and do very well in this life, but it is not good in the stormy trial of judgment. The wise man will choose the foundation which is always sure. (1 Tim. 4: 8.)

Every one that heareth these words and doeth them not. This was a very fitting conclusion to his sermon. He was emphasizing the fact that by listening to that sermon those people had increased responsibilities. One cannot trifle with God's word. To hear and not do is to reject the author of the words. (Luke 10: 16.) But to refuse to hear his word is no safe way of escaping responsibility. (Matt. 13: 15.)

Built his house upon the sand. No contractor would put a house of value upon a foundation of sand. Why should the most valuable thing on earth, the soul, be placed upon such a poor foundation? The sand will provide sufficient foundation for a light structure for a while, but not in time of storm. But a foundation which is worthless in time of storm is worthless at any time. So doing the will of man may be sufficient to bring happiness here, but it cannot bring happiness in eternity. A course which cannot bring happiness in eternity is not a fit course to follow at any time.

And it fell. These are sad words. They remind us of the words spoken of the foolish virgins, when Jesus said, "And the door was shut." (Matt. 25: 10.) The door was shut while the poor foolish virgins were out trying to make preparation which should have been made hours before. So the house fell because the builder was so unwise as to construct it on a foundation of sand instead of solid rock. These are sad words, because it took as much time, effort, and money to build the house on the sand as it would have taken to build it on the solid rock. So a religious character built on the sand of disobedience takes as much time and effort to build as is

spent building a character on the solid rock of obedience to God's word. But all is lost when the storm strikes.

Great was the fall thereof. Why? (1) Because much was involved. A soul worth more than all the riches of the world is involved. (2) Because the fall cannot be remedied by trying again. If in this life we make mistakes and detect them here, we have time to correct them; but if we let them go until we get to judgment it will be too late to correct them. (3) Because the fall is for eternity. One cannot suffer in purgatory for his mistakes, and then go free after a few thousand years of suffering.

Multitudes impressed with Sermon. (Matt. 7: 28, 29.) **Multitudes were astonished.** Those who think Jesus preached this sermon to the apostles only should explain why the multitudes were astonished at his teaching.

He taught them as having authority. They were astonished at both the manner and the subject matter of his teaching. The subject matter was different from that which they had heard before; it affected the heart, and through the heart sought to direct the life. His manner of teaching was new in that he did not quote a lot of authorities from among the fathers like the scribes did. "The teaching of the scribes was narrow, dogmatic, and material; it was cold in manner, frivolous in matter, secondhand, and iterative in its very essence; with no freshness in it, no force, no fire; at once erudite and foolish, never passing a hair's breadth beyond the boundary line of commentary and precedent . . . This testimony of his enemies furnishes us with convincing proof that his teaching was not, as some would insinuate, borrowed from the various sects and teachers of his time." (Farrar.)

Topics for Discussion

1. The Sermon on the Mount contains both blessings and curses. It begins with blessings and ends with condemnation; it promises blessing to all who do the will of God and threatens condemnation to all who hear but do not obey the will of the Father.

2. Nothing can be worse than being among that number who will argue with the Lord on judgment day that they should be allowed to enter heaven. How important it is that we learn the truth and obey it! "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

3. How many statements can you find in our text which Jesus used in such way as to declare his divinity? such as, *Not every one that saith unto me; many will say to me in that day;* etc. Show how that only God could use such language.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What is the usual attitude towards hearing and doing?

Are Christians freer from this attitude than alien sinners?

Name some of the causes of hearing and not doing.

Golden Text

What can be said for men who are doers?

Can you show that doers of God's will are not self-willed?

Can you show why they are not seeking their own honor?

Why is it so important that we study God's will?

Why is it better to follow God's word than traditions and opinions of men?

Why should we not be hearers only?
Name some men who are examples
of hearers only.

Exposition of the Text

What is the meaning of the word
Lord?
Show the inconsistency in calling Je-
sus Lord and not doing his will.
What is the meaning of the term
kingdom of heaven in our text?
Upon what is eternal life condi-
tioned?
How can eternal life be a gift and
yet we have to do something to
obtain it?
To what does the expression in *that*
day refer?
Discuss the possibility of people go-
ing to judgment deceived.
What grounds will the lost have for
asking to be saved?
What did Jesus mean by saying, I

never knew you?
How do we show our wisdom?
Discuss the relative values of sand
and rock foundations.
What does listening to a sermon do
for us?
What are the saddest words of our
lesson? Why?
Give three reasons why the failure of
life is so great.

Multitudes Impressed

What effect did this sermon have on
the people?
What was there about the sermon to
astonish them?
What do you know about the teach-
ing of the scribes?
Can you prove from this text that
Jesus did not copy other teachers
of his day?
What can you suggest after a study
of topics for discussion?

Lesson VIII—February 20, 1949

THE LIMITED COMMISSION

The Lesson Text

Matt. 10: 5-15, 40-42

5 These twelve Je'-sus sent forth, and charged them, saying. Go not into
any way of the Gen'-tiles, and enter not into any city of the Sa-mar'-i-tans:

6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Is'-ra-el.

7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons: freely
ye received, freely give.

9 Get you no gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses;

10 No wallet for *your* journey, neither two coats, nor shoes, nor staff: for
the laborer is worthy of his food.

11 And into whatsoever city or village ye shall enter, search out who
in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go forth.

12 And as ye enter into the house, salute it.

13 And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it
be not worthy, let your peace return to you.

14 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, as ye go
forth out of that house or that city, shake off the dust of your feet.

15 Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sod'-om
and Go-mō'-rah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

40 He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiv-
eth him that sent me.

41 He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a
prophet's reward: and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a
righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

42 And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup
of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you he
shall in no wise lose his reward.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers
are few."* (Matt. 9: 37b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 10: 24-33.

Daily Bible Readings

February 14. M..... Mark's Record of This Commission (Mark 6: 7-13)
February 15. T..... Herod Disturbed By Their Preaching (Mark 6: 14-29)

February 16. W.....	Luke's Record of This Commission (Luke 9: 1-10)
February 17. T.....	Seventy Sent on Similar Mission (Luke 10: 1-16)
February 18. F.....	Rejoicing Over Wrong Things (Luke 10: 17-24)
February 19. S.....	Later Unlimited Commission (Matt. 28: 16-20)
February 20. S.....	Gospel First Preached in Samaria (Acts 8: 1-13)

TIME.—Late A.D. 28 or early A.D. 29.

PLACE.—In Galilee.

PERSONS.—**Jesus and his twelve apostles.**

Introduction

When Jesus selected the twelve apostles and commissioned them to preach that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, we may think of him having both an immediate and a remote reason for doing so. Of course the remote reason for this is seen in the services which these men rendered in the establishment and development of the kingdom, a record of which we have in the book of the Acts. There are two possible reasons which we may assign as his immediate objectives in selecting and commissioning these apostles. First, this was done at a time when his popularity was at its highest. There was a greater demand for his preaching and healing than he could answer personally, so it was necessary for him to commission and empower helpers to meet this demand. This seems to be suggested by the following: "But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest." (Matt. 9: 36-38.) Immediately following this we are told that he gave his apostles power to perform miracles and commissioned them to preach to the people.

The second reason for selecting and commissioning the apostles to preach at this time was the growing opposition of the Pharisees. The more the popularity of Jesus increased the more his enemies hated and opposed him. They accused him of being no better than the publicans and sinners. (Matt. 9: 10-13.) They accused him of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub. (Matt. 9: 32-34.) And they accused him of profaning the Sabbath. (Matt. 12: 1-8.) The Pharisees were many and strongly entrenched in the affections and prejudices of the people. The light of truth and the melting, tenderizing power of sympathetic service rendered in pure unselfishness and without charge was needed in more cities and villages than Jesus himself could reach. So to overcome this unfair and unholy opposition of the Pharisees Jesus sent out six teams to preach and heal.

Golden Text Explained

Conditions which called forth our text. From the context we see that Jesus had been going about the country teaching and healing in the cities and villages; he had been in actual contact with multitudes of the poor, the sick, and the suffering of his day. The record says that when he saw the conditions which prevailed he was moved with compassion for them, for they were distressed and scattered as sheep having no shepherd. On the word *distressed* Albert Barnes has a good note, as follows: "The word used here refers to the weariness and fatigue which result from labor and

being burdened. He saw the people *burdened* with the rites of religion and the doctrines of the Pharisees; sinking down under their ignorance and the weight of their traditions; neglected by those who ought to have been enlightened teachers; and scattered and driven out without care and attention. With great beauty he compared them to sheep wandering without a shepherd . . . without his care the sheep would stray away. They were in danger of wild beasts. They panted in the summer sun, and knew not where was the cooling shade and stream. So, said the Savior, is it with this people."

The harvest is plenteous. Jesus had contacted many people, and surely many of them believed he was a prophet come from God, but so very few understood who he was, what his purpose was, and what their duty was. So little had been done, and so much remained to be done. So we may say today that the harvest is great. Many people have Bibles, but they know so little of what the program of the Lord is, and so little of what is their duty to the Lord that the harvest is great. Do they not have great teachers and preachers among them? Yes, and so did the people among whom Jesus labored. But the scribes and Pharisees as teachers only added to the burdens of the people and made worse their pitiful condition. So the false blind teachers of today only add to the burdens of the people by the traditions they teach.

The harvest is great because, (1) It covers a vast area; much of the world is yet to be evangelized in this generation if we perform our duty. (2) Because a vast multitude of people are involved. It takes time to cover vast areas, but it takes longer to teach people who have been poisoned with false teaching. Only God can estimate the time, effort, and energy necessary to teach every person on earth the truth. (3) It is great because there are possibilities of great saving, as well as great losses, to the Lord. Souls are precious; one soul is worth more than all the world. Who can estimate the value of all the millions of lost souls on earth!

The Laborers are few. Jesus had but few helpers and yet they preached the gospel to every creature on earth. (Col. 1: 23.) While the laborers are few today compared with the immensity of the job, they are not as few as they were in that day. Considering our means of communication and the wealth controlled by Christians today, the world is not as big today as it was then. Our task in getting the gospel to every creature is not as big as it was for the apostles. Though the laborers were few, they did not give up without an effort. The fact they were few spurred them to greater exertions. So we should not be discouraged by the fact that the task is great and the men and money scarce. The Lord said pray for laborers, and then he sent those who prayed. If we will pray with the willingness to go, the work can be done.

Exposition of the Text

Workers, their field, and their work. (Matt. 10: 5-8.) *These twelve Jesus sent.* The names of the apostles are given in the two preceding verses, and should be memorized by each student. There are three distinct groups of these men, four in each group. Peter heads the first group in every list given, Philip heads the second group; and James the son of Alphaeus is at the head of the third

group. The lists are not in the same order in the different lists given, but they are never out of their group, and the groups are always in the same order. The lists can be found in Mark 3: 16-19; Luke 6: 14-16; and Acts 1: 13.

Go not to Gentiles or Samaritans. The apostles were not ready to preach to the Gentiles, nor would they have been understood by the Gentiles themselves. Nor was it time to preach to them, for the kingdom was in the state of preparation, which, in the wisdom of God, was to be established among the Jews. Even when the gospel in its fullness began to be preached the order was to Jews first. "Ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judae and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1: 8.) The Samaritans were a mixed people who had their origin in the mixture of Assyrians and Jews after the captivity of the kingdom of Israel. (2 Kings 17: 24.) When the kingdom of Judah had spent seventy years in captivity and had returned to build Jerusalem, these mixed people wished to help them, but were refused the privilege, so the hatred grew (Neh. 4), until in the time of Christ the Jews had no dealing with them. (John 4: 9.)

Lost sheep of the house of Israel. All Israel were lost, but many of the leaders would not admit it. (Matt. 9: 10-13.) The house of Israel were the physical descendants of Jacob, who was given the name Israel. (Gen. 32: 28.)

The kingdom of heaven is at hand. This is a message they were to preach. John the Baptist had preached it. (Matt. 3: 2.) Jesus had been preaching it. (Mark 1: 14.) This was the kingdom foretold by the prophets. (Dan. 2: 44.) The fullness of time had come. (Gal. 4: 4.) Both John and Jesus thought it was time for the establishment of the kingdom, and they made preparation for it. It was not postponed; it was established on Pentecost after his death (Acts 2), and the people were translated into it (Col. 1: 13), they had received it (Heb. 12: 28), and John was partaker with others in the kingdom. (Rev. 1: 9.)

Heal the sick, raise the dead, etc. This was part of the duty of the workers our Lord sent forth. He had freely given them the power to perform this work, and they were to be as free in the use of that power. They were not to use it for personal gain, but for the good of men and the glory of the Lord. "To take money for their miracles would ruin their work among the people, would teach selfishness instead of love, and cause them to be regarded as mere exorcists instead of preachers of free salvation, with divine credentials." (Peloubet.) Such work was to be done to confirm the truth of the message they preached. (Mark 16: 17-20; Heb. 2: 1-4.)

Their conduct while on the field. (Matt. 10: 9-15.) **Get you no gold nor silver, etc.** The twelve were to make no extra preparation for their journey; they were to go as they were, since they were to be among their own people. Among the things they were told not to get was a staff, while Mark says they might have one. (Mark 6: 8.) Jesus did not mean for them to leave what little money they might have in their pockets at the time they started, but for them not to take time to get any more. So if one had a staff in his hand it was not necessary that he get rid of it; but if he did not have one he was not to go to the trouble to get one. **The laborer is worthy of his hire.** This was given as a reason why they were to make no

special preparation; they were to expect the people among whom they labored to appreciate them enough to give them food and lodging. Extra coats and shoes would not be needed, for the journey would not be too long.

Search out who is worthy and abide there. A worthy person would be one who was of a disposition to entertain them, as well as one of good character. They were not to stay in a home notorious for loose morals; nor were they to stay where they were not wanted. They were to stay at one place, not be going from one place to another as if they were not worthy of being entertained in one home.

Let your peace come upon it. When they entered a house they were to let their peace come upon it, that is, they were to seek the peace and happiness of that home. But if the home was unworthy, unwilling, to receive them they were to let their peace return to them. To let one's peace return was a Hebrew way of saying they were not to seek the peace and happiness of that home.

Whosoever shall not receive you. To receive them was to receive their mission and message; to recognize them as sent from God and to give them whatever encouragement and cooperation was reasonably possible. And to receive the apostles was to receive Jesus who had sent them; and to receive Jesus was to receive God who sent him. (Luke 10: 16.) But to reject these apostles was to reject both Jesus and God, hence a very serious thing.

Shake off the dust of your feet. "To shake off the dust of the feet, therefore, was a significant act, denoting that they regarded them as impure, profane, and heathenish, and that they declined all further connection with them." (Barnes Notes.) (Acts 13: 51.) So serious was the offense of rejecting these apostles that it will be more tolerable in the day of judgment for the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that city or house that rejected them. Is it so serious an offense today to reject their teaching? The reason for this awful judgment is that the apostles were equipped with power to perform miracles, and if any respected them they did so in the face of positive evidence that God was with them. Sodom and Gomorrah did not have as much light as the people among whom the apostles were working, so not as responsible for their wickedness. This is not said to minimize the responsibility of the ancients, but to magnify the responsibility of those to whom the apostles preached. But if greater light increases our responsibility, how can people today in the full light of complete revelation expect to escape terrible judgment if they reject the teaching of Christ through the apostles?

Receiving Christ and its reward. (Matt. 10: 40-42.) *He that receiveth you receiveth me.* To receive one's representative is to honor the one he represents; to reject one's representative is to dishonor the one who sent him. To despise the teaching of the apostles is to despise the Lord who sent them.

In the name of a prophet. To receive a prophet in the name of a prophet is to receive him as a prophet, or on account of his work and office. And for this he shall receive a prophet's reward, for many times the one who received the prophet had to endure the persecution which followed the prophet. Jason of Thessalonica had such an experience when he received Paul into his house. (Acts 17: 5-9.) The same lesson is suggested under another term when he said if one receives a righteous man he shall receive a righteous

man's reward. God will not allow any act of help or encouragement to go unrewarded.

One of these little ones. The apostles are spoken of as little ones because they were going out wholly dependent upon the society in which they worked. As children are wholly dependent upon their parents, and a sin for parents to mistreat them; so while these peniless apostles are among the people and dependent upon them for daily bread, it will be a sin to mistreat them.

In the name of a disciple. This meant for one to identify himself with Christ. To give a cup of water as a fellow human being would not be rewarded, for from such an act of help could come little good to the apostles and no glory to the Lord. But to give the cup of water *in the name of a disciple* would be to say to the community, I am in sympathy with what these men are doing; I have identified myself with the cause they are promoting; and I am making my contribution, though little, to do what I can to promote the cause. Even so small a gift will not go unrewarded. Such a gift in such a manner would expose the giver to the same contempt and persecution from the enemies of Christ that a large gift would from a rich man.

Topics for Discussion

1. "He sent his apostles into a cold, unfriendly world, and he took care of them. So none that trust him shall want. The righteous shall not be forsaken. The God who has in his hand all the pearls of the ocean, the gold in the heart of the earth, and the cattle on a thousand hills, and that feeds the raven when it cries, will hear the cries of his children and supply their wants." (Barnes Notes.)

2. When an apostle entered a house, those in the house had to receive or reject. To receive brought rewards; to reject brought a curse. So today their message has come to our house, and we must either receive or reject it; there is no other alternative.

3. The apostles were to be shown hospitality when they went into a city, but to do so often brought persecution upon the hospitable one. It is difficult enough now to get people to show hospitality to the preacher through a meeting when no persecution is attached; what would it be if people were persecuted for entertaining the preacher!

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What reasons did Jesus have for selecting and sending out his apostles?

What do you know of the growing opposition to Jesus?

How were more laborers to be enlisted?

Golden Text

In what condition did Jesus find the people?

How was he affected by their condition?

How had the teachers of that day contributed to this condition?

Give three reasons why the harvest is great today.

Are the laborers as few today as they were then?

How does the size of the job today compare with the size of their job?

What made it possible for them to evangelize the whole world?

Exposition of the Text

Can you name the twelve apostles? How are they grouped?

Why were they not to go to the Gentiles?

Who were the Samaritans, and why were they excluded from this work?

Who were the lost sheep of the house of Israel?

Discuss the kingdom in prophecy and preparation.

What proof do we have of its establishment?
 What service were the apostles to render the people? For what reason?
 What do you know of their entertainment?
 What is meant by their peace coming upon a house?
 What is meant by receiving an apostle, and rejecting one?
 What is meant by shaking off the dust of one's feet?

Receiving Christ and its Reward
 How do we receive, or reject, Christ?
 What is meant by receiving one in the name of a prophet?
 What was one liable to suffer? Give an example.
 Why speak of the apostles as little ones?
 What is meant by doing a thing in the name of a disciple?
 Did the value of a gift to an apostle determine the reward? Why?
 What lessons did you get from topics for discussion?

Lesson IX—February 27, 1949

JESUS PROMISES TO BUILD HIS CHURCH

The Lesson Text

Matt. 16: 13-20

13 Now when Je-sus came into the parts of Caes-a-re-a Phi-lip'-pi, he asked his disciples, saying, Who do men say that the Son of man is?

14 And they said, Some say John the Bap'tist; some, Eli'-jah; and others, Jer-e-mi'-ah, or one of the prophets.

15 He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am?

16 And Si'-mon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17 And Je'-sus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Si'-mon Bar—Jo'-nah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven.

18 And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Ha'-des shall not prevail against it.

19 I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

20 Then charged he the disciples that they should tell no man that he was the Christ.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."*
 (Matt. 16: 16b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 16: 21-28.

Daily Bible Readings

February 21. M..... The Mountain of Jehovah's House (Isa. 2: 1-4)
 February 22. T..... It is the Way of Holiness (Isa. 35: 1-10)
 February 23. W..... The Satisfaction for the Soul (Isa. 55: 1-13)
 February 24. T..... To be an Everlasting Kingdom (Dan. 2: 36-45)
 February 25. F..... John the Baptist Spoke of It (Matt. 3: 1-12)
 February 26. S..... Jesus and Apostles Spoke of the Kingdom (Mark 1: 14-22)
 February 27. S..... Promise Fulfilled and People Added to It (Acts 2: 37-47)

TIME.—A.D. 29, autumn.

PLACE.—Near Caesarea, Philippi.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his apostles.

Introduction

That the church had long been in the mind of God is evident from a number of scriptures. First, Paul said he was separated from his birth to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. (Gal. 1: 15, 16.) But the preaching of the gospel resulted in the establishment of the church in those communities where it was preached, as Corinth,

Ephesus, and other places. Is it possible that God separated Paul from birth to preach the gospel, but did not know such preaching would result in churches? We therefore conclude that God had the church in mind as early as the birth of Paul.

Again, when God promised Abraham that in his seed all nations of the earth should be blessed, he intended that both Jews and Gentiles should be fellow heirs of the blessing, fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ through the gospel. (Eph. 3: 6, 7.) Paul said in generations past this was a mystery, something not fully revealed, "as it hath now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit." If the Gentiles were to be fellow members of the body, and the body is the church (Eph. 1: 22), we therefore conclude that God planned as far back as the time of Abraham to build a church in which both Jews and Gentiles would be members.

But we can take it a step farther back in the plans and counsels of God. Peter says we are redeemed by the blood of Christ, as of a lamb without spot, "who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times for your sake." (1 Pet. 1: 18-20.) So in the plans of God it was known, even before the foundation of the world, that Jesus would be slain, and that through his death we would be redeemed. But in his death he purchased the church. (Acts 20: 28.) Is it possible that God knew Jesus would die, but that he did not plan that the church would be purchased as a result? Therefore as surely as God planned the death of Christ for the redemption of men, so surely he planned the church which is the number of the redeemed, or the body of the redeemed. And Peter says this plan was made before the foundation of the world. By reading Luke 11: 50, 51 we learn that the term *foundation of the world* refers to the creation, the beginning. So God planned from the beginning for his church to be established. Jesus came into the world to do the will of the Father. (Heb. 10: 7.)

There are some who think Jesus came to this world to establish an earthly kingdom and reign here on earth; that the Jews rejected him as their king, so he changed his mind and built the church instead to last until his second coming when he shall establish that earthly kingdom. But from the foregoing scriptures we know this idea is false, and that Jesus came to establish the church just as God planned it from the foundation of the world, and just as it has existed from Pentecost to the present time.

Golden Text Explained

Thou art the Christ. The word *Christ* is the Greek word meaning *anointed*, while *Messiah* is the Hebrew word. Kings, priests, and prophets were anointed. (Lev. 8: 30; 1 Sam. 16: 12, 13.) But the Jews looked for one to come who would be THE ANOINTED of God for greater and grander purposes than those for which any one had ever been anointed before his time or since. Hence he was referred to as the Messiah, the Anointed; the Greeks spoke of him as the Christ. The Jews expected him to deliver them from the oppression of their enemies, as judges and kings of old delivered the people from their oppressors. They thought his reign would be world-wide, and they would be the favored people in his kingdom.

Son of the living God. This expression means more than Christ; this is expressive of his divinity. The Jews did not expect their Messiah to be God in flesh. Jesus asked them about the Christ, whose son is he? and they said, The son of David. Jesus asked, How could he be the son of David, since David called him Lord? (Matt. 22: 41-45.) They could not answer, because they expected him to be a descendant of David by natural generation. And when he claimed to be both the son of David, through his mother, and the Son of God, begotten by the Holy Spirit, they rejected him as a blasphemer. By this, they said, he makes himself God. (John 10: 33.) He often referred to himself as "the Son of man" (John 3: 14), and truly he was. This term was one of humiliation; it expressed his humanity. He was a human being subject to all the temptations and weaknesses of human nature, capable of sorrowing, tiring, resting, longing for love and companionship. But the term "Son of God" is one of exaltation, suggesting that he was divine, that he was God tabernacling in the flesh. (John 1: 1,14.) In him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. (Col. 1: 15-19; 2: 9.) All the perfections of God dwelt in him, and were manifested to men while he lived among them.

Our confessions of him. Peter was not the first to make this confession of Jesus. Nathanael is the first man we know of who made it. (John 1: 49.) God confessed him as his Son at his baptism. (Matt. 3: 17.) But all who become his disciples, members of his church, must make this same confession. Paul said it is made with the mouth, and that it is unto salvation. (Rom. 10: 9, 10.) If it is *unto* salvation, we conclude that without it there can be no salvation. A man once wished to be baptized into Christ, but the preacher would not baptize him until he knew the man believed with all his heart. (Acts 8: 36-39.) Paul made mention of the fact that Timothy confessed "the good confession," and it is the same "good confession" which Jesus witnessed before Pilate. (1 Tim. 6: 12, 13.) While it is to be made before baptism, it may be necessary for us to make this confession many times through life; and many have died for the privilege of making this confession.

Exposition of the Text

Opinions concerning Jesus. *Who do men say that the Son of man is?* The apostles had been out on a preaching tour; they had been in contact with the people. The Jews were doing all in their power to check, and if possible destroy, the influence of Jesus. So he was anxious to know what the people thought. And this would give him something by which to measure the success of their labors.

Some say, John . . . Elijah . . . Jeremiah . . . one of the prophets. John was dead at this time, and some thought he had come back to life. (Matt. 14: 1, 2.) His work and teaching thus far were similar to that of John. Some thought he was Elijah, perhaps from Mal. 4: 5. And since he was a man of sorrows, often weeping, some thought him to be Jeremiah. Others had no definite idea, but supposed one of the prophets had come back to life. It should be noticed, (1) That no one thought he was a bad man. The leaders of the Jews accused him of many evil things, but it seems that the people refused to believe such accusations. (2) They all supposed him to be some one risen from the dead, and since none can come

back by their own power, they, like Nicodemus, thought him to be from God. (John 3: 2.) (3) Since they all thought him to be from God, they are without excuse for their disbelief and disobedience: they were without excuse for allowing the Jewish leaders to excite them and stampede them into asking for the release of Barabbas and the crucifixion of Jesus. The teaching of Jesus and that of his apostles, and the miracles Jesus performed were enough to convince the people that he was from God, and this report shows that his teaching and miracles had done their work. His mission was a success, and it was up to the people as to what use they would make of the truth they had learned. (4) Human opinions concerning spiritual matters are usually, if not always, wrong. Abraham had the opinion that God would raise Isaac from the dead. (Heb. 11: 19.) Even as great and good man as he was, he was wrong in his opinions. We ought to be careful about *forming* and *holding* opinions concerning spiritual matters, and much less about *preaching* our opinions.

Faith in Jesus and its source. When Jesus had heard the opinions of the people concerning himself, he then turned to his disciples who knew him best, men who had had the best opportunity to know, and asked them what they thought of him. Peter, ever the spokesman for the group, replied, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This was not opinion; it was faith. The difference between faith and opinion is the difference between evidence and no evidence. Opinion is man's position with reference to a matter concerning which he has no sufficient evidence; while faith is man's position based upon good and sufficient evidence. And whether a man has sufficient evidence depends upon two things: (1) Whether evidence is available and within reach of the person. (2) Whether a man makes use of his opportunities to get the evidence. The Jews had the opportunity to examine the evidence upon which Jesus based his claims, but they did not make good use of those opportunities. The apostles had even better opportunities than the average person to examine his claims, and they used their opportunities, hence they had faith, not opinions about the matter. And they all had the same faith, as indeed in the very nature of the case it could not be otherwise. Opinions may be varied, but faith never! Interpretations and explanations there may be many, but there is one faith. Those who have weighed the evidence correctly, assayed the material properly, have the faith; while those who have erred in their examination have opinion.

Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee. We usually take *flesh and blood* to mean man dependent upon merely human sources. But Barnes gives this: "This truth you have not learned from my lowly appearance, from my human nature, from my apparent rank and standing in the world. You, Jews, were expected to know the Messiah by his external splendor, his pomp and power *as a man*. But you have not learned me in this manner; I have shown no such indication of my Messiahship. Flesh and blood have not shown it. In spite of my appearance—my lowly state—my want of resemblance to what you have expected, you have learned it taught by God." (Barnes Notes.)

But my Father who is in heaven. This is the true source of all faith. That which is from God is our faith; that which is from man is opinion. Faith comes by hearing the word of God. (Rom. 10: 17.)

John said he wrote that people might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and believing they might have life. (John 20: 30, 31.) We are not to conclude that God made any miraculous revelation of the character and person of Jesus to these apostles which he had not made to others. They had been with Jesus constantly, had seen his works and heard his teaching; they had accepted the evidence God gave of his Son, and this was their faith revealed to them by the Father. In much the same way we learn of his words and works (they by personal contact, we by study of the Bible), and when we receive the evidence which God gave of his Son, we believe; and it has been revealed to us by the Father in heaven.

The church promised. Thou art Peter, and upon this rock. These words have given much trouble to commentators. What is the rock? Since the word Peter means rock, the Catholic church says this means that Peter was made the foundation of the church. Some Protestant scholars think the same thing, among them Barnes, but do not think Peter was infallible or that he has successors in office with the right to determine the faith of people today. But the word *Peter* is in the masculine gender, while *rock* is feminine. If *rock* refers to Peter it would be masculine gender. Others think the word *rock* refers to Jesus, because he is in other passages called a rock (1 Cor. 10: 3), and referred to as the foundation. (1 Cor. 3: 11.) But since the word is in the feminine gender it can no more refer to Jesus than to Peter. And since Jesus is the builder, he cannot, in the same illustration, be the foundation. So Peter is made the holder of the keys with power to open and shut, or bind and loose, and for that reason he cannot be the foundation. No one person can occupy two or more positions in one illustration. In other illustrations Jesus is said to be the foundation, the door, the vine, the shepherd, but obviously he cannot be all these things in one illustration. The rock upon which the church is built is the truth Peter confessed. If he is the Son of God, the church is divine and worthy of our membership and service. But if he is not the Son of God as Peter confessed, he was an impostor for claiming to be, and he is unworthy of our love and service, and his cause will, and should, fail.

I will build my church, and the gates of Hades. This statement was made about six months after the death of John the Baptist, yet some claim that John was in the church, and that he baptized the apostles into it. The building of the church was future to the date this was spoken. Neither Abraham, Moses, nor David could have been a member of it for the same reason that John was not; they all lived and died before it was built. That being true, it was not their duty to be members of the church; but it is our duty to be members of it, and we cannot please God as did they without becoming members of the church. By the gates of Hades not prevailing against it, some have thought Jesus guaranteed the life and continuance of the church; not even the powers of hell could destroy it. While I think it will never be destroyed, this verse was not meant to teach it. The pronoun it refers to the building of the church. Here is the sense: I will build my church, and the powers of Hades cannot keep me from it. Jesus went into Hades while his body was in the grave (Acts 2: 27-32), but Hades could not keep him, so he came forth and built his church as he promised. This

is one of the best texts to prove the establishment of the church after his death, and on the day of Pentecost.

I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom. Here again there is difference of opinion as to whether Jesus gave Peter anything he did not give the other apostles. Peter had the privilege of preaching the gospel to Jews and Gentiles first, but that he had any more power to bind and loose than any other apostle is an unfounded opinion, and is the source of much harm. (See John 20: 22, 23; Matt. 18: 18, 19.) "The phrase *to bind* and *to loose* was often used by the Jews. It meant to *prohibit* and *to permit*. To bind a thing was to forbid it; to *loose* it, to allow it to be done." (Barnes.)

That they should tell no man. This was not because Jesus was ashamed, or because he did not wish the people to know that he was the Christ. But, (1) People were not prepared to understand all the truth. Even the apostles could not receive it all. (John 16: 12.) (2) The people would be turned from their spiritual needs to their ambitions and desires with reference to the kingdom they thought the Messiah would establish. (3) If all had believed him to be the Messiah they expected there was danger of an open break with Rome, and Jesus had no desire to foment trouble with the Roman army. Until such time as they could get their false conceptions of a Messiah out of their minds, and receive him as the true Messiah and Son of God, it was better that they not be told he was the Messiah.

Topics for Discussion

1. The opinions of people today concerning Christ are as varied as they were in his day. Are they any more correct today? Are they any more hurtful? The common people of his day thought better of him than the educated. How about it today? Does the fact that a person has a good, a complimentary, opinion of Jesus entitle that one to salvation?
2. Jesus granted the apostles power. Was it spiritual or political, or both? What right has the Pope to claim power over political governments even if he could establish the fact that he occupies the same position now that Peter did then?
3. What is the one faith of the Bible, and how was it revealed?

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

Can you show that the idea of the church is as old as Paul?

Can you prove that God had it in his plan in the days of Abraham?

Can you show it was in the plan of God from the beginning?

What is the importance of knowing these things about the church?

Golden Text

What are the Greek and Hebrew terms which mean anointed?

What was the Jewish conception of their Messiah?

What does the term Son of man mean? and the term Son of God?

What question did Jesus ask the Jews about the Son of David, and why could they not answer?

What did Paul say dwelt in Jesus bodily, and what is his meaning?

Who was the first to confess Jesus as Christ the Son of God?

When did the Father confess him as his Son?

What place does confession have in the plan of salvation?

How do we confess Jesus? Is one time enough?

Opinions Concerning Jesus

Why would the apostles know what the people were thinking of Jesus?

Why should people mistake Jesus for John, Elijah, Jeremiah?

What was their general opinion as to character?
 Did they mistake him for any living man?
 Why were they without excuse for their disbelief?
 Are human opinions about spiritual matters usually right or wrong?
 What mistake did Abraham make concerning his son?

Faith in Jesus and its Source

What is the difference between faith and opinion?
 Upon what does sufficient evidence for faith depend?
 If opinions can be varied, can faith vary? Why?
 What is the meaning of "flesh and blood" in our text?
 Who was the source of the faith of the apostles?
 How did the Father reveal the Messiahship of Jesus to the apostles?
 How does faith come to us today?

The Church Promised

What is the rock upon which the church is built?

Why could it not be Peter, or Jesus as a person?
 How many things is Jesus said to be?
 Why can he not be all of these in one illustration?
 When did Jesus make this statement with reference to the death of John the Baptist?
 Why could Abraham, Moses, and John be faithful to God without being members of the church, but we must be members of it to be pleasing to God?
 What is meant by the gates of Hades?
 In what way did the gates not prevail against the church?
 What is meant by the keys of the kingdom?
 Were the keys given to Peter in any way not given to other apostles?
 What is meant by binding? and loosing?
 Why did Jesus tell the apostles to tell no man he was the Christ?
 What lessons have you learned from the devotional readings?
 What have you learned from the topics for discussion?

Lesson X—March 6, 1949

JESUS AND CHILDREN

The Lesson Text

Matt. 18: 1-6; 19: 13-15

1 In that hour came the disciples unto Je'-sus, saying, Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

2 And he called to him a little child, and set him in the midst of them,
 3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

5 And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me:

6 But whoso shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and *that* he should be sunk in the depth of the sea.

13 Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should lay his hands on them, and pray; and the disciples rebuked them.

14 But Je'-sus said, Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for to such belongeth the kingdom of heaven.

15 And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Jesus said, Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for to such belongeth the kingdom of heaven."* (Matt. 19: 14.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 65: 17-20.

Daily Bible Readings

February 28. M.....	A Child Saved for Great Work (Ex. 2: 1-10)
March 1. T.....	A Child Dedicated to a Great Work (1 Sam. 1: 21-28)
March 2. W.....	Children to Be Taught of God (Deut. 6: 4-9)
March 3. T.....	Children May Praise the King (Matt. 21: 12-17)
March 4. F.....	Children to Be Taught Obedience (Eph. 6: 1-4)
March 5. S.....	S. Admonition to Children and Others (1 John 2: 12-17)
March 6. S.....	Solomon's Last Word to Youth (Eccles. 12: 1-14)

TIME.—A.D. 29 or 30.

PLACE.—Capernaum, in Galilee.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, and some children.

Introduction

Power and position have always attracted humanity, and there is perhaps not a sin in the catalogue of crimes that has not been committed to gain either power or position. The disciples were not free from this weakness, and in spite of all the teaching Jesus could give them, and the humble example he set before them, they continued to fall victims to their lust for the highest places in the kingdom. Jesus had just taken Peter, James, and John upon the mount of transfiguration with him a short time before the events of this lesson, and had allowed them glorious privileges denied to the balance of the twelve. How much of this experience they were allowed to tell the other nine we do not know, but they were human, and undoubtedly word got around that they had been through a most unusual experience. This would naturally cause the nine to suspect that the three were being given special instruction for places of responsibility in the kingdom. Those who collected the half-shekel tax came to Peter to ask whether Jesus paid his tax. Why should they come to Peter? (Matt. 17: 24.) This might add to the suspicion in the minds of the nine. And the question of position was discussed openly among them as early as our lesson, for we read, "And they came to Capernaum: and when he was in the house he asked them, What were ye reasoning on the way? But they held their peace: for they had disputed one with another on the way, who was the greatest." (Mark 9: 33, 34.) And then follows Mark's record of the events of our lesson. So from Mark's record we find the reason for the question with which Matthew begins our lesson text.

The idea that Peter was Pope had certainly not entered the minds of these apostles at this time. The statement of Jesus directed to him as the spokesman for all the apostles in Matt. 16: 18 had not been taken by these men as intimating that Peter was going to be the head of the apostles and all the church on earth. 11 they had understood that statement as our Catholic friends understand it, there would have been no further argument about who was to be the greatest in the kingdom. Nor had the apostles got the idea that Peter was to be head of all as late as the last week before Jesus died. For as they were traveling to Jerusalem for the last time before his death the mother of James and John asked Jesus to grant her petition before she asked it; and the petition was that he allow her sons to have the first and second places in the kingdom. (Matt. 20: 20.) And in Mark's record we learn that the sons themselves were implicated in this matter. (Mark 10: 35.) So we may safely conclude that none of the apostles had the idea that Peter was to have the first place in the kingdom; hence such a doctrine was not taught by our Lord.

Golden Text Explained

The meaning of the text. When Jesus had concluded his teaching on divorce and remarriage he no doubt had left the impression on the people that he had a very high regard for the sanctity of the home. (Matt. 19: 1-12.) Perhaps this is what encouraged parents

to bring their children to him for his blessing, and for him to pray for them. It was not unusual for prophets of that time to give their blessing to people, including children. And it has always been a delight to parents for men of distinction to pay special attention to their children. So these fond parents brought their children to Jesus hoping he would give them some attention, which he did. But the disciples rebuked the parents for intruding and taking the precious time and energy of the Master. This rebuke of the disciples is what called forth the words of our text. Suffer, that is allow, the children to come to me. Do not send them away as if they were unworthy of my attention. They were worthy of the attention of Jesus, and we should learn the lesson from him to give time and attention to them for what they can be worth in the future. The church which gives no time and effort to the children will die, and should do so, in one generation.

This passage has been taken as proof of infant church membership. Jesus did not accept them into the membership of the church for the simple reason that he had not yet built his church. Nor is there anything in the text to suggest to us that they should be accepted as members of the church. He simply taught the lesson that children are worthy of the attention of the greatest, and that those who are childlike in character are great.

Lessons suggested by the Text. 1. It is a sin to mistreat children. Parents should be very careful to be kind to their children. Proper punishment is not mistreatment. In fact a lack of punishment when needed may be classed as mistreatment. But to be harsh and unkind to them is a sin. To keep them from school to make money in the field or shop is a sin against the child.

2. It is a sin to neglect children. Parents may neglect the physical welfare of children, through lack of interest or covetousness. But the greatest neglect is that of spiritual training. They should be taught the Bible daily in the home; they should be taught to pray; and they should be taught the churchgoing habit. To bring children into the world and then neglect to turn their feet heavenward during the formative period of life is the greatest sin parents can commit against their children.

3. It is a sin to misguide children. We misguide children by example and teaching. Parents who do things, such as drinking and smoking, which they do not wish their children to do are misguiding them, regardless of what they try to teach them. And we should live so as not to misguide the children of the community. Will the children of the community be turned heavenward, or toward hell by the example set by you?

Exposition of the Text

Greatest in the kingdom. (Matt. 18: 1-4.) **Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?** "By the kingdom of heaven they meant the kingdom which they supposed he was about to set up—his kingdom as the Messiah. They asked the question because they supposed, in accordance with the common expectation of the Jews, that he was about to set up a temporal kingdom of great splendor, and they wished to know who should have the principal offices and posts of honor and profit. This was among them a subject of frequent inquiry and controversy. Mark 9: 34 informs us that they had had a

dispute on this subject in the way. Jesus, he says, inquired of them what they had been disputing about. Luke 9: 47 says that Jesus perceived the thought of their heart—an act implying omniscience, for none can search the heart but God. (Jer. 17: 10.) The disciples, conscious that the subject of their dispute was known, requested Jesus to decide it. They were at first silent through shame (Mark), but, perceiving that the subject of their dispute was known, they came, as Matthew states, and referred the matter to him for his opinion." (Barnes Notes.)

He called a little child. How old was the child? Well, certainly more than eight days old, though we have no means of knowing how much older. The child was old enough to understand what Jesus wanted when he called, and he was old enough to go to Jesus. This passage was never intended to be used to prove infant church membership scriptural.

Except ye turn. Notice the word *turn* is in the active voice. In the King James Version we have *be converted*, which is passive voice. This mistranslation is the cause of some hurtful doctrines. If people have to be converted, there is little for them to do but wait for some higher power to change their hearts. But if they have to turn again, the responsibility of decision and action rests with them.

Become as little children. Their turning does not refer to a conversion from sin as we usually think of it. They were ambitious for high positions in the kingdom Jesus was to establish, and they were willing to run ahead of others to get them. The little child Jesus called to him had no such ambitions; he was not selfish; he was not mad with the lust for honor and fame, for position and power. Now, said Jesus, except you become as free from these sinful lusts and ambitions, you not only will not have high positions in the kingdom, but you will not even enter into the kingdom to be established.

Whosoever shall humble himself. This word humble shows that Jesus was striking at their pride and lust for position. They were thinking of themselves, not of the good of others. They were seeking advancement over others, as is common in the world of commerce and politics. They needed to think more of the welfare of others.

As this little child. Jesus did not say that the little child he had was in the kingdom, or that such little children should be taken into the kingdom. But he taught that people who have a heart as free from the love of power and position as that little child shall be great in his kingdom.

Greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Greatness in Christ's kingdom is on exactly the opposite basis as greatness in the kingdoms of men. "Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be among you: but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant." (Matt. 20: 25-27.)

Here we have the term *kingdom of heaven* used when it can refer to nothing but the church that Jesus built. Matthew uses the term kingdom of heaven, while others use the kingdom of God. There is no difference in their meaning. Both terms refer to the church.

Guarding the Believers. (Matt. 18: 5, 6.) *Whoso shall receive one.* Jesus pronounces a blessing upon those who receive and encourage those who believe on him. They are called *little ones*, or *little child*, meaning those who have turned from worldly ambitions as manifested by the disciples and have become childlike. It would be natural for his apostles to think that if they were to cease to look out for themselves and give their time looking out for the welfare of others that they would suffer in this world. So Jesus says all who receive these childlike disciples will have a blessing, and those who do not receive them will be punished. This was calculated to give the apostles courage to forget their selfish ambitions and be more interested in others. To receive one such disciple is to receive Jesus. This reminds us of his teaching with reference to the judgment. (Matt. 25: 31-46.)

Whoso shall cause them to stumble. Here reference is made to the same ones as these *little ones that believe on me*. This shows that Jesus did not have reference to the child he had by him, but to people who have childlike characters, free from such dispositions as Jesus was rebuking in them. The word *stumble* in this verse means to sin, to do wrong through the influence of others; Jesus is talking about people being the *cause* of these little ones stumbling.

Great millstone be hanged about his neck. Jesus says it would be better for a big stone to be tied around one's neck and be cast into the sea than to cause one of his little ones to stumble. So causing others to become discouraged, or to do wrong through provocation from us, is a most serious offense; it is one to be guarded against with all diligence, and to be shunned at all cost. The words *great millstone* literally translated would be *a millstone turned by an ass*. (Robertson.) Until recently scholars were bothered as to why mention was made of a stone being turned by an ass; but now on papyri found with the spade it is known that the expression was common in the days of the apostles. Two stones were used in grinding, one was small and one large. The upper one was large, and is the one turned by the ass. So Jesus speaks of the big stone being tied to the neck of the one who causes his people to stumble.

Sunk in the depth of the sea. Drowning was a mode of capital punishment used by the Greeks, Syrians, and Romans of that day. Tying this great stone about the neck and dropping one into the deepest part of the sea would be quick and certain death; but such punishment is to be preferred to the punishment which shall be meted out to the person who causes a child of God to stumble. It is difficult for the average person to recover from a stumble; he is like the bird with the broken wing. A life is wasted, and perhaps a soul lost eternally. These are reasons it is so serious to cause one to stumble.

Jesus interested in Children. (Matt. 19: 13-15.) *Lay his hands on them, and pray.* People were bringing their children to Jesus for him to lay his hand upon them and pray for them. This was no unusual thing for prophets, or distinguished men to do. However children did not have the place in the world of that day which they have at this time. This is a child's world. Schools are maintained for them; encyclopedias are published especially for them; and story-books without number are written for them. Laws are passed for their protection in the field of labor, and it is a crime for parents to

keep their children out of school to work the year around. These better conditions are here because Jesus showed his interest, and taught others to be interested in children. Contrast present conditions with those of long ago when parents exposed their unwanted children to wild beasts, and see what Jesus has been worth to the world.

The disciples rebuked them. Even though they had been with Jesus over a year these men, who were products of the time, did not realize the value of children. This shows that Jesus was not a product of his time. He was so far ahead of his time that the world unaided and unguided by his teaching could never have attained to his standards.

To such belongeth the kingdom. Not to children of this age; but to people of the disposition of these children. They were humble, had no worldly ambitions, were unselfish, and were quick to forget an injury or an insult. The kingdom of heaven is composed of just such characters as this. It therefore behoves each one of us to be diligent in examining our hearts to see whether we have these qualities. If we do not possess them we are in danger of being lost eternally, and we can have no greater or more urgent duty than cultivating such characteristics. Through much study, prayer, meditation, and self-denial we should be able to cultivate the proper disposition to be acceptable to him.

Topics for Discussion

1. Men who desire to be great in the church are unfit to be elders. Paul says those who desire the office of a bishop desire a good work. It is right to desire to do a great work, but it is sinful to desire to be boss of the church.
2. The church that fails to be interested in children is overlooking the most fertile and fruitful field of opportunity. They should be taught and trained to worship; they should be guarded against and equipped with weapons to fight the evil in this world to which they are subjected daily in the world in which they move.
3. The man who causes a child of God to stumble is in a worse condition than the man found guilty of some crime and has had the death sentence pronounced upon him.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What sins have always been common to mankind?

What led the disciples to dispute about high places in the kingdom?

What does this lesson do for the doctrine that Peter was the first Pope?

Golden Text

What likely encouraged people to bring their children to Jesus?

Why did the disciples rebuke the people for bringing their children?

Contrast the idea of Jesus about children with that of the disciples.

Does this passage teach infant church membership? Why?

Name and discuss three sins against children suggested.

Exposition of the Text

What idea did the disciples have of the kingdom Jesus was to establish?

What was uppermost in the minds of the disciples with reference to this kingdom?

How did Jesus illustrate his idea of what character should be?

Discuss the meaning of *turn* as compared with *be converted*.

What are the needful characteristics which children have?

Contrast greatness in world kingdoms with that in Christ's kingdom.

What is the meaning of the word kingdom in these verses?
 How does Jesus identify himself with his little ones?
 How was this teaching calculated to help his disciples?
 What is the meaning of the word stumble?
 How can we cause people to stumble?
 What was the great millstone? and for what used?
 Among what nations was drowning a mode of capital punishment?
 Why is causing people to stumble so serious a sin?

Jesus Interested in Children
 How have children profited from the teaching of Jesus?
 Why was Jesus not a product of his time?
 To whom does the kingdom of heaven belong?
 How may we become one of that number?
 Is it worth while to pay the price to become one of that number? Why?
 What would you suggest as worth while in topics for discussion?

Lesson XI—March 13, 1949

JESUS TEACHES FORGIVENESS

The Lesson Text

Matt. 18: 21-35

21 Then came Peter and said to him, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times?

22 Je-sus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven.

23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, who would make a reckoning with his servants.

24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, that owed him ten thousand talents.

25 But forasmuch as he had not *wherewith* to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

26 The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

27 And the lord of that servant, being moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

28 But that servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, who owed him a hundred shillings; and he laid hold on him, and took *him* by the throat, saying, Pay what thou owest.

29 So his fellow-servant fell down and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee.

30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay that which was due.

31 So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were exceeding sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

32 Then his lord called him unto him, and saith to him, Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou besoughtest me:

33 Shouldest not thou also have had mercy on thy fellow-servant, even as I had mercy on thee?

34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due.

35 So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.

Golden Text.—*"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."* (Matt. 6: 14.)

Devotional Reading.—Eph. 4: 25-32.

Daily Bible Readings

March 7. M.....Joseph Forgives his Brothers (Gen. 45: 1-15)
 March 8. T.....David Prays for Forgiveness (Psalm 51: 1-17)
 March 9. W.....No Offering Merits Forgiveness (Micah 6: 6-8)
 March 10. T.....God's People are to Pray for Forgiveness (Matt. 6: 5-15)

March 11, F..... Erring Child of God Told to Pray (Acts 8: 18-24)
 March 12, S..... Law of Pardon for Alien Sinners (Acts 2: 36-42)
 March 13, S..... The Blessedness of Forgiveness (Psalm 32: 1-11)

TIME.—A.D. 29.

PLACE.—Capernaum.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his apostles.

Introduction

The need for forgiveness is universal. "There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God; they have all turned aside, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not so much as one." (Rom. 3: 11, 12.) "For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3: 23.) "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." (1 John 1: 10.) Not only the word of God, but our own consciences, convict all of sin. Only the proud, haughty, and self-righteous will deny that they sin.

The need for forgiveness is imperative. The soul that sins shall die; the wages of sin is death; no sin can enter heaven (Rev. 21: 27); and those who have sinned shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. (Rev. 21: 8.) Since all have sinned, and since the consequence of sin is eternal destruction, the need of forgiveness is emphasized. None can ever enter heaven without forgiveness.

God forgives, and teaches us to forgive. Seeing our lost condition, God was moved with compassion toward us, to forgive us on simple easy terms within the reach of every lost soul. We had nothing wherewith to pay, or make amends, so he asks only that we show our humility and submission by simple obedience to gospel commandments. In this he teaches us to forgive those who sin against us. We are to partake of the nature of God, and since it is his nature to forgive, we are to cultivate that characteristic. And one who does not derive pleasure from forgiving his brother, even his enemy, is not enough like the Lord to be given a place in heaven to live with him forever.

Golden Text Explained

The meaning of forgiveness. Too many of us act as if we think forgiveness means a cessation of hostilities. And others are willing to put the transgressor on probation, and, if no further mistakes are made, all will finally be forgotten. But the only way we can really learn what forgiveness means is to see how God does it. What does God do when he forgives us of our sins? (1) He pardons our sin; he removes the notation from his record; he forgets, puts out of his memory, the wrong we have done him. (2) He treats us just like he did before we sinned, and like he would have if we had not committed the sin. He receives us back into his love and favor, into his fellowship and communion, as wholeheartedly as if we had done nothing wrong. When the prodigal son returned, the father would not grant the son's request to make him one of his hired servants; he gave him the place of a son, he put him right back where he was before he went off into that far country. Yes, that is perfection, and it is a most difficult thing to do; but it is forgiveness, and the thing we must learn to do.

Proper Attitude toward the transgressor. What should be our attitude toward the one who has sinned against us from the time the sin is committed until the time he repents and asks for forgiveness? If we have an improper attitude toward the transgressor during this period it will be difficult, maybe impossible, for us to forgive; but if during this time we can maintain a Christlike attitude toward the transgressor, it will be much easier to forgive when he repents. When man had sinned against God, God did not do as we often do when people sin against us. It is human to have nothing to do with one who has wronged us; we evade him, and maybe with perfectly good intentions. But God did not evade us when we had sinned against him. He clothed himself in our nature, lived among us, suffered for us, made love to us to try to get us to love him. How then should we act toward those who have sinned against us? We ought to cultivate their good will, be so good to them that they will learn to love us. And when they have learned to love us, they will be ashamed that they have wronged us, and that will lead them to repent and ask forgiveness. And since we have been cultivating their good will, making love to them, we will be in a position, and have the disposition of heart, essential to true forgiveness.

Necessity of forgiving others. This is one of the flattest, most binding, conditions of salvation ever laid down by our Lord. It is a take-it-or-leave-it proposition. If we forgive others, God will forgive us when we sin against him; but if we forgive not our brother, God will not forgive us our sins against him. And since we all sin occasionally and so need the forgiveness of God, it is absolutely essential that we learn to forgive others when they sin against us. We are prone to justify ourselves by pointing out how inexcusable was the act of sin committed against us; or we may call attention to how long a period of time the sin has been going on; or we may have reason to believe the transgression was willful and premeditated, and oft repeated even after we had called his attention to it. But if he turns and asks forgiveness, our duty is plain and positive. It is up to us to decide whether we wish, or ever will wish, to ask God for forgiveness. If we decide that we may ever have occasion to ask God to forgive us, we certainly will have to forgive our brother before we have any right, or any hope, to ask and expect God to forgive us. And surely, regardless of how great and continued has been the sin against us, it is not worse than we have sinned against God. Since it is worse to sin against God than it is to sin against a human being, on account of the dignity of the person of God, we are as inexcusable for our lack of compassion as was the man in our lesson who was forgiven but refused to forgive.

Exposition of the Text

Peter's question about forgiveness. (Verses 21, 22.) *How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times?* Why Peter chose the number seven in this question is not known, but certainly he thought no more than that could be expected, and that the Lord could not criticize him if he was willing to forgive seven times. It is possible Peter had in mind Solomon's statement that "A righteous man falleth seven times, and riseth up again." (Prov. 24: 16); or a statement of Eliphaz, "He will deliver thee in six troubles; yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee." (Job 5:

19.) It may be that Peter did not know, or did not consider, the nature of repentance on the part of the one asking forgiveness. When one genuinely repents, he is in position and condition of heart to be forgiven; but until he does repent he is not to be forgiven even one time. Jesus said, "If thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he sin against thee seven times in the day, and seven times turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him." (Luke 17: 3, 4.)

Until seventy times seven. The margin says "seventy times and seven." But whichever is right, the number is large enough to indicate that there is no end to the act of forgiving. In the language of Jesus, as many times as a brother turns again and says that he repents, that many times he is to be forgiven. No doubt this astounded Peter, for there was no such teaching in the law of Moses; and this is just one of the many instances wherein Christianity is superior to the old covenant.

An example of forgiveness. (Verses 23-27.) *The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king.* The kingdom of heaven is said to be like a great many things. But it is not to be supposed that every characteristic of this king can be found in the kingdom of heaven. By this Jesus meant that there is something in the kingdom which is illustrated by the forgiving spirit of this king. By the term kingdom of heaven here is meant the church which he had in mind to establish.

Made a reckoning with his servants. In Matt. 25: 19 we read of a reckoning which represents the judgment on the last day, but this reckoning cannot be so understood. From that reckoning the servants went to their eternal reward, but from this one this servant went out and mistreated his fellow servant.

As he had not wherewith to pay. This man owed his master ten thousand talents. A talent of silver was worth about \$1600, so ten thousand talents would be about sixteen million dollars. If the talents are to be understood of gold, the amount would be several times that amount. The amount was made large enough to create the impression that there was no possibility of his being able to pay his debt. This teaches us the lesson that there is no possibility of our ever being able to atone for our sins; we can never merit the forgiveness of our sins.

The Lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and his children. This master was perfectly within his rights to collect what he could from the sale of these people to apply on the debt. Justice, unseasoned with mercy, demanded payment or suffer the consequences; and the master would not have been guilty of injustice had he sold them. Though he would not have been guilty of *injustice*, it could have been said that he had no *mercy*. So God could have destroyed man for his sin without injustice; he would have shown no mercy in doing so. His mercy is manifested in the gift of his Son to save man.

Have patience, and I will pay thee all. The servant worshiped him, not an act of divine worship, but such as may be shown to a creature; he prostrated himself in abject humility. He begged for time, perhaps thinking time would some way or another take care of all things. But if time had been extended, he would still have been in debt. "Reprieve is not pardon." He not only begged for time,

but he made a big promise—I will pay thee all. So there are people today who think they can by their honesty, purity of life, and kindness to the unfortunate make amends for their sins. They think surely God will not condemn an honest, upright moral man, even though he refuses to become a Christian. They put themselves in the place of saying I, not Christ, I, by my goodness, will pay thee all.

Being moved with compassion. The lord of this servant had a tender heart, one that could be touched with the weakness and helplessness of his servants. Compassion means, "Sorrow or pity excited by the distress or misfortunes of another." (Webster.) With his servant prostrate at his feet, begging for time and mercy, his sense of justice relaxed and mercy became the dominant force. Justice was seasoned with mercy.

Released him, and forgave the debt. By release is meant he was not kept in the hands of the law. The master had a right to turn him and his family over to the law for the collection of the debt. And since he had already "commanded him to be sold," it is reasonable to think he was in the custody of the sheriff. But the matter had not gone so far but that the master could have him released. And since the master was willing to forgive, the man owed nothing and could not be held by the law any longer. So when God pardons us the law no longer has any claim on us with reference to the sins forgiven.

Unwillingness to forgive and its consequence. (Verses 28-35.) **Found one of his fellow-servants.** The fact that this man was a fellow servant should have been enough to excite sympathy in the heart of this man, but it did not. He should have remembered how easy it was to get in debt, but how hard to repay.

Who owed him one hundred shillings. This amounted to about \$17 in our money, a very insignificant amount as compared to the amount forgiven the man who was trying to collect this small amount. And how many there are who freely ask God to forgive great sins, when they are not willing to allow some little unintentional slight, or social discourtesy, to pass without full and complete amends being made. Solomon said, "The discretion of a man maketh him slow to anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression." (Prov. 19: 11.) But there are many who refuse to pass over the slightest wrong.

Took him by the throat. The lord of this unmerciful man was kind; he did not lay hands upon him at all when he was unable to repay that great sum. This is another indication of the meanness of his spirit, and his unworthiness to be forgiven his debt. Though his fellow servant fell down and begged for mercy just like he had done, his ears were deaf to the cry of the humble. He cast him in prison. He took advantage of every provision of the law to get all he could.

His fellow-servants were exceeding sorry. This unmerciful servant was allowed to handle great sums of money, or he never could have got so far in debt. He undoubtedly had more than ordinary abilities and opportunities. Yet he was lacking in one quality that even the fellow servants of this unfortunate debtor had, and that was sympathy for their fellow man.

Shouldst not thou also have had mercy? This is the question the lord of this unmerciful servant asked him when he had put this debtor in prison. The fact that this man had received merciful treatment at the hands of his lord laid him under great and lasting obligation to deal mercifully with those about him and in debt to him. This is the heart of the lesson. Mercy is to be shown to those who show mercy, but to him who has shown no mercy, no mercy shall be shown. Those who have been forgiven much are obligated to forgive others, and to refuse to do so is to show a lack of gratitude and appreciation for the mercy shown them. It is to show their utter unworthiness of the mercy which has been shown them. Notice that the lord of this man called him a *wicked servant*. One does not have to be a thief or an adulterer to be wicked in the sight of the Lord; being unwilling to forgive people when they do you wrong and ask to be forgiven is enough to characterize one as wicked. Some who have been baptized, and have taken the Lord's Supper every Sunday for forty years may, in the day of judgment, hear their Lord call them *wicked servants* because they held a grudge against some one, and would not even speak, much less pray for that one.

Delivered him to the tormentors until he should pay all. Barnes suggests that this simply means the prison keepers, as "Torments were inflicted on criminals, not on debtors." He revoked his act of mercy, and treated this servant as if he had never been the object of his mercy. Does this not suggest that one can be forgiven through the mercy of God to become a Christian, and then on account of that one's unwillingness to forgive those who do him wrong God will reject him and deliver him over to torments?

So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you. This is the conclusion which Jesus drew from his parable. Though we have been forgiven of our sins and enjoyed the mercy of God for years, if we then refuse to forgive our brother of his wrong which he has done us, our heavenly Father will treat us like we have treated our fellow man—he will not forgive us. And as this lord delivered his debtor to the tormentors, so shall our heavenly Father do unto us because of our lack of mercy toward others.

If ye forgive not from your hearts. Notice the word *hearts*. Forgiveness must be from the heart; it must be sincere, and without reservation. Halfhearted forgiveness is not enough. If God is going to deal with us on the same basis that we deal with our fellow man, how careful we ought to be to forgive and encourage!

Topics for Discussion

1. Have you ever had occasion to forgive the same person seven times? How many times has God had occasion to forgive you? We should not tire of forgiving others before we tire of asking forgiveness of God.
2. Since God will treat us like we treat our fellow man, it is up to us to determine what kind of treatment we shall receive. What an incentive to me merciful!
3. How much change would there be in your community, church, home if this lesson should be applied by all concerned?

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What can you say about the need of forgiveness?

Why is forgiveness imperative?

How does God teach us to forgive?

Golden Text Explained

What is the meaning of real forgiveness?

Show how this lesson is taught in the story of the prodigal son.

What is to be our attitude toward the transgressor until he repents?

Show how God manifested this attitude toward us.

How will this proper attitude be helpful to us?

How necessary is it that we forgive others?

How do people often justify themselves for not forgiving?

Peter's Question About Forgiveness

How many times did Peter think we should forgive?

What scriptures may have suggested that number to him?

What did Jesus teach about forgiveness in Luke 17: 3, 4?

What is the meaning of seventy times seven?

An Example of Forgiveness

What is the kingdom of heaven? Why did Jesus say the kingdom of heaven is like a king?

Does the reckoning in this parable mean the last judgment?

How much did this servant owe his lord, and what does this suggest about our sins?

What does justice have a right to demand? How is it seasoned?

What promise did the servant make, and could he fulfill it?

Are there people today who act as if they can merit their salvation?

What is compassion, and what excited it on this occasion?

How did this lord's compassion manifest itself?

What is the value of a shilling?

How did this servant show his lack of mercy, sympathy, and kindness?

What attitude did the fellow servants have?

What obligated the servant to show mercy to his fellow servant?

Who may be termed as wicked in the judgment?

May one be the recipient of the mercy of God, and then be finally lost?

What is meant by forgiving from the heart?

What lessons did you get from the daily Bible reading?

What did you learn from the topics for discussion?

Lesson XII—March 20, 1949

THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

The Lesson Text

Matt. 25: 13-30

13 Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour.

14 For *it is as when a man, going into another country, called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.*

15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one; to each according to his several ability; and he went on his journey.

16 Straightway he that received the five talents went and traded with them, and made other five talents.

17 In like manner he also that *received* the two gained other two.

18 But he that received the one went away and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

19 Now after a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and maketh a reckoning with them.

20 And he that received the five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: lo, I have gained other five talents.

21 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

22 And he also that *received* the two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: lo, I have gained other two talents.

23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast

been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

24 And he also that had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou didst not sow, and gathering where thou didst not scatter;

25 And I was afraid, and went away and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, thou hast thine own.

26 But his lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I did not scatter;

27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received back mine own with interest.

28 Take ye away therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him that hath the ten talents.

29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away.

30 And cast ye out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord."* (Matt. 25: 21.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalms 97: 1-6.

Daily Bible Readings

March 14. M.....The Parable of the Pounds (Luke 19: 12-27)
 March 15. T.....The Parable of the Husbandmen (Luke 20: 9-18)
 March 16. W.....The Parable of the Unrighteous Steward (Luke 16: 1-13)
 March 17. Th.....The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree (Luke 13: 6-9)
 March 18. F.....The Parable of Laborers in the Vineyard (Matt. 20: 1-16)
 March 19. S.....The Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matt. 25: 1-13)
 March 20. S.....The Judgment of Faithful and Unfaithful (Matt. 25: 31-46)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Mount of Olives.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his disciples.

Introduction

At the time of our lesson, Jesus was in Jerusalem for the last time before his death. He talked about his departure from the disciples; he foretold the destruction of Jerusalem; and he told them about his return and the judgment to follow. The disciples were at a loss to understand most of these things. They asked him to tell them plainly about some of them. The twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters of Matthew are devoted to his answer to these questions, and to thoughts growing out of them.

The twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew is divided into three paragraphs. The first deals with the ten virgins, five of whom were wise in that they made all necessary preparations to meet the bridegroom. But the other five were careless and negligent about making their preparation until it was too late. And while they were gone to make the needed preparation the bridegroom came, went into the feast, and the door was shut. This teaches the blessedness of being ready at all times for the coming of the Lord, and the danger of a lack of personal preparedness for his coming.

The third paragraph of this chapter gives us a view of the last and great judgment in which all nations will be gathered for their rewards and punishments. As in the first two sections, so in this last, our Lord deals only with those who were his servants, and who should have been faithful to him in his service. The standard

of judgment is whether or not one has been faithful in doing the things which the servants of the Lord should do. Feeding the hungry, visiting the sick and needy, clothing the naked, and encouraging those in prison for the sake of the gospel, these things are not duties of the servants of the devil; they are duties of the servants of the Lord. Those servants who did such things are rewarded; while those who failed, regardless of the reason for failure, to do these things according to their ability were put on the left hand, and sent away into everlasting punishment. And in our lesson this matter of accepting responsibility and discharging it according to the ability the Lord gives us is fully developed.

Golden Text Explained

The Lord is pleased with their persons. 1. The Lord will call those servants *good* who have done his will while they lived on this earth. Their goodness consisted in a proper attitude toward their lord. The man with one talent looked upon his lord as a hard, grasping, and unsympathetic man who would deal unfairly and unmercifully with others. These looked upon their master as their owner and entitled to respect and faithful service. Their attitude was good.

2. He called them *faithful*. It is required of stewards that a man be found faithful. (1 Cor. 4: 2.) Faithfulness does not depend upon the amount of work a person can do. One may be just as faithful as another though he does but half as much good. The amount of ability has to be taken into consideration. But the Lord is pleased when people are faithful; when they make use of their time, energy, and ability in doing his will. If the one talent man had gained another talent, he would have been just as faithful as the other two men, though he actually gained only half as much as one, and only one fifth as much as the other. But that would have been as faithful use of what he had to begin with, so would have proved him just as faithful in the use of what he had as were the other men.

The Lord is pleased with their service. Concerning their service he said, "Well done." They had done their work well. A child fairly beams with satisfaction when his parent says he has done well. So the approval of our Lord will be the source of great satisfaction to us. Even now when we have sacrificed and worked hard to do his will and accomplish his purposes, the greatest source of satisfaction is not the praise of the brethren, but the assurance we have that our Lord is well pleased with what we have done.

Another indication that he was pleased with their service is found in these words, "Thou hast been faithful over a few things." They had been faithful in all their master had given them, but they were few compared with what he was going to do for them. So many of us have no time for the little things of life, not knowing that the man who is not humble enough to do little things is not big enough to do great things.

Rewards for all who please their Lord. 1. "I will set thee over many things." Of what our reward will consist we do not know. How we shall occupy our time and abilities in heaven we have no way of knowing, except it is said that we shall serve him, and shall reign forever. (Rev. 22: 3, 5.) But it is intended that we shall get the lesson that if we are faithful in the little expected of us here, we

will be entrusted with much more and much greater tilings to do for him in the world to come. Heaven is not going to be a place of idleness, but a place to serve.

2. "Enter thou into the joy of thy lord." This servant was rewarded by being told to enter into something he had not experienced before; he was to be allowed a place and a part in the festivities of the palace of his master. He was still a servant, but exalted to rare privileges. So we will still be servants of Christ, but we will be exalted servants, with the rare privilege of enjoying with him the glories of heaven. All that the omniscience of God can conceive, and all that the omnipotence of God can execute is being prepared for the delight of the faithful of this earth. These things are the joy of our Lord in that they are being prepared by him, and will be shared by him with us.

Exposition of the Text

Responsibilities Imposed. Going into another country. As this man went into another country, so Jesus went into heaven. And as these servants were supposed to do their work in the absence of their master, so the servants of Jesus serve him while in heaven. There is to be no service of this kind, saving the lost and caring for the poor, after he returns. Those expecting him to return here and reign a thousand years to give personal direction to this kind of work find no evidence of such program in this parable.

Called his own servants. This man had no right to use the servants of another man. So Jesus does not use the servants of the devil in his work; he is looking to his blood-bought servants to do his work.

Delivered unto them his goods. He placed money in their hands for their use while he was away. So Jesus places responsibility with each one of his servants. The word *talent* in this lesson does not mean *ability*, but *responsibility*, for the talents were given according to their ability. Ability is God-given, but the word *talent* here does not teach it.

To *one five talents, to another two, and to another one.* A talent of silver was a little more than \$1600. So he made one man responsible for the use of eight thousand dollars while he was gone; another he made responsible for three thousand two hundred; and one man was made responsible for only sixteen hundred. (1) It should be learned from this that the Lord knows our ability, and can make us responsible for that which we are able to do. (2) We should learn that God is good and fair with us, not demanding more of us than we are able to do. If this man had divided his money equally among these servants, he would not have dealt fairly with them. So if the Lord should demand the same of all of us, some would be expected to do more than they are able, while others could get by with doing less than they are actually able to do. (3) We should remember that it is human to minimize our ability to do church work in order to evade responsibility. Many people go through life telling themselves and others that they cannot do certain things needed to be done for the Lord; but the Lord knows all the time they are able and could do these things if they would make a reasonable effort. They may be rejected in the judgment for not trying. (4) We should learn that while the Lord will not demand more of us than we are able to do, he will not demand less than we are able to do. Since

it is human to minimize our ability, and since the Lord will demand of us all we are able to do, we must not allow our inclination to minimize our ability to keep us from doing all the Lord expects of us.

How these responsibilities were accepted. The men who had the two and five talents went immediately and traded with them and gained other two and five talents. They accepted the responsibility given them, and discharged it according to the ability they had. This parable is capable of abuse here in that we are liable to think those with much ability are more ready to accept responsibilities than those with little ability. But if Jesus had made the five talent man the unfaithful one in the parable, we would have had the same trouble. The amount of ability one has does not determine whether he will, or will not, accept responsibility. The man who received one talent digged in the earth and hid the money, and this is seen today when people evade responsibility, refusing to serve Jesus.

Accounting for our responsibilities. After a long time the lord cometh. Perhaps nothing is to be determined from this as to the time of the second coming of Christ, but those who think the apostles expected him to come in their lifetime would have a hard time reconciling this with their idea. That master returned for a reckoning, so our Lord will come next time for judgment, not to reign personally over his servants while they serve him in preaching the gospel.

I have gained other five talents. Handling the amount of money this man received was quite a responsibility. It was possible that he would be unwise in choosing a man to whom to lend the money, and would never be able to collect it. He might lend it to a good man, but unforeseen reverses might come, and all would be lost. If he could not collect the money, he would be put in prison until settlement was made. Herein was the responsibility. But this man had made good, and with joy and satisfaction he makes his report. And the man to whom two talents were entrusted made the same report, and was given the same words of approval. It is gratifying to know that we who have little ability in life may be rewarded equally as great as those who have much ability. The reward depends upon our faithfulness in the use of the ability we have. If we accept responsibility and discharge it faithfully, whether with little or much ability, we shall be rewarded for our faithfulness.

He that received the one talent came. (1) This man accuses his lord of being hard and unreasonable as a master. So there are people today who think Jesus is unreasonable in the demands he makes for us. Why have to go to church so much? Why have to give so much? Why have to deny ourselves of so much pleasures? It is a mean spirit in a servant to accuse his master, especially after the master has done as much as Jesus has done for us. (2) He excuses himself for not accepting responsibility. He said he was afraid. He feared he might not be able to collect the money if he lent it, so to be sure he would be able to give back as much as he received, he hid it in the earth. But his excuse did not relieve him of the responsibility. So people today excuse themselves from serving the Lord by saying they are afraid they will make mistakes; afraid they will do more harm than good; and a dozen others as foolish as these. But excuses do not take the place of faithful

service to the Lord. (3) He assured himself in the fact he had not wronged his master. He said, "Thou hast thine own." He had not stolen; he had not lost; he had not wasted. So there are people today going to the judgment with the assurance they have not wronged the Lord by breaking any of his positive commandments; they have not done things he forbade. But like this man, they forget that they have failed to do what he expected of them.

Rewards and punishments. In the Golden Text we have dealt with the rewards of the righteous, so no more will be said here. We now deal with the punishment of the unfaithful. (1) His master charged him with being wicked. And there may be two reasons for this. First, the accusation brought against the master is not necessarily true. And in the application of the lesson, those who accuse Jesus of being too hard and exacting are certainly making a false accusation. Jesus says, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light." And, next, he was wicked in that he had not accepted the responsibility his master laid upon him. It is true that he had not lost, stolen, or wasted any of the master's money, but it is also true that he had done nothing good for the master. And so people think they are going to be saved because they have done no harm as they go through life. They forget they have done no good; they have lived a "good for nothing" life. Heaven is a place to rest from the labors of this life, and those who have not worked will need no rest. The slothfulness of this man was enough to make him wicked in the sight of the Lord. (2) The master condemned this slothful servant. First, because he knew what to do and refused to do it. *Thou knewest I reap where I sowed not.* This might well be considered as a question, or at least a conditional statement. This is the sense, If thou knewest I reap where I sowed not, you are all the more responsible for not serving me. So he knew what to do, and he knew the master would expect him to do it. And there is greater punishment in store for all who know the Master's will and refuse to do it than there is for those who do not do his will because they do not know it. (Luke 12: 47, 48.) Second he was condemned because he did not even do the next best thing he could have done. If he was afraid to lend the money himself, he could have put it into the hands of a banker and let him lend it. Bankers were those men who borrowed money at a small rate of interest and lent it at a higher rate. (3) The master sentenced this servant. The talent was taken away from him; he was relieved of all responsibility, which was to say he was no longer a servant. His talent was given to the one who had ten talents, for to every one that hath shall be given. By this Jesus teaches that faithful improvement of what we have will entitle us to more and greater blessings, But from him that hath not shall be taken away that which he hath. By this Jesus taught that failure to use what we have will cause us to lose it. People lose their memory because they do not use it; they lose ability to study through neglect of study; and they lose a knowledge of God's word by failing to teach what they know. He not only lost his talent, but he was cast out from his master's presence. This teaches us that a blood-bought servant of Jesus who does not accept responsibilities, and does not do what he is able to do for the Lord, will be cast out in the day of judgment. Those who believe in the impossibility of apostasy have trouble with this passage. They must either prove that this man was never a servant of this master,

or that this reckoning was not final. But as surely as that master represents Jesus, and that servant represents a blood-bought servant of Jesus; and as surely as that master's return to reckon with his servants represents the second coming of Jesus to judge the world; and as surely as that servant was cast out for unfaithfulness, just that surely will unfaithful servants of Jesus be cast out of the presence of Jesus in the day of judgment. A lack of faithful service can send one to torment as surely, and for as long, as a murder and adultery. And in the next paragraph Jesus shows in what way people fail to serve, and the consequence of failure. (Verses 41-46.)

Topics for Discussion

1. How can we know that service for which the Lord makes us responsible? If he makes us responsible for what we are able, the question is easily answered.
2. Do people usually believe the excuses they make? How then can they expect other people, and especially the Lord, to accept them?
3. Is the day of judgment a time for the Lord to determine who shall be saved and who shall be lost? Or is it a time to reward the righteous and punish the wicked?

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of the lesson.

Introduction

What is the lesson taught in the first paragraph of this chapter?

What lesson taught in the third, and what the connection with our lesson?

Golden Text Explained

Why were these servants called good?

Why were they called faithful, and in what does faithfulness consist?

What did the master say about their service?

What do you think of one who is too proud to do little things for the Lord?

What is meant by setting faithful servants over many things?

Do faithful servants cease to be servants at the judgment?

What is meant by the joy of our Lord?

Responsibilities Imposed

What evidence do we have that Jesus will remain in heaven until the work of redemption is all done?

Whom does Jesus use to carry on his work?

Does he use the servants of another?

What does the word talent mean in this lesson? Why?

What was the value of a talent?

What determined the number of talents each man received?

How is God's fairness to us demonstrated?

What are we prone to do to evade accepting responsibility?

Does the amount of ability we have determine whether we will be faithful?

Accounting for Responsibilities

What is suggested about the time of the return of the Lord?

Wherein lay the responsibility of these servants?

What were they expected to do?

How did the one talent man accuse his lord?

How did he excuse himself?

By what fact was he assured?

Make the application of these in our life.

Rewards and Punishments

On what grounds did the master accuse this servant of being wicked?

On what grounds did the master condemn his servant for slothfulness?

What was the sentence pronounced on this servant?

What is meant by giving to him that hath?

What is meant by taking from him that hath not?

What about the "impossibility of apostasy" in the light of this lesson?

What is the dominant note in the daily Bible readings?

What do you see of interest in the topics for discussion?

Lesson XIII—March 27, 1949

THE GREAT COMMISSION

The Lesson Text

Matt. 28: 16-20

16 But the eleven disciples went into Gal'i-lee, unto the mountain where Je'-sus had appointed them.

17 And when they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted.

18 And Je'-sus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth.

19 Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit;

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

Mark 16: 15, 16

15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation.

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.

Luke 24: 44-47

44 And he said unto them, These are my words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Mo'-ses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me.

45 Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the scriptures;

46 And he said unto them. Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day;

47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Je'-ru'-sa-lem.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusa-lem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1; 8b.)

Devotional HEADING.—Psalm 116: 1-9.

Daily Bible Readings

March 21. M.....The Limited Commission of the Twelve (Matt. 10: 1-15)
 March 22. T.....Limited Commission of the Seventy (Luke 10: 1-11)
 March 23. W.....Results Under the Great Commission (Acts 2: 36-42)
 March 24. T.....Opposition Met and Suffered (Acts 7: 54-60)
 March 25. F.....Gospel Preached in Samaria (Acts 8: 4-13)
 March 26. S.....First Gospel Preaching in Europe (Acts 16: 6-15)
 March 27. S.....The Gospel Preached in all Creation (Col. 1: 21-29)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACES.—Mountain in Galilee, and Mount of Olives.

PERSONS.—Jesus, the apostles, and all Christians.

Introduction

Jesus came to this world to establish a kingdom. But he had neither money nor a great army to buy or conquer territory, or to win subjects and levy taxes upon them for the perpetuation of his kingdom. But since his kingdom is not of this world, he did not need worldly means and methods to build and operate his kingdom. (John 18: 36.) He had no money, but he had a message; he had no guns, but he had a gospel with sufficient power to accomplish his purposes; he had no army, but he had a few faithful men who loved him more than they loved life, and they were willing to wander

over the face of the earth homeless and penniless to preach this gospel to every creature under heaven, and in turn get these to preach this same gospel to others until every soul of every nation of every generation had heard it. Yes, this was his plan, but the unfaithfulness of some this side of the apostles has impaired the effectiveness of the plan.

There are some who think that the Great Commission, being spoken to the apostles only, is not binding upon us today. Needless to say that people who hold this idea are not missionary minded; neither are they preaching the gospel around home enough to brag about. Jesus left his home to bring the gospel to us, and until we have gone farther to preach it to others than he came to bring it to us, we should not stop or complain. Paul left Asia to take the gospel to Europe; he wished to go to Spain (Rom. 15: 24, 28), and perhaps his desire was granted between two Roman imprisonments, and if he did, comparing modes of travel, he went farther than we would have to go today to take the gospel to the remotest bounds of the earth. Jesus said, "The field is the world." (Matt. 13: 38.) And until we have covered the world, we have not covered the field he gave us. If the apostles, without money and without modern means of travel, could cover the field in their generation, we are without excuse if we do not cover the field in our generation.

Golden Text Explained

Witnesses of Christ. Jesus said the apostles were to be his witnesses. And Christ appeared to Saul of Tarsus to make him a witness. Ananias said to Saul, "The God of our fathers hath appointed thee to know his will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear a voice from his mouth. For thou shalt be a witness for him unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard." (Acts 22: 14, 15.) And Jesus said to Saul, "To this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee." (Acts 26: 16.) The Greek word for witness is *martus*, and means, "*a witness* (one who avers, or can aver, what he himself has seen or heard or knows by any other means)." (Thayer.) There has been some argument about whether one can now be a witness for Christ, but this definition excludes the possibility since no one now can aver that he has either seen or heard Christ, or knows the facts of his life and death by any other means. That which we read in the Bible is our faith, and not our knowledge.

There is another suggestion in this word *martus*. From it we get our word *martyr*. "In the New Testament the original notion of a witness is exhibited in the special form of one who attests his belief in the gospel by personal suffering." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.) So Stephen is referred to by Paul, "And when the blood of Stephen thy witness was shed." (Acts 22: 20.) And Antipas is another martyr. (Rev. 2: 13b.) All the apostles, except John, died for their faith in the gospel, and he suffered much. While one did not have to die to be a *witness*, yet the witnesses for Christ both suffered and died, and so the word for witness was applied to them and we call them martyrs, the English form of the Greek word for witness.

Territory covered by witnesses. The gospel was to begin in Jerusalem. (Luke 24: 47.) The church had a very rapid growth in the city, due to the great number of people gathered for the Feast of Pentecost. Five thousand men became members the first two days, and after that great numbers were added. (Acts 6: 7.) How long the preachers of the gospel would have stayed in Jerusalem if the church had not been persecuted we have no way of knowing. But soon persecution came and the scattered disciples went everywhere preaching the gospel. (Acts 8: 4.) Then we have the record of the gospel going into Samaria, the division of Palestine just north of Judaea. And in the same chapter we learn that the gospel is preached to a man of Ethiopia far to the south. Though the preaching was not done far from Jerusalem, it may safely be assumed that that Ethiopian taught others the gospel he had obeyed, and so the church was established in an "uttermost part" of the then known world. And soon the gospel was preached to Cornelius, the first Gentile convert, in Caesarea. (Acts 10.) Though this was not far in miles from Jerusalem, it was the biggest step, the greatest departure, from Jewish attitudes and customs the church had yet taken.

About this time Saul of Tarsus, the persecutor, was converted and made a witness for Christ. After a few years of preaching and preparation for his life's work, he was introduced to the church at Antioch by Barnabas, and together they went into new territory, Asia Minor, with the gospel. On their second tour, after visiting the churches established on their first, they took the gospel into Europe for the first time. Peter is thought to have worked in Babylon. (1 Pet. 5: 13.) And tradition says other apostles went to various other nations with the gospel until it reached every nation under heaven.

Exposition of the Text

Commission Recorded by Matthew. The eleven disciples went into Galilee. This was by appointment which was made before his death (Matt. 26: 32), and through the women who first saw Jesus. (Matt. 28: 10.) And he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time. (1 Cor. 15: 6), and this is usually thought to have been in Galilee, though we cannot be certain.

They worshiped, some doubted. Their doubt is mentioned to show that they were men who required "infallible proofs" (Acts 1: 3), before they would accept him as resurrected. Their caution, their slowness to believe, and their willingness to die for their belief make them creditable witnesses in any court, and give a testimony to the resurrection which infidels have never been able to disprove or destroy.

All authority in heaven and on earth. There was a time when Moses was authority on earth (Matt. 23: 1, 2; Mark 1: 44), but his commission has expired and he is no longer an authority to bind and loose commandments upon us. The law came by Moses (John 1: 17) and was our tutor to bring us to Christ (Gal. 3: 24), but Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth (Rom. 10: 4), and we are no longer under the tutor. (Gal. 3: 25.)

Go, make disciples. The word here means to make one a learner, or follower, of Christ. So the apostles were to make followers of Christ of the nations. Nations as such cannot be followers of Christ;

but the individuals who make up the nations can. So a nation may be made a Christian nation only as individual citizens become Christian.

Baptizing them into the name. The word *baptizing* is a participle, and may be looked at as defining how disciples were made—that is, by baptizing them. One becomes a follower of Christ by being baptized into his name. To be baptized into the name of a person is to come by baptism into fellowship and communion with the person for whom the name stands. So we have fellowship and communion with the Father only when we have been baptized into the name of the Father; we have fellowship and communion with the Son only when we have been baptized into the name of the Son; and we have fellowship and communion with the Holy Spirit only when we have been baptized into the name of the Holy Spirit. The preposition *into* denotes a passing from without to within, a transition. So *baptism into the name* means to come from without to within this fellowship and communion. The King James Version uses the word *in* instead of *into*, but the latter is much more faithful to the sense of the original.

Teaching them to observe all things. When people become disciples they are to be taught to observe all that Jesus commanded. There is no end to the program of teaching authorized and demanded by this commission as long as people are imperfect either in knowledge or practice of the things Jesus wants them to do, and what he wants them to be. It should be remembered that our teaching is to consist of the things Jesus commanded, and not of our opinions; and hence our practice in work and worship is to consist of the same.

Lo, I am with you always. Jesus promised to be with the teachers of his commandments, even to the end of the world; but he has nowhere intimated that he would be with men who go beyond his teaching. (2 John 9.) Paul says we should learn not to go beyond what is written (1 Cor. 4: 6), and says the God of peace will be with us if we believe and do what we learn from him. (Phil. 4; 9.)

Commission recorded by Mark. Go ye into all the world. Was this intended for the apostles, but not for us, and for every generation? If the apostles were to teach the baptized all that Jesus commanded them, it follows that the apostles taught the baptized to go into all the world with the gospel, for that is one thing Jesus commanded them.

Preach the gospel to the whole creation. Every creature is entitled to hear the gospel. Paul said he was a debtor both to the Greeks and the barbarians, to the wise and the foolish. (Rom. 1: 14.) We are debtors to the white, black, red, and yellow people, to preach the gospel without distinction. This does not argue social equality and the mixing of the races by intermarriage, but it does mean equal spiritual privileges in Christ.

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. He who believes the gospel as preached by the apostles, and is baptized, immersed in water, in obedience to its commandments, shall be saved from sin. The religious world has fought this verse with a fierceness and tenacity worthy of a better cause. They have joined the infidel world in saying this portion of this chapter has been added by a later writer, and that it is not inspired. There are three old Greek

manuscripts, two of which do not contain this portion from verses 9-20. But one of the three does contain it all as it is in our Bibles. Since it is in one is it not more likely that it was lost from the others then added to this one? There are three things to notice:

1. Believe, 2. Baptize, 3. Saved. The religious world turns them around and gets: 1. Believe, 2. Saved, 3. Baptize. Here is an illustration: He that soweth and reapeth shall have bread. Now, do this like some do this verse and we have: He that soweth shall have bread and then may reap if he chooses.

He that disbelieveth shall be condemned. Faith and baptism are necessary to save a person, but disbelief is enough to condemn one. (John 3: 18, 36.) Even the baptizing of a disbeliever would be of no avail. The gospel is God's power to save the believer; God has no power to save the disbeliever.

Notice that the gospel is addressed to people who are capable of belief and obedience. Infants and people who have not the right exercise of their minds, are not gospel subjects. They are safe; they do not need saving. People incapable of sin are not lost on account of sin, and therefore do not need saving from their sins.

Commission recorded by Luke. All things must needs be fulfilled. Jesus had spoken to his apostles of many of these things while he was with them—the things written in Moses and the prophets and the Psalms. Three divisions are mentioned. The first five books of the Old Testament were written by Moses; the prophets "comprehended the books of Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, which were called the *former prophets*; and Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the twelve smaller books from Daniel to Malachi, which were called the *latter prophets*. The Psalms . . . comprehended the Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Songs of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Ezra, and Nehemiah, and the two books of Chronicles." (Barnes.)

Then opened he their minds. He did for the apostles the same thing he did for the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, "And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." (Luke 24: 27.) And they spoke of it as opening the scriptures. (Verse 32.) And the Lord opened the heart of Lydia by the preaching of Paul. (Acts 16: 14b.)

That the Christ should suffer and rise. Isaiah 53 foretells the sufferings of Christ, and Psalm 16: 8-11 speaks of his resurrection, according to Peter. (Acts 2: 25-31.) And the fact that the gospel was to go to all the nations was included in the promise of Christ as the seed of Abraham. (Gen. 12: 3; 22: 18; Acts 3: 25, 26.) And Isaiah 2: 1-4 may be referred to here as the prophecy of the church beginning in Jerusalem and being for all nations.

Repentance and remission of sins in his name. This is still a part of what the scriptures foretold. On condition that people would turn from sin they might have remission of their sins. And this was to be preached in the name of Christ for the first time in Jerusalem. Repentance had been preached for ages past. Jonah preached it to Nineveh, and John the Baptist preached repentance to the Jews. But neither of them preached repentance as a condition of salvation *in the name of Christ*. Jesus and his apostles preached that men should repent, but it was not preached in the

name of Christ during his ministry. Only after the death of Jesus and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost to guide the apostles into all the truth did they preach repentance as a condition of salvation in the name of Christ. (Acts 2.)

It should be said that in neither of the three records of the Great Commission do we have all the conditions of salvation mentioned. But putting the three together we have, (1) preaching the gospel; (2) belief of the gospel; (3) repentance, turning from sin; (4) baptism into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; (5) salvation from sin. Confession of our faith in Christ is not mentioned in either record of the commission, but from Acts 8: 36-38 and Rom. 10: 9, 10 we learn that it is a condition of salvation, and it is to be done before we have any authority to baptize a person.

That the work of John the Baptist could not be the work foretold is seen by the fact that he did not begin in Jerusalem, he did not preach in the name of Christ, and his preaching was to Israel and not to all nations. That the work of Christ in his personal ministry is not the fulfillment of these prophecies is evident, for he did not begin his work in Jerusalem, but in Galilee, and his work was limited to Israel, and not to all the nations. Only the preaching of the apostles on Pentecost can meet all the requirements. (1) They began in Jerusalem; (2) they preached a gospel for all nations' (Acts 2: 39); (3) they preached repentance and remission of sins in the name of Christ. (Acts 2: 38.)

Topics for Discussion

1. If the world is lost in sin, and if the gospel is the power to save the world, and if we love lost souls as much as we should, in what should we be engaged?
2. The simplicity of the gospel, and the fact that it is within the power of the poorest of earth to obey are proofs of its divine origin.
3. The missionless church is not a church of Christ.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of the lesson.

Introduction

What was the purpose of our Lord's coming into the world?

What kind of kingdom did he expect to establish, and how?

Is the Great Commission still in force? Why?

Who gave us examples of going far to preach the gospel?

Golden Text Explained

What is the meaning of the word witness?

What were the qualifications of a witness?

Where did we get our word martyr, and what is its meaning?

Where was the gospel to begin?

What can you say of the growth of the church?

Trace the spread of the church from Jerusalem to the uttermost part of the world.

Commission Recorded by Matthew

What appointment did Jesus leave with his apostles?

What was their attitude when they saw him in Galilee?

How much authority has Moses? and Christ?

Who is a disciple, and how is a disciple made?

What is meant by being baptized into the name of a person?

From this text, how would you prove the importance of baptism?

What are disciples to be taught?

What promise does Jesus make to those who teach the truth?

What is the penalty for going beyond the teaching of Christ?

Commission Recorded by Mark

How can you prove the commission applies to us as to the apostles?

Is one race any more entitled to the gospel than another?

According to Mark, what are the conditions of salvation?

What fight has been made against this passage of scripture?

Can you illustrate the teaching of the verse?

What is the sole condition of condemnation?

Are infants gospel subjects of baptism? Why?

Commission Recorded by Luke

What division is made of the Old Testament?

How did Jesus open their minds?

What incidents in the life of Christ were foretold?

Had repentance and remission of sins been preached before Christ?

Where were these first preached in the name of Christ?

Do either of the records give all the conditions of salvation?

What is the sum of all three records as what one must do to be saved?

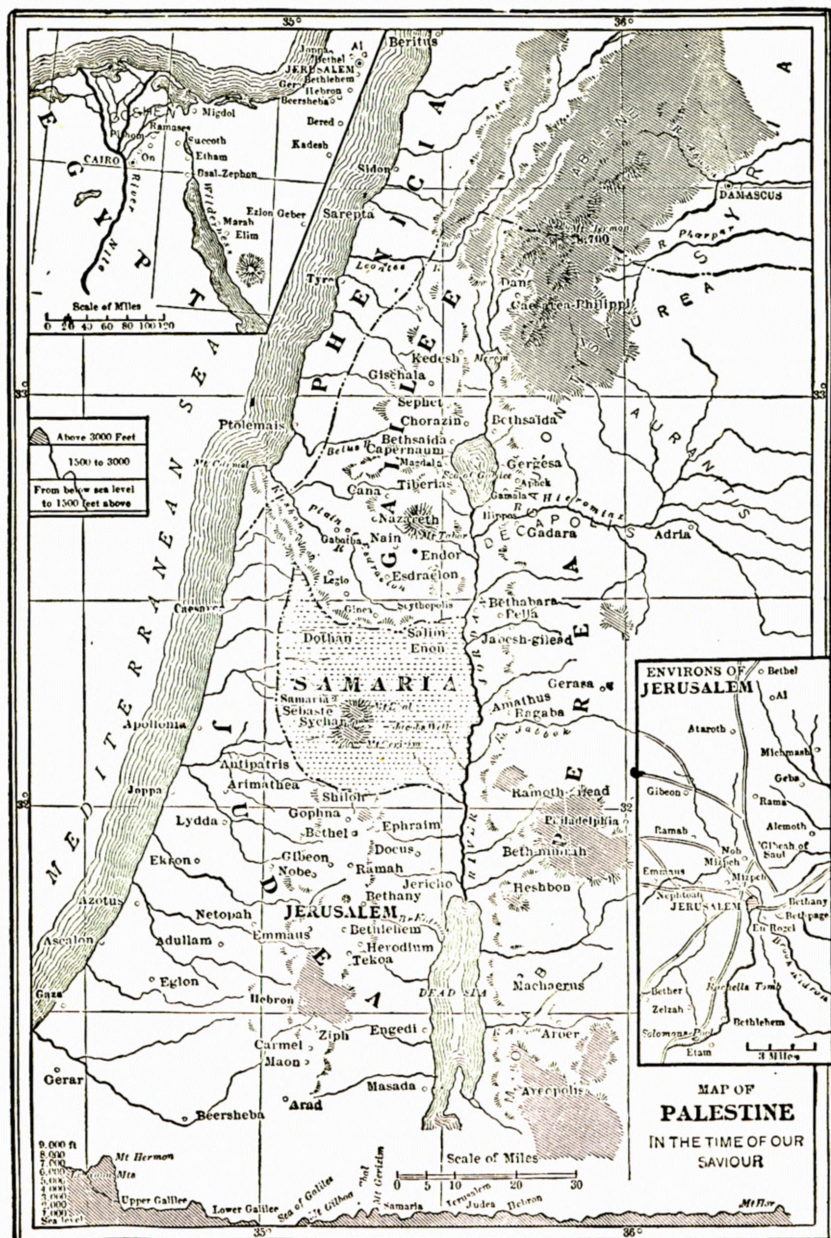
Is there any other condition of salvation? What?

Can you show that the work of John the Baptist is not the work mentioned here?

Can you show that the work of Jesus during his personal ministry is not mentioned here?

What lesson did you get from the daily Bible readings?

Did you get a helpful thought from topics for discussion?



SECOND QUARTER

STUDIES IN MARK

AIM.—To lead the student to appreciate how Jesus in his life and teachings emphasized service to all men; to lead the pupils to discover the grace and power of the Son of God; and to give their lives fully to him in diligent service on behalf of others and thus help to build a new world in accordance with the ideals of our Lord.

Lesson I—April 3, 1949

MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

The Lesson Text

Mark 1: 1-11

- 1 The beginning of the gospel of Je'-sus Christ, the Son of God.
- 2 Even as it is written in I-sa'-iah the prophet, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, Who shall prepare thy way;
- 3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ye ready the way of the Lord, Make his paths straight;
- 4 John came, who baptized in the wilderness and preached the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins.
- 5 And there went out unto him all the country of Ju-dae'-a, and all they of Je'-ru'-sa-lem; and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.
- 6 And John was clothed with camel's hair, and had a leathern girdle about his loins, and did eat locusts and wild honey.
- 7 And he preached, saying, There cometh after me he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.
- 8 I baptized you in water; but he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit.
- 9 And it came to pass in those days, that Je'-sus came from Naz'-a-reth of Gal'-i-lee, and was baptized of John in the Jordan.
- 10 And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him:
- 11 And a voice came out of the heavens, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."* (Matt. 3: 2.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 40; 3-11.

Daily Bible Readings

- March 28. M..... The Work of John the Baptist Foretold (Mal. 3: 1-6)
 March 29. T..... Matthew's Account of John's Work (Matt. 3: 1-12)
 March 30. W..... Luke's Account of John's Work (Luke 3: 1-14)
 March 31. T..... People in a State of Expectancy (Luke 3: 15-22)
 April 1. F..... What Jesus Thought of John (Luke 7: 24-35)
 April 2. S..... John Was the Elijah to Come (Matt. 11: 7-19)
 April 3. S..... Death of John the Baptist (Matt. 14: 1-12)

TIME.—John's work began A.D. 26; Jesus baptized A.D. 27.

PLACE.—Wilderness of Judaea, near the Jordan River.

PERSONS.—John the Baptist, Jesus, and the multitudes.

Introduction

It is generally conceded by scholars that Mark was first to write an account of the life, labors, and death of our Lord. The date of his writing is not known, but is now supposed to be around A.D. 55. Mark's account is called the gospel of action because he gives so

much space to a recital of the deeds of Jesus, and so little to sermons. The discourses and parables recorded are much briefer in Mark than in the other gospel records. It was written for Gentiles, so many explanations of Jewish customs and expressions are made which would have been wholly unnecessary if he had been writing for Jews.

Though Mark was written with Gentile readers in mind, and Matthew's record was written for Jewish readers, there is no comfort in this for the critic who says that Matthew's record represents Christianity in its first stage, Luke's account represents the Pauline idea of Christianity, and that Mark's account "occupies an intermediate position, marking the transition from one to the other." And if Mark's account was written before Matthew was written, of course this idea of Christianity gradually growing from strict Jewish conceptions to Pauline conceptions in Luke is without foundation.

Golden Text Explained

A call to repentance. John's message was one of repentance; the baptism he administered was a baptism of repentance; and his whole life was spent in leading backslidden Israel to turn from sin back to God so they might be ready for the coming of Christ to establish his reign in the hearts of his people. This is a sad commentary on the life of the Jews, and upon the quality of teaching and leadership of that day. They were in such a poor backsliding condition spiritually that a special work of preparation had to be inaugurated by John and carried on by Jesus and his disciples for four years before enough people could be made ready for the establishment of his reign on earth.

The word *repent* means a change of mind with reference to God. It is not godly sorrow, for that is the thing which works repentance. (2 Cor. 7: 10.) Some think repentance is reformation, or change of life, but this is the result of repentance. So repentance is that change of mind between godly sorrow and reformation. There are two Greek words translated by our word repent. This one used here is one, and the other means sorrow or regret that sin has been committed and detected. In this sense Judas repented that he had betrayed Jesus. (Matt. 27: 3.) John called the people to a repentance caused by godly sorrow, and that issued in a reformation of life.

Inducement to repentance. As an inducement to the people to repent of their sins, John said, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. The Jews had been looking for, and expecting, the time to come when the Messiah would take over, deliver them from the rule of Rome, destroy all their enemies and set up his kingdom and give them the places of honor in the kingdom. But this idea of the kingdom was wholly false, and was as degrading spiritually as it was false. Why should people have to repent to be ready for the establishment of that sort of kingdom? So the fact that John called on them to repent, turn back to God, was an indication that their conception of the kingdom was wrong. Yet so great was their desire for their Messiah and the kingdom he would establish, the promise of such was an inducement to them to repent.

The expression *at hand* means *near, impending, to be expected immediately*. This emphasized the urgency of the matter; this suggested that they repent at once, without delay. So the people flocked

to the Jordan in the wilderness to hear his message and be baptized into repentance. (Matt. 3: 11.) To baptize into (unto) repentance, was to baptize them into that repentant state, a state or condition of preparedness for the kingdom to come.

The goodness of God leads men to repent. (Rom. 2: 4.) It was a signal manifestation of the goodness of God to that generation that he was fulfilling his promise to send the Messiah and establish his kingdom. Hence John was appealing to them to repent on account of God's goodness to them.

But a kingdom exists not only to bestow benefits upon its worthy citizens, it also administers punishment to those who are unworthy and disobedient. So the fact that the kingdom was about to be established for the punishment of all who rejected the king and would not allow him to rule over them, this fact was intended to be an inducement to the people to repent. And the fear of punishment is still a gospel means of bringing people to repentance. God is both good and severe. (Rom. 11: 22.) Hell is described in considerable detail for our consideration. It is intended to be a restraining force in our lives to keep us from sins we might otherwise commit. And there ought to be more "hell-fire-and-damnation" preaching to stop sinners and cause them to give consideration to the gospel.

Exposition of the Text

Prophecy concerning John's work. The beginning of the gospel. The word *beginning* here refers to the work of John the Baptist, which was the work of preparation. The statements from the prophets may be viewed as the gospel in prophecy. Peter refers to the day of Pentecost as the beginning. (Acts 11: 15.) He did not mean that it was the beginning of either prophecy or preparation, but Pentecost was the beginning of the actual operation of the kingdom. On that day the kingdom was established, the gospel in its fullness was preached for the first time, and the promise of blessings to the whole world regardless of race or nationality upon the same conditions was made by accredited witnesses and ambassadors of the king.

Even as it is written in Isaiah. In the King James Version the name of the prophet is not given. The first prophecy quoted is not from Isaiah, but from Malachi. The reader might get the idea from this statement that all the quotation is from Isaiah. In Mark's quotation the Father is the speaker, saying he will send his messenger before the face of Christ to prepare the way for him. In Malachi it reads, "Behold, I send my messenger." In this statement Christ is represented as the speaker, sending his own messenger, John.

The voice of one crying in the wilderness. John is represented as a voice in the wilderness, an uninhabited place, calling to those of the cities to make ready a way for the king to travel. "1. Fill up the valleys of neglected duties, the sins of omission, defects of prayer, of faith, of love, of work. 2. Bring down the mountains of pride, sin, selfishness, unbelief, worldliness, hypocrisy, wrongs against men. 3. Straighten out all crooked places, crooked dealings with others, crooked ways of sin, settle difficulties, confess sins. 4. Smooth the rough places, harshness of temper and manner, lack of courtesy,

coldness, faultfinding, which are the little foxes that spoil the vines." (Peloubet.)

John prepared the way for Jesus. John came. John was the son of Zacharias and Elisabeth. (Luke 1.) Zacharias was a priest. Elisabeth was barren. They had prayed that they might have a child. As Zacharias was ministering in the holy place an angel came to him and told him his supplication had been heard, and that Elisabeth was to bear him a son, and he was to call his name John. The angel said John would be great in the sight of the Lord, and that he would turn many from the ways of sin to the paths of righteousness. To give a son like this to the world is the greatest contribution parents can make to the world, and to God.

Who baptized in the wilderness. Why did John begin his work in the wilderness instead of Jerusalem? The Bible does not tell us in so many words the answer to this question, but there are several possible, or probable, reasons. (1) The class of people who would go out there would be composed mainly of those who were sincere. (2) He would not incur the animosity and opposition of the Jewish leaders so quickly. (3) The wilderness surrounding seems to have been more in harmony with the austerity of John's message and appearance than the city. (Matt. 11: 7-10.)

Preached baptism of repentance unto remission of sins. The *baptism of repentance* means that baptism pertaining to, or characteristic of, those who had repented. John refused to baptize people who had not repented. (Matt. 3: 7.) John's whole effort was to get people to turn from sin, and the number baptized by him was to be that number who had turned from sin. If he baptized some who had not turned from sin, there would be no difference between his group of people and those who had not been baptized.

Unto remission of sins. Much has been written on the meaning of these words. Debates have been conducted to determine the meaning. But the obvious meaning to one who is seeking truth is *to obtain forgiveness*. This same phrase is found in Acts 2: 38. Thayer translates it "to obtain forgiveness of sins." (Greek Lexicon, p. 94.) So John baptized people so that they might obtain forgiveness of their sins; and having obtained forgiveness of sins, they were ready for the coming of the Messiah and his kingdom.

They were baptized of him in the river Jordan. What does *in the river* mean? Some have tried to make it mean *in the vicinity of*. But again the obvious meaning is the truth; he was performing the rite in the river, and not on the banks of it. The meaning of the word baptize must not be overlooked. It is not enough to define the English word which is according to present day usage. What is the meaning of the word Mark used here? A great mistake was made when the Greek word was spelled out with English letters instead of translating it. If the Greek word had been translated we would have never had sprinkling or pouring. Thayer defines it, "To dip repeatedly, to immerge, submerge; 2. To cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water." Again. "Of John's baptism, that purificatory rite by which men on confessing their sins were bound to a spiritual reformation, obtained the pardon of their past sins and became qualified for the benefits of the Messiah's kingdom soon to be set up . . . 3. Of Christian baptism; this, according to the view of apostles, is a rite of sacred immersion, commanded

by Christ by which men . . . come into the fellowship of Christ and his church." (Greek Lexicon, pp. 94, 95.)

Confessing their sins. John baptized people who confessed that they were sinners, and who wished forgiveness of sins. The people who claim to administer the same baptism today will not baptize one who admits he is a sinner and wishes to be forgiven.

John was clothed in camel's hair. John's dress and food were in harmony with his surroundings and his work. If his dress did not appeal to the rich social groups of the day, he had nothing to lose if they shunned him and nothing to gain if they courted him.

And he preached. (1) He preached the preeminence of Christ—I am not worthy to unloose his shoe. (2) He preached the power of Christ—one mightier than I. (3) He preached the promises of Christ—he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit.

Jesus baptized and acknowledged. Jesus came from Nazareth. As John stayed in obscurity until time to begin his work, so Jesus grew up in a carpenter's shop in Nazareth of Galilee. He walked about sixty miles from his home to the place where John was baptizing.

Was baptized of John. There were three classes of people who submitted themselves to John for baptism. (1) Jesus, who was without sin. John hesitated to baptize him, saying he had need to be baptized of Jesus. (Matt. 3: 14.) John was baptizing people for the remission of sins; he regarded Jesus as a sinless person, therefore not in need of baptism. (2) Certain scribes and Pharisees who were self-righteous and unwilling to confess they were sinners. John flatly refused to baptize them. (3) The common people who confessed they were sinners, and who wished to be forgiven of their sins. These John baptized, but these the religious world today will not baptize. The only people John refused to baptize, those who claim they have no sins to be forgiven, are the only people the religious denominations will baptize today.

Coming up out of the water. The fact that Jesus *came up out of* the water argues that he must first have *gone down into* the water. This is not positive proof of immersion, for the act of going down into the water simply signifies that he walked down off the bank of the river to a position where he was surrounded by water. This is absolutely essential to immersion, but it is not at all necessary to sprinkling or pouring. In Acts 8: 38, 39 we have another example of going down into the water, baptism being performed, and coming up out of the water.

The Spirit as a dove descending upon him. This Spirit is the third person of the Godhead. Why this form of the dove was taken is not known. The dove is a symbol of harmlessness (Matt. 10: 16), and gentleness; it is among fowl life that the lamb is among animals. Luke says he "descended in a bodily form, as a dove." (Luke 3: 22.) But the purpose of the descent of the Spirit is stated by John as, "I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize in water, he said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, the same is he that baptizeth in the Holy Spirit. And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God." (John 1: 33, 34.)

Thou art my beloved Son. These are the words of the Father from heaven. Here we have the trinity present and each contributing a part on this occasion. The Son is baptized, the Spirit descends

upon him, and the Father speaks his approval. Yet there are some who deny there are three persons in the Godhead, saying there are simply three different manifestations of one person. At the stoning of Stephen we have the three present again. The Spirit was dwelling in Stephen, he looked into heaven and saw Jesus standing on the right hand of the Father. (Act 7: 55.)

In thee I am well pleased. The fact that the Father spoke these words at the baptism of Jesus is significant. Jesus said it behooved him to fulfill all righteousness, or to submit to all the righteous ordinances of God; and when he did so, the Father said he was well pleased. If the sinless Son of God had to submit to all the righteous outward ordinances of God to please his Father, how do sinful men expect to be pleasing to God in the judgment when they refuse to submit to baptism, a righteous ordinance of God today?

Topics for Discussion

1. Does the preaching of the gospel now stir people like John's preaching stirred the people? Why?

2. In the light of 1 John 1: 3-6, what must we conclude concerning those who refuse to be baptized?

3. If baptism is immersion in water, those who have not been immersed have not obeyed the gospel; if those who have not obeyed the gospel are lost (2 Thess. 1: 7-9), does it follow that those who have not been immersed are lost? And what should we who know the truth be doing about it?

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

What is the aim of the lessons of this quarter?

Introduction

Which gospel record was written first? At about what date?

What has Mark's record been called? Why?

Was it written for Jews or Gentiles?

Golden Text Explained

What was the heart of John's message?

What was John's main purpose in life?

What is the meaning of the word repent?

In what way did Judas repent?

What inducement did John give the people to repent?

What kind of kingdom were the people expecting?

What does the expression "at hand" mean?

What does the expression "baptize into repentance" mean?

What place does the preaching of hell-fire have in the gospel system?

Prophecy Concerning John's Work

To what does the "beginning of the gospel" refer?

What prophets foretold John's work?

What did the voice in the wilderness call upon people to do?

What do you know of John's background?

Why did John begin his work in the wilderness?

What does the expression "baptism of repentance" mean?

What does "unto remission of sins" mean?

Discuss the meaning of the word baptize as used in the New Testament.

Did John's subjects for baptism confess sins, or sinlessness?

What were John's dress and food? why?

What three classes of people came to John for baptism?

What is suggested by the fact that Jesus came up out of the water?

In what form did the Spirit descend upon Jesus?

Why did the Spirit come upon him at that time?

What proof do we have here of three persons in the Godhead?

In what words did the Father speak his approval?

What does this example of Jesus teach us about the importance and necessity of obeying gospel commandments and submitting to gospel ordinances?

What did you get from the daily Bible readings?

What thoughts are suggested in topics for discussion?

Lesson II—April 10, 1949

THE MINISTRY OF HEALING

The Lesson Text

Mark 2: 1-12

1 And when he entered again into Ca-per'-na-um after some days, it was noised that he was in the house.

2 And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room *for them*, no, not even about the door: and he spake the word unto them.

3 And they come, bringing unto him a man sick of the palsy, borne of four.

4 And when they could not come nigh unto him for the crowd, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed whereon the sick of the palsy lay.

5 And Je'-sus seeing their faith saith unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins are forgiven.

6 But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning: *n* their hearts,

7 Why doth this man thus speak? he blasphemeth: who can forgive sins but one, *even* God?

8 And straightway Je'-sus, perceiving in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, saith unto them, Why reason ye these things; *n* your hearts?

9 Which is easier, to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?

10 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins (he saith to the sick of the palsy),

11 I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house.

12 And he arose, and straightway took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

Golden Text.—“*Son, thy sins are forgiven.*” (Mark 2: 5b.)

Devotional Reading.—Psalms 32: 1-7,

Daily Bible Readings

- April 4. M..... Jesus Healed all Manner of Disease Matt. 4: 23-25)
 April 5. T..... Healing Diseases a Sign of the Messiah; Luke 7: 18-23)
 April 6. W..... One Man Healed on the Faith of Another (Luke 7: 2-10)
 April 7. T..... One Man Healed on Condition of Obedience (John 9: 1-12)
 April 8. F..... Signs Were to Accompany the Believers (Mark 16: 14-20)
 April 9. S..... Believers Must Have Apostolic Hands Laid On (Acts 8: 14-24)
 April 10. S..... Prayer of Faith Shall Save the Sick · James 5: 13-18)

TIME.—A.D. 28, May or June.

PLACE.—Capernaum.

PERSONS.—Jesus, palsied man, and the multitude.

Introduction

The ministry of healing was used very effectively by our Lord to gain the ears of the people, and to serve as proofs of his divinity. The enemies of Jesus tried to keep the common people from listening to him preach and teach. They said he had a demon; they said he was a companion of publicans and sinners; and they said he was a glutton and wine drinker. All of these accusations were made for the purpose of keeping the people from hearing him. But when Jesus performed such miracles as healing the sick and feeding thousands of hungry people on a few loaves and fishes, the people gathered about him in spite of the warnings and accusations of their leaders. Next, Jesus healed the sick to prove his divinity. When John sent his disciples to ask Jesus if he was the Messiah, or should

they look for another, Luke says, "In that hour he cured many of diseases and plagues and evil spirits; and on many that were blind he bestowed sight. And he answered and said unto them, Go and tell John the things which ye have seen and heard; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good tidings preached to them." (Luke 7: 21, 22.) This was our Lord's way of proving that he was the Messiah to come, and that they need not look for another.

It is said that Jesus began "both to do and to teach." (Acts 1: 1.) You will notice that the *doing* is mentioned first. When Jesus had served the people, they were ready to listen to him teach. The church must learn that lesson today. We have specialized in teaching the doctrine of Jesus. There is not a group of people on earth who can surpass us in that. But we have neglected to serve the community in which we teach. There are several groups of religious people, and some civic groups, who can do a better job of serving than we do. As a consequence of neglecting to serve, we have lost the ears of the people to a great extent. When we develop a program of service—when we make use of the ministry of service—we may expect to gain the attention of people to our message. This is illustrated in a small way many times when the church helps a poor family pay its rent, or feed and clothe its children. Soon the children are in Bible school, then the parents are seen in attendance, and then the parents and children, as they become of age, are baptized.

Golden Text Explained

An affectionate address. Jesus called this sick man, Son. It was a term denoting youth, yet he may have been in what we now term middle age. It was also an affectionate manner of address, at once assuring the man of the love, sympathy, and understanding of the speaker. The man was in sin, yet the Son of God against whom he had sinned is still willing to call him his son. From one point of view all are the sons of God. Paul said, We are the offspring of God. (Acts 17: 29.) He is the Father of our spirits. (Heb. 12: 9.) And in spite of the sins we have committed he is still willing to own us as his sons, and willing to forgive us. Though we may have gone into that far country and there wasted the physical and mental strength with which he endowed us, he is still anxious about us. He loved us enough to give his only begotten Son to die on Calvary for us, surely he loves us now enough to forgive us our sins and accept us into his house where blessings innumerable are to be had and enjoyed.

Our sins, not Adam's. Jesus said, Son, thy sins. He did not say, Son I forgive you of Adam's sins. Some believe we are born in sin, and that we are separated from God on account of the sin of Adam as the federal head of the human race. The prophet of old said, "Jehovah's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, so that he will not hear." (Isa. 59: 1, 2.) Paul said, "And you did he make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins." (Eph. 2: 1.) Again, "And you, being in time past alienated and enemies in your mind in your evil works." (Col. 1: 21.) These

and other passages, teach that men are separated from God, and become the enemies of God, through their own sins; no one was ever counted an enemy of God on account of the sin of Adam. We die physically because he sinned. (Rom. 5: 12ff.) The *consequence* of Adam's sin reaches down to us, but the *guilt* of his sin did not even reach to his first-born son.

Forgiveness of Sins in Christ. Jesus had the power even in life to forgive sins, for he was God, the Son of God. And he said to this man, Thy sins are forgiven. Some argue that no sin was ever forgiven until Jesus died on the cross. This man's sins were forgiven. It is right to say that no sin was ever *atoned for* until the death of Jesus, but it is not right to say that no sin was ever forgiven. Sins before the cross were forgiven in view of the atonement which *was to be made*; sins this side of the cross are forgiven in view of the atonement which *has been made*. (Rom. 3: 21-26.) All sins are forgiven in Christ, on account of his death. Forgiveness is made possible by the shedding of his blood. If he had not died, God could not forgive us of our sins; if it had not been in God's plan for him to die for sins, God could not have forgiven sins before his death. It is possible that the prophet referred to this when he spoke of a fountain opened in Jerusalem for sin, and that half should flow to the former sea, and half toward the hinder sea. (Zech. 13: 1; 14: 8.) Paul speaks of the passing over (forgiveness) of sins done aforetime. (Rom. 3: 25.) And the death of Christ showed God's righteousness in doing so.

Exposition of the Text

Faith manifested. Many were gathered together. This was during the time of the greatest popularity of Jesus among the people. They were following him to hear him and to see his miracles. And on this occasion the house was filled with uninvited and unannounced guests until there was no longer room for them to get in.

And he spake the word unto them. Jesus did not get out the card tables to provide entertainment for his visitors; he did not make them a speech filled with the latest jokes; nor did he discuss the political problems, the stock markets; he did not even review the latest book of the month production. He preached to them. *We* may think on this profitably. (1) Faith cooperates in a task too big for one. Four men, believing Jesus could do good to this man, took hold of the bed on which he lay and carried him. They did not stop to criticize each other, or to object to working with another in the party. They worked together to accomplish a desired end. We ought to be able to overlook little personal differences and work together for the good of men and the glory of God. (2) Faith overcame obstacles. When they could not get into the house at the door, they did not give up and go back home. They went upon the flat roof, tore a hole in it, and let the man down before Jesus. Many times we give up when hindered in our work, when it is possible that the hindrance was but a trial of our faith. (3) Faith was rewarded beyond their expectation. They took the man to Jesus to be healed of his palsy, but Jesus did something infinitely greater than that when he forgave him his sins. Why did the young man have the palsy? Of course we can never know, but there is the possibility that he had brought it upon himself by dissipation. To heal the man completely it was best to remove the cause of his trouble, so the forgiveness of

sins was in order. But whether this was the cause of his trouble or not, he was healed physically and spiritually. So Jesus has the power today, and is more than willing to exercise it, in doing for us more than we are able to think or imagine. (Eph. 3: 20.) But, like that man and the four who carried him, we must manifest our faith. A faith which is never manifested will never be rewarded. "Yea, a man will say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith apart from thy works, and I by my works will show thee my faith. . . . Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith." (James 2: 18, 24.)

Ministry of Jesus criticized. There were certain of the scribes. The scribes were the writers and teachers of the law. The popularity of Jesus had stirred their jealousy and opposition. So they were sitting around to find something to criticize. All good works are opposed until they become popular; and evil works are rarely opposed until they become unpopular.

He blasphemeth: who can forgive sins but one, God? To blaspheme was to speak evil of one, to speak or act as only God has a right; so to elevate one's self to the place of God is blasphemy. (Does not the Pope do this today?) If Jesus had been a mere man, he would have been guilty of what they accused him; he was acting and speaking as only God can do. But these scribes were not so much interested in whether or not Jesus was blaspheming God as they were interested in finding some way to hinder him in his work. His miracles were convincing the people that he was from God, and if convinced of that the people would believe his teaching. If they believed his teaching they would forsake the scribes and their schools. The scribes were due to lose control of the people if they could not find some way to stop Jesus. Their interest was personal. They were not so much concerned for the glory of God and the defense of God's name and God's way of life. The defenders of orthodoxy today are liable to become guilty of this same sin. False doctrines and unscriptural practices are to be exposed, but if the critics of heterodoxy do not practice orthodoxy, their influence is weakened and their motives are likely to be suspected of being slightly ulterior.

Jesus Defends His Ministry. Why reason ye these things in your hearts? The fact that Jesus knew they were reasoning these things in their hearts is evidence of his divinity. This was the first act on his part to defend himself and his ministry on this occasion. He intended that they should respect him as one who searches the hearts of men, and knows what they are thinking. Knowing the Old Testament scriptures as they did, they would recall that God said, "I, Jehovah, search the mind, I try the heart, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings." (Jer. 17: 10.) They would remember that David prayed, "Examine me, O Jehovah, and prove me; try my heart and my mind." (Psalm 26: 2.) They had said, Only God can forgive sins. Now Jesus did something else that only God can do. It was to serve as a rebuke and a warning to them; it must have made a great impression on them.

Which is easier to say? Jesus did not ask which is *easier to do*, but *easier to say*. The comparison is not between the power, or authority, to forgive sins and the power to heal the man. It took no more power to do one than it did to do the other. But his thought was, Which is easier to say and get by with it? It is obvious that it

was much easier to say. Thy sins be forgiven than it was to say, Pick up thy bed and walk. He could say the former and no one would be able to prove whether it was done or not. They could not see whether sins were forgiven. But if he said, Take up thy bed and walk, the people could all see whether that was done or not. There are fake healers going around today claiming to heal all sorts of diseases, except those we can determine with the eye whether they are healed. They can heal(?) stomach trouble, headaches, and disorders of the liver. But they do not give you a good eye for the glass eye you bought; they do not give you good natural teeth in the place of the set you got from the dentist; nor do they ever heal a broken arm or leg. We may put this same question, Which is easier to say, Thy stomach trouble be cured, or to say, Thy false teeth be replaced with natural teeth? Obviously the former is easier for them to say, for no one can prove, or demonstrate, their failure. But if they try the latter every one can see their failure, and they would be exposed and silenced.

But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth. With the courage of one who knew what he was doing, and who knew his power, Jesus boldly accepted the challenge and proposed to say that which was harder to say. He was ever and always the master of every situation in which we find him. He was never at a loss as to what to do or to say. He was never confused by his enemies. They were never able to make a surprise move to catch him off guard. Being divine and knowing their hearts he always anticipated them and handled them with more ease than a mature person can handle a child.

Jesus performed this miracle of healing to prove that he had divine power. He said expressly and positively that he did it for that very reason. Yet if a pretender at healing today is asked to perform a miracle to prove that he can do such things, he will say that such would be putting God on trial, and such would be a sin. Surely Jesus would not do a thing that is sinful. Yet he performed this miracle of healing to prove he had divine power to forgive sins.

Take up thy bed, and go unto thy house. Beds of the common people were not like the ordinary beds seen in homes today. They were what we call pallets, which might easily be rolled and carried under the arm, or on the head, according to eastern customs.

Another thing in connection with men who pretend to heal by the power of God is the purpose for which miracles were performed. Jesus used his powers to heal to get the people to listen to his teaching, and believe what he taught them. Miracles were to confirm the truth taught. The apostles were given power to heal so they could prove that God was with them. (Mark 16: 19, 20; Heb. 2: 3, 4.) When God gave a man the power to heal, he showed by that act that he approved of what the man taught. If men can heal diseases today that very act is proof that God approves of what they are teaching the people. All one has to do with any and all who pretend to heal is to compare what they teach with the Bible and see that they are teaching false doctrines. Since they teach things contrary to Bible teaching, if God gives them the power to heal, he is confirming a false doctrine. God will not, he cannot, confirm a false doctrine. Therefore the pretended miracles of all healers (?) who teach things contrary to the teaching of God are fakes. God

will not give a man power to work a miracle to confirm a false doctrine he is teaching.

They were all amazed, and glorified God. The people were deeply impressed, and gave God the glory. The purposes of Jesus had been accomplished. He had served humanity, and he had glorified God in that service. These are the motives which should move us to serve him now. It should be a great joy to us to help others, and we should not let a day go by without doing something for others. It should be our highest joy to glorify God, and we certainly should not let a day go by without doing something for the glory of God. And when we have so served others that they will glorify God for what we have done, we have helped others, helped ourselves, and honored God. Man cannot spend an hour or a day to better advantage than in this way.

Topics for Discussion

1. Why could this man's sins be forgiven in this way, while we have to obey the commandments of the gospel in order to be forgiven?
2. "Wherever this man went he would be pointed out as the one who had been restored and forgiven. He would be an example of what Jesus came to do for all. He would be a marked man, watched to see what change was made in his character and life." (Peloubet.) So the world watches us today to see if what Jesus does is worth while; if we show them by our life his service is worth while, they may be led to him.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

For what purpose did Jesus use the ministry of healing?

Why did the Jews oppose his ministry of healing?

What use can the church make of the ministry of service to others?

Golden Text Explained

How did Jesus show his love and sympathy for this man?

How has God shown his love for lost men of all ages since?

On account of whose sins are we alienated from God?

Distinguish between the consequence and the guilt of sin.

Were sins ever forgiven before the death of Christ?

Distinguish between atonement for sins and forgiveness of sins.

What makes it possible for God to forgive sins?

Faith Manifested

What suggests the popularity of Jesus at this time?

How did Jesus entertain the people who came to see him?

Discuss the cooperation of faith manifesting itself.

How did faith overcome obstacles?

Discuss the reward of faith when manifested.

Ministry of Jesus Criticized

What was the nature of the work of scribes?

Why were they listening to Jesus?

What charge did the scribes make concerning Jesus?

What is the meaning of blasphemy?

Why were the scribes inclined to oppose Jesus?

Jesus Defends His Ministry

What was Jesus' first act of defense?

What does the Bible teach about searching the heart?

Discuss the meaning of the question of Jesus in verse 9.

What can you say of the manner in which Jesus handled his critics?

Why did Jesus heal this man?

What is the purpose of miracles in the New Testament?

How can we determine whether a man is a real or a fake healer?

What effect did this miracle have on the people?

What did you learn from the daily Bible readings?

What is there of interest in topics for discussion?

Lesson III—April 17, 1949

JESUS AND THE SABBATH

The Lesson Text

Mark 2: 23-28

23 And it came to pass, that he was going on the sabbath day through the grainfields; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears.

24 And the Phar-i-sees said unto him. Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful?

25 And he said unto them, Did ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was hungry, he, and they that were with him?

26 How he entered into the house of God when A-bi'-a-thar was high priest, and ate the shewbread, which it is not lawful to eat save for the priests, and gave also to them that were with him?

27 And he said unto them. The sabbath was made for man. and not man for the sabbath:

28 So that the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath.

Col. 2: 14-16

14 Having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross;

15 Having, despoiled the principalities and the powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a sabbath day.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"For the Son of man is lord of the sabbath."*
(Matt. 12: 8.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Mark 2: 15-22.

Daily Bible Readings

April 11. M. God Rested on the Seventh Day (Gen. 1: 1-5)
 April 12. T. Jews Required to Keep Sabbath Holy (Ex. 20: 8-11)
 April 13. W. Death Penalty for Breaking Sabbath (Num. 15: 32-36)
 April 14. T. Sabbath a Sign Between God and Jews (Isa. 58: 13-14)
 April 15. F. Sabbath Made Known to Jews at Sinai (Neh. 9: 9-15)
 April 16. S. Covenant Given at Sinai Taken Away (Heb. 8: 6-13)
 April 17. S. Those who Keep Old Law Fallen from Grace (Gal. 3: 10-12)

TIME.—A.D. 28.

PLACE.—Capernaum.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, and the Jews.

Introduction

The Jews had many traditions with respect to the Sabbath and the manner in which it should be kept. They did not allow the lighting of candles on the day. They made it unlawful to throw more grain to their poultry than could be eaten lest some of it might sprout and grow and thus they would be guilty of sowing on the Sabbath. To them it was unlawful to swat a fly on that day. Jesus did not consider it necessary to observe all these needless and trivial regulations, even though it brought criticism of himself and his disciples on numerous occasions. It is possible that he got more criticism from the Jews concerning his attitude toward, and his action on, the Sabbath than he got on any other one matter. It is worth while to list some of them for added information on this lesson.

1. Mark 3: 1-6, he was criticized for healing a withered arm on the Sabbath, and he replied that it was lawful to do good on the Sabbath.

2. Luke 4: 33-39, Jesus drove a demon out of a man in the synagogue, and then went home with Peter and healed his wife's mother.

3. John 5: 5-18, we learn that Jesus healed a man who had been on his bed for thirty-eight years, and told him to take up his bed and walk. The man was criticized for carrying his bed, and when he told them Jesus healed him, the Jews persecuted Jesus.

4. John 9: 1-14, it is said that Jesus made clay, anointed a man's eyes, and told him to go, wash in the pool of Siloam.

5. Luke 13: 10-17, we read that he healed a woman who had been "bowed together" by an infirmity for eighteen years. When criticized by the ruler of the synagogue, Jesus called him a hypocrite who would loose his ox on the Sabbath to give it water, but did not want a woman whom Satan had bound to be loosed on the Sabbath.

We are still tradition bound in some respects, and it is well to be able to know what the Lord requires, and where the traditions of men begin; we ought to be able to distinguish between the law and tradition, hold to the former and reject the latter.

Golden Text Explained

Consider His person. Jesus on this occasion, as on others (John 3: 14), calls himself the Son of man. It is interesting to note that neither of the gospel writers calls Jesus Son of man, but they do record the fact that he called himself Son of man. The title is used in Dan. 7: 13 with reference to the Messiah. It denotes the humanity of our Lord, but not necessarily his humiliation, for Stephen said he saw the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. See also Rev. 1: 13 and 14: 14 for use of Jesus in his exaltation.

There are two interesting uses of the term in connection with the title Son of God worthy of our notice. Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" They gave him the various things people had said about him, and then he put the question to them. Peter replied, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The Son of man is the Son of God. This use of the two titles emphasizes the dignity of his person. And again when Jesus was on trial before the Jews, the high priest put him under oath, and asked if he was the Christ, the Son of God. (Matt. 26: 63, 64.) Jesus answered and confessed that he was the Son of God. Then he added, "Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." This he said to keep them from thinking that he claimed only to be the Son of God. He wished them to remember that he was both Son of man and Son of God. His divinity lent dignity to his humanity, and for that reason he could well say that the Son of man is the lord of the Sabbath.

Consider his authority. Jesus came clothed with the authority of heaven and had the endorsement of the Father in all things he did. He said to the Jews, "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself, but as the Father taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent

me is with me; he hath not left me alone; for I do always the things that are pleasing to him." (John 8: 28, 29.)

The Son of man had authority on earth to forgive sins. (Mark 2: 10.) The Father gave him authority to execute judgment because he is Son of man. (John 5: 27.) It is the Son of man who shall send forth the angels to gather out of his kingdom all that offend. (Matt. 13: 41.) It is the Son of man who shall come in the glory of his Father to separate the righteous from the wicked, execute the wrath of God upon the wicked, and take the good with him into eternal glory. (Matt. 25: 31-46.) And it is the Son of man who is our mediator, himself man, interceding at the right hand of God for us.

(1 Tim. 2: 5.) Surely this person had the right to claim that he was lord of the Sabbath, so had the right to interpret the laws regulating the actions of his disciples on that day.

Consider His work. When Jesus was accused of blasphemy, he said to the Jews, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do them, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father." (John 10: 37, 38.) His works were of such nature as to prove the presence of the Father. (John 3: 2.) If the Father was with him and in him, surely he had the right to understand the nature of the Sabbath and its purpose, as well as the law regulating its observance. For this reason he was lord, or master, of the Sabbath, and was to be expected to make the right use of it.

Exposition of the Text

What Jesus taught on the Sabbath. (Mark 2: 23-28.) *His disciples began to pluck the ears.* The King James Version uses the word corn in this connection, which word was the English term for all small grains in the time of James, King of England. Corn as we know it was not known in England at that time. The grain here was probably barley.

Why do they on the Sabbath day that which is not lawful? Luke says the disciples were rubbing the heads of grain in their hands to separate the grain from the chaff. Either the pulling the grain or the rubbing the grain in their hands was considered a violation of the tradition of the elders concerning the Sabbath. The taking of grain to eat was in harmony with the law of Moses, provided they did not take more than they could eat at that time (Deut. 23: 24, 25), but taking it on the Sabbath and separating the grain from the chaff was what the Jews criticized.

Did ye never read what David did? In Matt. 12: 1-8 we have a fuller account of this same incident, and in that passage Jesus asked this question, *Have ye not read?* twice, and one time says, *If ye had known.* A lot of the trouble in the religious world today comes from not having read what the Lord says about matters. On another occasion when the Jews thought they had Jesus trapped on a question, he told them, "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God." (Matt. 22: 29.) Brethren often make trouble in the church because they do not know the teaching of the Lord on matters. It behooves us to study the Bible daily and diligently that we may know what is the will of the Lord so that we will not make errors on account of our ignorance. If these Jews had read their

scriptures with an understanding heart they would not have criticized the disciples on this occasion.

When he had need, and was hungry. In 1 Sam. 21: 1-6 we have the story of how David, fleeing from Saul, came to the high priest and asked for food. The high priest told him he had no bread except the holy bread, the showbread, which it was unlawful for any except the priests to eat. On the condition that David and his men had kept themselves free from women for at least three days, the high priest gave David the bread for food. So David did that which ordinarily was a sin to do, but on account of the urgency of the occasion, and his great need for food, it was not sinful for him to eat it. So the disciples of Jesus had need for food. Jesus was not saying there was no more wrong in what they did than there was in what David did. People often try to justify themselves in a wrong by saying it is no worse than something else. Young people often say there is not as much harm in dancing in the parlor at home as there is in "necking" in a parked automobile. But this does not justify the dancing in the parlor. Jesus was showing that the need of David and his men was such that it set aside the regulation concerning the eating of holy bread. And since the Jews understood and allowed that in David's case, they ought to consider the need of his disciples on this occasion such as would set aside their regulation concerning the Sabbath.

When Abiathar was high priest. But the record in 1 Sam. says Ahimelech was the high priest. This may be explained in either of two ways. (1) Abiathar was high priest for a long time during David's reign, and the mention of David and a high priest in connection with him would very naturally bring him to mind instead of his father. (2) Since Abiathar was the son of Ahimelech, he was heir to the office, and was associated with his father in the work. And it was not uncommon to speak of the son of an aged high priest as actually being the high priest since he did most of the work connected with the office.

The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. This relates back to the argument concerning the need of man. Since the Sabbath was made for man, the laws regulating the observance of the day were not to be interpreted in such way as to make man a slave of the day. They were not to be interpreted so as to work harm to man for whom the day was made. Such interpretations would defeat the end and design of the Lord in making the day for man and giving it to him for his benefit. The interpretation which the Jews put upon it made man a greater slave to the day than were the beasts. They allowed it was lawful to get the ox out of the ditch, or to loose him and lead him to water on the day, they therefore ought to allow men to satisfy their hunger on the Sabbath.

Man was created first, and the Sabbath was made for his benefit. (1) He was to rest from physical labor, except that which was necessary for the comfort of animal life, and for carrying on the worship of God. (2) The Sabbath was for the good of man in that it was unlawful for a man to work his servants on the Sabbath. (Deut. 5: 14.) (3) The Sabbath was made for man's spiritual good. It gave man one day in seven to rest from physical labor that he might read the word of God, that he might visit the sick, and in other ways exercise himself unto godliness. One day of rest each

week from physical labor is still good for man; it is good for him both physically and spiritually, if he will rightly use the day. Too many use the Lord's day for such physical activities that they get no rest for the body. And being so busy at such play, they have neither time nor inclination to meditate upon the spiritual things which feed the soul. If church members generally would use the Lord's day to the best advantage from a spiritual point of view, the church would grow in both numbers and spirituality in such way as we have never seen it in our generation. The writer does not believe that the Lord's day has taken the place of the Jewish Sabbath in every way, but man's need of one day in seven to devote to rest for the body and cultivation of the soul is as great today as ever, unless man's nature has changed essentially.

What Paul taught about the Sabbath. (Col. 2: 14-16.) *Having blotted out the bond.* This was a bond written in ordinances, having reference to the law of Moses, or the old covenant, with its many ordinances of a fleshly nature. (Heb. 9: 9, 10.) To blot out was to render void. It is the same thing as a cancellation of a note or check. When a note is paid, it is canceled and cannot be collected again. So when the law was fulfilled, it was blotted out, or canceled.

Was against us and contrary to us. The demands of the law of Moses, especially in the ceremonial ordinances, was a very burdensome affair. "Those ordinances bound and fettered the soul, restrained the expansive spirit of true piety which seeks the salvation of all alike, and thus operated as a hindrance to the enlarged spirit of true religion. Thus they really operated against the truly pious Jew, whose religion would lead him to seek the salvation of the world; and to the Gentile, since he was not in a situation to avail himself of them, and since they would be burdensome to him if he could." (Barnes.) And they were contrary in about the same sense. If the law had not been taken away, the Gentiles would never have been free to avail themselves of the blessings of Christ. Paul had this in mind when he said the rejection of the Jews was the salvation of the Gentiles, and the casting away of the Jew was the reconciling of the world. (Rom. 11: 11-15.)

Hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross. This shows us when the law of Moses was taken out of the way, at the time of the death of Christ. Paul argues the point in Rom. 7: 1-6 that we became dead to the law when Christ died. To be dead to a law is to be freed from its authority, to be no longer bound to keep the law. And to identify the law to which we have become dead through Christ, Paul mentions the commandment against coveting. (Rom.

7, 8.) Hence we are dead to the law which forbade coveting. That is one of the Ten Commandments, so that is the law, with all the ceremonial requirements based upon them, from which we are discharged by the death of Christ.

Having despoiled principalities and powers. Jesus came into the realm of Satan to rescue man from his cruel bondage. He had power to drive him out of the bodies of men and he has the power to shut the demons up in perdition; he triumphed over Satan in his death and has the power to save us from all his wicked designs. All this points back to verse 13 where Paul said we were dead in sin, but we have been made alive with Christ. Then follows three participial phrases, (1) Having forgiven. . . (2) Having blotted out. . . (3)

Having despoiled. . . . These are the things he did to give us spiritual life in Christ.

Let no man judge you. Since you have been made free in Christ, allow no man to bring you again into bondage to that from which Christ has set you free. Let no man tell you that certain meat is clean and others unclean, as the law of Moses, from which you have been discharged, indicates. All meats are clean. (Mark 7: 19b; 1 Tim. 4: 1-5.) Again, let no man judge you in matters of drink. The law regulated people with reference to drinks, and drink offerings, but Paul says these regulations are no longer in force. Let no man bind the observance of feast days upon you. Certain feasts were kept by the Jews, and the Jewish members of the church found it hard to break away from these, and many of them continued to observe them. But if one realized his freedom and did not wish to keep them, he was not to be judged, or condemned, on account of it.

New moon or a Sabbath day. The new moon refers to a feast the Jews were to keep in the month Tisri, our October, as commanded in Lev. 23: 24, 25. And the Sabbath refers to the weekly Sabbath, the seventh day of the week. There were other Sabbaths, and they may be included; certainly the principle would apply to them as well. Barnes, in his comment on this verse, says the weekly Sabbath was not included, since Paul said *Sabbath days*. But he might have noticed that the word *days*, being in italics, is not in the original. The American Standard Version puts in the word day in the singular. In the Greek the word Sabbath is plural, but Thayer says the plural is put for the singular, and means a *Sabbath day*, and he cites its occurrence both in this verse and in Matt. 28: 1 as examples of this use. So we are to let no man bind the keeping of the Sabbath upon us any more than we will allow the Old Testament law concerning clean and unclean meats to be bound upon us.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What was the attitude of Jesus toward Jewish traditions?

Cite and discuss briefly instances of Jesus clashing with the Jews over the Sabbath.

What should be our attitude toward traditions?

Golden Text Explained

Discuss the meaning of the title Son of man in connection with the title Son of God.

What connection does this have with his being lord of the Sabbath?

Discuss the authority of Jesus, and show what connection that has with his being lord of the Sabbath.

Show how his works should have caused the Jews to recognize him as lord of the Sabbath.

What Jesus Taught on the Sabbath

What do you know of the corn, or grain, mentioned in our text?

What did the disciples do which the Jews considered a sin?

Did the disciples have the right to eat grain belonging to another?

What was the source of the Jews' trouble on this occasion?

What incident did Jesus use to defend his disciples?

What effect does human need have on the laws regulating the Sabbath?

Did Jesus justify his disciples on the ground that one thing is no more wrong than another?

Was Abiathar actually the high priest connected with this incident in the life of David?

What did Jesus mean by saying the Sabbath was made for man?

How did the Sabbath benefit man?

How do these principles apply to our use of the Lord's day?

Do you believe the average church member uses the Lord's day as God intends, and what are you willing to do to correct the situation?

What Paul Taught About the Sabbath

What is meant by blotting out a bond?

How was the law against us, and contrary to us?

When was the law taken out of the way, and how taken away?

How do you know this law taken away includes the Ten Commandments?

How did Jesus despoil principalities?

What connection does this have with judging people in respect of meats and drinks?

What does the new covenant teach about eating meats?

What was the new moon referred to?

Why are we to let no man bind the keeping of the Sabbath upon us?

Lesson IV—April 24, 1949

JESUS FEEDS THE MULTITUDES

The Lesson Text

Mark 6: 35-44; 8: 1-9

35 And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said. The place is desert, and the day is now far spent;

36 Send them away, that they may go into the country and villages round about, and buy themselves somewhat to eat.

37 But he answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred shillings' worth of bread, and give them to eat?

38 And he saith unto them. How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes.

39 And he commanded them that all should sit down by companies upon the green grass.

40 And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties.

41 And he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake the loaves; and he gave to the disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all.

42 And they all ate, and were filled.

43 And they took up broken pieces, twelve basketfuls, and also of the fishes.

44 And they that ate the loaves were five thousand men.

1 In those days, when there was again a great multitude, and they had nothing to eat, he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them,

2 I have compassion on the multitude because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat:

3 And if I send them away fasting to their home, they will faint on the way; and some of them are come from far.

4 And his disciples answered him. Whence shall one be able to fill these men with bread here in a desert place?

5 And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven.

6 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks, he brake, and gave to his disciples, to set before them; and they set them before the multitude.

7 And they had a few small fishes: and having blessed them, he commanded to set these also before them.

8 And they ate, and were filled: and they took up, of broken pieces that remained over, seven baskets.

9 And they were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"I am the bread of life."* (John 6: 35a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—John 6: 27-35.

Daily Bible Readings

April 18. M.....God Feeds his People in the Wilderness (Ex. 16: 4-12)

April 19. T.....Instruction for Gathering Manna (Ex. 16: 13-30)

April 20. W.....A Song About God's Care for his People (Psalm 78: 12-29)

April 21. T.....Jesus Promises Necessities of Life (Matt. 6: 25-34)

April 22. F..... John Reports Miraculous Feeding (John 6: 1-14)
 April 23. S..... Jesus Gives us Bread from Heaven (John 6: 48-59)
 April 24. S..... Saying too Hard for Many (John 6: 60-71)

Time.—A.D. 29.

Place.—Near the Sea of Galilee.

Persons.—Jesus, his disciples, and the multitudes.

Introduction

The providence of God for his creatures is a never-failing and never-ending source of marvel and admiration. When we think of the countless myriads of tiny creatures in the sea, in the forests, and in the mountain and desert wastes which live upon the bounties prepared for them by their creator, we can begin to realize how infinite is his care for his creation. Jesus referred to his care of the grass of the field which lasts only for a season and then withers away, to impress us with the fact that God will care for us. With such infinite detail does God concern himself that even the hairs of our head are numbered, and not one sparrow falls to the ground but our heavenly Father knows about it. If he feeds the birds and attends their funeral, surely he will care for those who are his own. Again, Jesus reminds us that we love our children too much to give them a stone when they ask for bread, or to give them a serpent when they ask for fish; if we, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to our children, surely our all-wise Father will do as much for his children who love and serve him.

But if God were good only to those who love and serve him, his providence would not be so marvelous. "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." (Matt. 5: 45.) Israel sorely displeased him in the wilderness, yet over a period of forty years he continued to send them manna from heaven. And if he punished them, it was for their correction, and not a vengeful display of his wrath. And today there are many millions of people who never think of God except to take his name in vain; yet he gives them their daily bread, their good health of mind and body, and holds out his offer of eternal life on simple easy terms within the reach of all. It is intimated in scripture that God's love for fallen humanity, his merciful long-suffering in his dealing with rebellious sinners, and his power to redeem and transform a child of Satan into his own likeness through the gospel, is a source of wonder and amazement to the angels so that they desired to look into these things, and even now they are willing workers with God, doing service for the sake of them who shall inherit salvation. (Heb. 1: 14.)

Golden Text Explained

Meaning of the Figure. Bread as an item of food is very old. The first mention of bread is in Gen. 3: 19, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." Here the word is used to mean food in its general sense. But in the days of Abraham we read that cakes were made for the men who visited him just before the destruction of Sodom. (Gen. 18: 6.) Bread has for a long time been considered the "staff of life." The prophet asked the unfaithful Jews why they would spend their money for that which was not bread, or labor for that which satisfieth not. (Isa. 55: 2.) Here bread is represented as that

food which would satisfy, and the spiritual application was that they should leave their sinful way which could not satisfy; he hungered of the soul, and return to God who alone can completely satisfy every longing of the soul. So the meaning of the figure suggested by our text is that Jesus satisfies the desires of the soul. What bread is to the body, Jesus is to the soul. And we may consider the word bread used here in its general sense of food. So what food is to the body, Jesus is to the soul. Bread, or food, is an absolute necessity to the body, so Jesus is absolutely necessary to the life of the soul. Without food the body will die; without Jesus the soul dies.

Source of Spiritual Bread. Jesus said, "I am the living bread which came down out of heaven." (John 6: 51.) And again, when the Jews remarked that their fathers had manna in the wilderness, Jesus told them it was not Moses who gave them that manna; "But my Father giveth you the true bread out of heaven. For the bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life unto the world." (John 6: 32, 33.) So that which the soul needs, and upon which its life depends, comes down from God out of heaven.

Men look in vain for spiritual life in the philosophies of men. One may become wise in the ways of this world, but if he does not turn to heaven for food for his soul it will die. Men try to find satisfaction in the pleasures of this life, but, according to Solomon, all is vanity. Others look to social service as a science and occupation to give them that spiritual satisfaction which only the bread from heaven can give. And, sad to note, many are deceived into thinking they have found something to take the place of the bread from heaven, so they continue to eat the husks fit only for swine, while in the Father's house is the true bread waiting only their return.

Bread must be eaten. Food on the table is no proof that our bodies will grow; it must be eaten. So the bread from heaven will do us no good unless we take it and appropriate it to our good. "He that eateth this bread shall live forever." And, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man . . . ye have not life in yourselves." (John 6: 53.) This simply means to accept Jesus in faith, to abide in his teaching, and trust him for his salvation.

The Jews said, "Lord, evermore give us this bread." If it was something they could take in their hands, they would like to have it. But when he said, I am the bread of life, they were not so interested. If they had to walk by faith, instead of sight, they were not interested. They had the bread of life within reach, but did not recognize it; so we have it and cannot see it and appreciate it because of our carnal desires and attitudes.

Exposition of the Text

Jesus feeds five thousand. (Mark 6: 35-44.) *The place is desert.* This does not mean that it was a barren waste of sand, for John 6: 10 says there was much grass in the place. The meaning is that it was uninhabited, and being so far a great distance, the people should not be sent away hungry. We also learn from John that this was in the spring, near the time of the Passover, which is our Easter season, so the mention of much grass is more easily understood.

Send them away. The disciples did not have enough food to care for so many, and they were willing to tell the people to go into the

villages some distance away to buy for themselves. But Jesus is never inclined to send people away empty. When they follow him in spite of distance and lack of food, such attention will not go unrewarded.

Give ye them to eat. And thus Jesus bids his disciples today. Yes, he bids us give the hungry people bread to eat. The church has left such work to civic and other religious organizations to do this part of it. And he bids us give the hungry world the bread of life. Churches of Christ over the world are doing this part of their work as they have never done it before, and still millions have never had the bread of life broken to them.

Two hundred shillings worth. A shilling was worth about seventeen cents in our money, so the disciples, Philip (John 6: 7), thought thirty-four dollars would be too much for them to spend for bread. Why the mention of this amount of money? Even this they said would not be enough to buy bread for all to have even a little. Was this the amount of money in the bag which Judas was carrying as treasurer for the disciples? Probably that is the answer.

How many loaves have ye? Jesus bade them to take stock of what they had. And it is a good thing for us to do to take stock of what we have on hand that can be used for the master. If all the people in the church were to take stock of what they have which Jesus can use for his glory, and if all of us were willing to bring what we have to him to be used by him, there is no way of telling how much good could be accomplished.

Five, and two fishes. This was all they could find on hand. And from John we learn that the disciples did not have these in their possession. They had been working and teaching so long that their supply of food was gone. A boy in the company had these. (John 6: 9.) Teachers of boys will not lose this opportunity to impress them with the fact that they can be helpers of Jesus by doing what they can for him, and that no service is so humble that he cannot use it for his glory.

Ail should sit down by companies. These companies were composed of fifty or one hundred people. Seating the people kept them from crowding around those who distributed the food. It also gave them to understand that they were going to get a full meal, and not a light "handout" which they could have handled as they walked. And they were seated in companies to make the distribution orderly; it would be easy to pass between the groups. This suggests that as our Lord did things in an orderly manner, we ought to give attention to doing his work in the most orderly and effective manner possible.

Looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake. The prayer life of Jesus is an example which far too few people follow today. He gave thanks. The blessing had nothing to do with increasing the amount of food (though several commentaries stress this point); it was simply giving thanks. (See Matt. 26: 26, 27; Luke 22: 19.) There are families rearing children today in homes where thanks are never expressed for food. Such is a sin against the children, and a mark of inexcusable ingratitude to God for his providence.

They all ate and were filled. The Lord provides an abundance. The prodigal said there was plenty and to spare in his father's house. So here there was plenty for all and some to spare. The

Lord who supplies seed for sowing, and multiplies the seed when sown, can take the little we have and use it for the accomplishment of his will. (2 Cor. 9: 10, 11.)

And they took up broken pieces, twelve basketfuls. (1) Notice the wastefulness and extravagance of the people. They ate part of what they took and threw the balance on the ground. Perhaps some one did not like bread crust, so he threw it down. The average church wastes enough food and clothing to put over a good program of charity. (2) Notice the economy and frugality of the Lord. John tells us the pieces were gathered "that nothing be lost." (6: 12.) It is not Christlike to be wasteful of that with which God blesses us.

There were about five thousand men. This number represents men only. Matthew adds, "besides women and children." (Matt. 14: 21.) There is no limit to the bounteousness of our Lord. Numbers are no problem to him; neither does the urgency or the depth of our poverty pose a difficulty to him. We need not fear to call on him for great things, or to help us in the accomplishment of any work.

Jesus feeds four thousand. (Mark 8: 1-9.) *I have compassion on the multitude.* These were the poor people who followed Jesus from one place to another. They were the people whom the Jewish leaders despised and neglected. When the church fails to have compassion on the poor, it loses its Christlikeness. There is a tendency in churches of Christ today to make an appeal to people who are well up in the social and financial world to the neglect of those who cannot move in such circles. Other religious groups, who do not break the true bread of life to people, are giving attention to these poorer classes and are growing rapidly in numbers. This tendency is not good. God's people ought to have compassion on the lowly.

Some of them have come from far. This may be accounted for in two ways. In the first place, his miracles attracted many, and they brought their sick and crippled to him that they might be healed. And next, there were some who followed for the loaves and fishes they could get. But regardless of the reason why they followed, Jesus had compassion on people who were in need of what he had to give them. It may be suggested that there were people in this company who had gone a lot farther to see and hear him than many, church members will travel today to worship; but likely there was not a person in that great multitude who had traveled as far to see Jesus as many church members will go for pleasure. People can go long distances and sit for hours to be entertained, but they will not go far nor sit for long to worship God.

Whence shall one be able to fill these? They were in a desert place, a most unlikely place to get food, so the disciples were worried. They had forgotten the experience of a few months past. How easy it is to forget to call on the Lord! But while these disciples were wondering where they could find provisions, they were overlooking the only one who could supply their needs, and overlooking him in spite of the fact he was in their very midst. People look in strange places for help. They often go to fortunetellers for information about the future to cure a bad case of anxiety. Why not take Paul's advice? (Phil. 4: 6, 7.) Churches look to worldly schemes to fill their houses with people, to revive a dead prayer meeting, or hold their young people. Why not try the Lord? He will very likely be able to give you just what you need for all these problems.

Having given thanks he brake. Another instance, and so another example to us, of giving thanks for our food before we eat. An example all should follow.

Gave to his disciples to set before them. Jesus could have distributed this food to the people in a miraculous manner. It would have required no more power to distribute the food miraculously than was required to produce the food. But he used his disciples to make the distribution. Our Lord is an economist, not only in picking up the pieces dropped on the ground, but in that he did not exert miraculous power when something could be accomplished by the use of human power. So he could have the gospel preached to all the world in every generation through angels, or through direct operation of the Holy Spirit; but since this can be done through human instrumentality, our Lord sees fit to have it done in that way. The disciples should have, and doubtless did, esteem it a privilege to be fellow workers with Jesus in feeding so many people and doing so much good. So ought we today esteem it a great and glorious privilege to be fellow workers with God and his Son in the grand work of preaching the gospel to the lost, and saving souls from sin and to the enjoyment of eternal life in the world to come.

They took up seven baskets. It should be noticed that each time Jesus used all the loaves and fishes on hand. He could have produced enough food for all without even one loaf or one fish, or by using one of each. But he used all they had each time. And with five loaves and two fishes he fed more than he fed with seven loaves and a few fishes; and from the five loaves he took up twelve baskets, yet from the seven loaves he took up only seven baskets. Jesus makes use of all we are able to bring to him today. And no one is capable of bringing talents too great or abilities too outstanding for him to use to the limit in his work.

Topics for Discussion

1. "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, to all the persons you can, in all the places you can, as long as ever you can." (John Wesley.)
2. Why starve in the midst of plenty? Certain diseases of the body destroy appetite and cause people to waste away. So sin, the disease of the soul, causes people to reject the bread of life, while they starve in the midst of plenty.
3. Bread can be poisoned so as to do much harm. So the bread of life can be so poisoned by misrepresentation and perversion as to destroy instead of save.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

How is the providence of God manifested in the world?

Is there a special providence toward God's children?

To what extent do all men enjoy God's providence?

Golden Text Explained

Discuss the meaning of the figure of bread in this lesson.

What is the source of supply of our spiritual needs?

To what sources do men often look for satisfaction?

What responsibility does man have with reference to the bread of life?

How do men overlook the true source of supply?

Jesus Feeds Five Thousand

What is the meaning of desert place?
 Contrast the attitude of Jesus and that of his disciples toward the people.
 What is the church today doing to give the bread of life to the world?
 What do you know of the financial ability of the disciples of Jesus?
 What is the advantage of taking stock of what we have with which to serve Jesus?
 Who supplied the loaves and fishes on this occasion?
 Why did Jesus have the people to sit down in companies?
 What example did Jesus set at this time for Christian families?
 What can you say of the amount the Lord provides?
 Why were the broken pieces gathered, and what lesson in this for us?
 What impresses us with the Lord's ability to handle big situations?

Jesus Feeds Four Thousand

What moved Jesus to feed the people instead of sending them away?
 Do you believe there is a tendency in the churches to overlook lower social classes and give attention to the upper middle class today?
 Will people go as far and stay as long for the bread of life as they will for worldly pleasures?
 How many people today forget the true and ever near source of supply and turn to sources which cannot supply that which will satisfy?
 What lesson do you get from the fact that Jesus used his disciples to distribute the food to the multitude?
 What suggests that Jesus makes use of all we have and can bring to him.
 What lessons did you get from the daily Bible readings?
 What is there of interest suggested in topics for discussion?

Lesson V—May 1, 1949

JESUS HEALS THE DEMONIAK

The Lesson Text

Mark 5: 1-17

1 And they came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Ger-a-senes'.

2 And when he was come out of the boat, straightway there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit

3 Who had his dwelling in the tombs: and no man could any more bind him, no, not with a chain;

4 Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been rent asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: and no man had strength to tame him.

5 And always, night and day, in the tombs and in the mountains, he was crying out, and cutting himself with stones.

6 And when he saw Je'-sus from afar, he ran and worshipped him:

7 And crying out with a loud voice, he saith. What have I to do with thee, Je'-sus, thou Son of the Most High God? I adjure thee by God, torment me not.

8 For he said unto him. Come forth, thou unclean spirit, out of the man.

9 And he asked him. What is thy name? And he saith unto him, My name is Legion: for we are many.

10 And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country.

11 Now there was there on the mountain side a great herd of swine feeding.

12 And they besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.

13 And he gave them leave. And the unclean spirits came out, and entered into the swine: and the herd rushed down the steep into the sea, *in number* about two thousand; and they were drowned in the sea.

14 And they that fed them fled, and told it in the city, and in the country.

they came to see what it was that had come to pass.

15 And they came to Je'-sus, and behold him that was possessed with demons sitting, clothed and in his right mind, *even* him that had the legion: and they were afraid.

And they that saw it declared unto them how it befell him that was possessed with demons, and concerning the swine.

17 And they began to beseech him to depart from their borders.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"How much then is a man of more value than a sheep!"* (Matt. 12: 12a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalms 8.

Daily Bible Readings

April 25. M.....	The Lame Shall Leap as a Hart (Isa. 35: 1-10)
April 26. T.....	To Proclaim Liberty to the Captives (Isa. 61: 1-3)
April 27. W.....	The Blind are Made to See (Matt. 9: 27-34)
April 28. T.....	The Withered Hand Restored (Matt. 12: 9-22)
April 29. F.....	A Canaanite Daughter Healed (Matt. 15: 21-28)
April 30. S.....	Jesus Heals the Epileptic Boy (Matt. 17: 14-21)
May 1. S.....	Widow's Son Restored to Life (Luke 7: 11-17)

TIME.—A.D. 28.

PLACE.—Country of Gerasenes, on Southeast shore of Sea of Galilee.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, the demoniac, and the Gerasenes.

Introduction

There have always been those who doubt the actual existence of demons, so it may be worth while to give some consideration to that subject in the beginning of our lesson. The devil (false accuser) has angels (Matt. 25: 41), and Beelzebub, which is Satan, is the prince of demons. (Matt. 12: 24-28.) If Satan is the prince of the demons, we must conclude that Satan is no more real than are his angels, over whom he rules as prince. In proof that demons are immaterial, intelligent spirit beings, the following is offered.

1. The Old Testament law forbade turning to familiar spirits. (Lev. 19: 31.)
2. New Testament writers speak of demons as personalities. (James 2: 19; Rev. 16: 14.)
3. Jesus spoke of and treated them as such. (Luke 11: 24-26.)
4. Jesus distinguished between demons and disease. (Matt. 10: 8; Mark 1: 32-34.)
5. Jesus addressed them as persons, and they answered. (Mark 5: 8; 9: 25.)
6. Demons have desires and passions, and express them. (Mark 5: 12, 13.)
7. Demons have superhuman knowledge. (Matt. 8: 29.)
8. Demons believe, know, and confess. (Luke 4: 34; James 2: 19.)

Usually this subject of demon possession is not discussed for long until some one wishes to know why people are not now subject to such possession. The writer knows of no passage of scripture which teaches that such possession is impossible. However there does seem to be a good reason why it should have manifested itself in the days of Jesus and not in our time. Jesus had come with the avowed intention of destroying the devil and his works. The devil marshaled all his forces for the fight, and led them personally as in the temptation of Jesus. It was necessary that the demons be allowed to inhabit human bodies so that Jesus might demonstrate before people his power over the devil. The sickness of Lazarus and his death were allowed that the Son of God might be glorified. (John 11: 4.) And a man was born blind "that the works of God should be made manifest in him." (John 9: 3.) This is most probably the answer as to why demons were allowed to live in the bodies of peo-

pie at that time. Miracles were performed in which men were given powers to use for confirmation of the word, but these powers are no longer given to men, because no longer needed. So demons were allowed to inhabit human bodies that Jesus might demonstrate his power over Satan, but since further demonstration is not needed, why subject human beings to unnecessary torment?

Golden Text Explained

Man's greater Value. Our Golden Text is taken from that passage which teaches how Jesus justified his work of healing on the Sabbath. The Jews would pull sheep out of a pit on the Sabbath, but would condemn him for healing a cripple on the same day. Jesus justified his work on the ground that a man is of so much more value than a sheep. We may raise the question as to why this is true. And the answer is, (1) Man is made in the image of God. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness . . . And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." (Gen. 1: 26, 27.) (2) Man is the offspring of God. "Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold." (Acts 17: 29.) (3) Man was created with the power to choose between good and evil, and so able to do either good or evil. The sheep, as all dumb animal creation, has not this power. Being unable to do either good or evil the sheep is incapable of obedience to God, and hence is no pleasure to his creator. (4) Man is in a position to glorify God. As great and holy as is the God of this universe, man is capable of glorifying him, and making his name great and honorable in the earth. These are great and wonderful privileges, which bring upon us terrible consequences and responsibilities.

Our appreciation of values. Do we really think man is of more value than a sheep? The Jews would have argued that they did so believe. But their actions belied their profession, and so may ours. Men will do more to care for their livestock, show more interest in them and spend more time and money in caring for them, than they will do for lost people. Let the care for sheep in this verse represent our care for the material things of life, and the care for man represent our interest in things divine. Can we say we have a greater interest in things divine than we have in things material? And if we say so, do our actions belie our profession?

Men more valuable than swine. Jesus has been criticized for allowing the demons to go into the swine, thus causing them to be destroyed. So he is accused of destroying the property of others. His critics forget that both the owners and the swine belonged to the Lord; they forget that he could repay them in a hundred ways we know not of. But which is worth more, the swine or the man? But it is answered the demons could have been driven out of the man, and yet not allowed to go into the swine. True; but if that had been done, how would the people have known the man was possessed by demons? and how would they have known that Jesus had power over them, and that he drove them out of the man? The people of the community had a demonstration of the power of Jesus over demons which they could not have had otherwise. And the knowledge thus gained made it possible for the man to tell his friends what

Jesus had done for him. So many were brought to know Jesus who would never have known him.

Exposition of the Text

The man. Into the country of the Gerasenes. Matthew calls it the country of the Gadarenes. (Matt. 8: 28.) There were two cities, Gerasa and Gadara, in this section of country south and east of the Sea of Galilee. But it is thought Gerasa was too far from the sea for this miracle to have been performed near it. So it is held that Gadara is the city near which the miracle was performed, and that this city was in the district of Gerasa, or the country of the Gerasenes, near the city of the Gadarenes.

There met him out of the tombs a man. This man was in worse condition, it seems, than any other man with whom Jesus dealt. Seven demons were driven out of Mary Magdalene, but there were a legion in this man. And we may judge that Jesus went all the way across the lake just to heal this man, and that his disciples might have the privilege of seeing him deal with so many demons at one time.

He had his dwelling in the tombs. These tombs were caves, either natural or dug in the side of the hills and ravines by man. Robber bands often made their hide-outs in them, and they were appropriate places for demons and sinful men. Demons are called unclean spirits (verse 2), and tombs, being unclean places, are fit abodes for unclean spirits.

No man had strength to tame him. Though he had been bound with chains in the hope of holding him, the chains were broken. This ought to be sufficient evidence to prove that the man was not merely insane. Insane men can be bound; they have not enough strength to break even light chains. If they exerted sufficient strength, their arms would break before the chains could be broken. But such was the power of the demons that they would break the chains and still preserve the arms from breaking.

Crying out and cutting himself. This was continuing both night and day. We are not forced to conclude that the man got no sleep and rest at all; that such went on continuously without any recess at all. But such was the restlessness of the demons that they kept the man on the move a great part of the time. Notice what cruel masters demons are. They caused the man to go without clothes, to wander about crying, and to cut his body with sharp stones. Is this a foretaste of what hell will be? The days of sweet communion with the Savior, and the glorious experience the three had with him on the Mount of Transfiguration may well be considered as faint glimpses of the joyous fellowship and communion the redeemed will have forever in heaven. Why not consider the experience of this unfortunate man with the demons as a faint glimpse of what hell will be when the disobedient will be compelled to share those infernal regions with them? Driven, aggravated, and tormented through one millennium after another without a recess; added to which will be cutting one's self with continual self-reproaches and condemnation forever being so foolish as to reject Jesus and live in disobedience to his word which was so often and so powerfully preached in our hearing—this is the reality of which this unfortunate man's condition is but a faint shadow.

The Demons. He ran and worshiped him. This is said of the man, but in the statements which follow we observe that it is not the man's own action; it is the man controlled by the demons, and forced to speak their sentiments. They worshiped him! The Greek word here for worship means an act of reverence which might be paid either to man or God. What chains could not do, the unseen power of the will of Jesus accomplished. The demons were brought down in submission at his feet.

What have I to do with thee? This is as much as to say, I am not bothering you, why should you trouble me? The demons did not wish to have any contact with Jesus; they much preferred that he not come into that country. But there follows their confession of him as the Son of the Most High God. The demons knew Jesus even before a miracle was performed; they have more than human knowledge.

I adjure thee by God, torment me not. The demons know that Jesus is the one to administer their punishment; they recognize him as having greater power than they have, and greater than Satan has. Matthew's record says they asked why he had come to torment them before the time. (Matt. 8: 29.) So they know there is a time appointed for their torment to begin, and they did not wish to suffer before the appointed time. If the demons who know something about the torment dread it, and wish not to be tormented before the time, why will men live in disobedience to God's will and lay themselves liable to the same torment? It is appointed to demons, and they cannot escape it; but Jesus died that men might not have to endure that torment, and if any go there it will be their own fault.

My name is Legion, for we are many. A legion was the chief subdivision of the Roman army, containing about six thousand infantry, with a contingent of cavalry. It, however, was like the *division* in our army and did not always have just that many men. But it is used to mean an indefinite large number, a host. So there were thousands of demons in this one human body.

That he would not send them out of the country. Why they did not wish to leave this particular country we cannot know, it has been suggested that the Jews were in a backsliding, apostate, condition, so were more receptive to demon possession. But it is certain they did not wish to go to an uninhabited country. They preferred to inhabit the bodies of swine to being in an uninhabited place where they would have no bodies of flesh in which to dwell.

The herd rushed down the steep into the sea. If they had been destroyed by cholera, a common disease among swine, would people charge God with wrong? But, says one, Jesus permitted the demons to go into the swine. Yes, and God permits cholera to destroy thousands of hogs every year. God can prevent earthquakes which destroy lives and property; does he do wrong in not preventing them? And if these owners were Jews they were in violation of their law in raising the hogs. (Deut. 14: 8.) If they were not Jews, they were in Jewish territory and raising that which was unclean to God's people and so a temptation to them.

Jesus, Son of the Most High God. And they come to Jesus. The keepers of the swine ran to tell their masters what had happened; others heard the story; still others followed because of excitement. So a crowd soon came to see Jesus. The demons recognized him as

Son of the Most High God, but the people did not; they looked upon him as a nuisance.

Sitting, clothed, and in his right mind. Here is sufficient evidence to prove the divinity of Jesus if the people had been looking for it; if they had had open minds. Here was a man who had roamed like a wild man, but now he is sitting. He has been given peace; he can now take a rest. He had wandered over the hills and through their valleys without clothes, but now he has clothes. He was no longer an embarrassment and nuisance in the community. He had been like an insane man, having not the use of his mind, for the demons used it for their fiendish purposes; but now he is in his right mind. What is the answer? Jesus, Son of the Most High God. See that man in neat clothes, a bright smile, humbly and gratefully coming to the house of worship? He used to be a drunkard who spent the small earnings of his wife and children for drink; he abused his family, cursed his neighbor, and blasphemed God. Why the change? and by whose power did he conquer his satanic masters and make such a change? Jesus, the Son of the Most High God, through the gospel which is his power to save all who will believe. It should not take intelligent people long to decide whom they desire for their master here, and their associate in eternity.

And they began to beseech him to depart from their borders. Why? They were afraid. (Verse 15.) Were they afraid of his power? He had exercised it only on the demons; he had exercised it only to do good. Why be afraid of him who conquers the devil and does good to humanity? Why be afraid of him whom we should trust?

Or were they afraid of his power to read their hearts and know their sins? And did they wish him to depart so that they might not be reminded of their sins, and disturbed by the thought of the consequence of their sins? On one occasion Peter asked the Lord to depart from him because he was a sinful man. (Luke 5: 8.) But Peter learned that the best place to be is close to the Lord if one wishes to keep free from sin. He followed at a distance, and warmed himself by the fire some distance from Jesus on the night of his trial, and, being away from him, Peter was tempted to deny his master. The most foolish thing people can do is to drive the Lord out from their borders. Jesus will not stay where he is not wanted, so he left this country of the Gerasenes.

Topics for Discussion

1. There was no room for Jesus in Bethlehem; no room in Nazareth (Luke 4: 29); no room in Gerasa; and finally no room on earth, so they crucified him. Is there room in your heart, in your home, in your business, and in your pleasures for Jesus?

2. If there is a devil, and if there are demons, there certainly must be a hell. If there is a hell for the devil and his angels, where else can people go who live like him and for him?

3. The demons confessed Jesus as their tormentor; we have the privilege of confessing him as our Savior.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What do you know of Satan?

Discuss the proof given of the reality of demons.

Why do you think demons do not now inhabit our bodies?

Golden Text Explained

Why is man of more value than a sheep?

Did the Jews realize that man is more valuable than sheep?

How does our valuation of spiritual things compare with our valuation of material things?

What ends were gained by allowing the demons to go into the swine?

On what ground can Jesus be justified in allowing such destruction of swine?

The Man

Tell what you know of the country Jesus visited.

Where did this man who met Jesus dwell?

What evidence do we have that the man was possessed by someone of more than human power?

What influence did the demons exercise over the man continually?

Do you think this may be a foretaste of what hell will be? Why?

The Demons

What was the first act of the demons? What does this suggest as the power of Jesus?

What was the demons' first word to Jesus?

What was the first request of the demons?

How do you know there is a time appointed for their torment?

What was the name of the demons, and what its meaning?

Why do you think they desired to stay in that country?

Did Jesus do wrong in allowing the destruction of the swine?

Jesus, the Son of the Most High God

How did Jesus get a crowd in that country?

Contrast the attitude of the demons and the people toward Jesus.

What evidence did the people have to lead them to believe in Jesus?

Does Jesus bless people in similar ways today?

What did the people request Jesus to do?

Why did they make this request?

Tell how Peter learned that it is good to stay near Jesus.

What did you get from the daily Bible readings?

What is there of interest in the topics for discussion?

Lesson VI—May 8, 1949

THE STANDARD OF AUTHORITY IN RELIGION

The Lesson Text

Mark 7: 1-13

1 And there are gathered together unto him the Phar'-i-sees, and certain of the scribes, who had come from Je-ru'-sa-lem,

2 And had seen that some of his disciples ate their bread with defiled, that is, unwashed, hands.

3 (For the Phar'-i-sees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands diligently, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders;

4 And when they come from the marketplace, except they bathe themselves, they eat not; and many other things there are, which they have received to hold, washings of cups, and pots, and brassen vessels.)

5 And the Phar'-i-sees and the scribes ask him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with defiled hands?

6 And he said unto them. Well did I-sa'-iah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written. This people honoreth me with their lips, But their heart is far from me.

7 But in vain do they worship me, Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men.

8 Ye leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men.

9 And he said unto them, Full well do ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your tradition.

10 For Mo'-ses said, Honor thy father and thy mother; and, He that speaketh evil of father or mother, let him die the death:

11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or his mother, That wherewith mightest have been profited by me is Cor'-ban, that is to say, Given to

God.

12 Ye no longer suffer him to do aught for his father or his mother;

13 Making void the word of God by your tradition, which ye have delivered:

and many such like things ye do.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth."* (Matt. 28: 18.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 24: 1-6.

Daily Bible Readings

May 2. M.....	God Was to Raise up a Prophet (Deut. 18: 15-19)
May 3. T.....	Jesus is God's Prophet (Acts 3: 22-26)
May 4. W.....	Many Jews Accept Christ as the Prophet (John 7: 25-52)
May 5. T.....	The Words of Jesus to Judge Us (John 12: 44-50)
May 6. F.....	Judgment to be According to the Gospel (Rom. 2: 12-16)
May 7. S.....	Conduct Measured by Teaching of Apostles (2 Thess. 3: 6-14)
May 8. S.....	Judged by Things Written in Books (Rev. 20: 11-15)

TIME.—A.D. 29.

PLACE.—Capernaum, in the "land of Gennesaret." (Mark 6: 53.)

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, Pharisees and scribes.

Introduction

There is need for a standard of authority in religion, as in everything else. If all were allowed to determine their own standard of weights and measures, there could be no unity, and commercial trade would be impossible. When a person buys a pound of meat he wishes to know how much that will be. But if each butcher were left to determine how much is a pound, no one would have the slightest idea how much meat he would get when he orders a pound. So the government determines this matter and regulates the scales in every market so we can be sure of the amount we will get when we make an order. So in matters of religion, we are not left to determine individually what we shall do, or what we shall not do. If there were no standard of authority, each man would be a law unto himself, to do that which is right in his own eyes. Unity of thought, speech, and of action in work and worship would be absolutely impossible. Furthermore, if there were no standard of authority, on what basis could we be called into judgment? If every man were left to do as he pleases, and whatever he does is right in his own eyes, how could he be accused of doing wrong? We must have a standard by which to live and by which we are to be judged.

Not only is there a need for a standard of authority in religion, but there is a need that the standard be respected by all men. And to respect a standard of authority means that we accept it as complete and final, and that we recognize it as binding upon us to direct us in all our religious activities. If we respect the standard of authority, we will not add to it, take from it, nor make any change whatever in it to suit our convenience, or to justify some member of our family in some misconduct. No benefit can be derived from a standard unless we respect it. Neither popes nor councils; neither synods nor conferences, have any right to alter or modify the standard. Nor does any, or all, of these have the right to set aside the standard God has given, and set up in its place a more liberal standard for these modern times.

Golden Text Explained

Extent of his authority—All. Jesus declares that he has all authority. This leaves none at all for others to exercise without being guilty of usurpation. Moses was once considered good authority.

Jesus recognized him as authority when he said the scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat, and the people were to do what they taught from Moses. (Matt. 23: 1-3.) And Paul said the one who set at nought Moses' law died without compassion on the word of two or three witnesses. (Heb. 10: 28.) So there was a time when Moses was good authority. But he no longer has any authority in matters of religion, for Jesus has it all. There was a time when General John Pershing had authority over the armies of the United States, but that time is no more; his commission has expired, and another has been clothed with this authority. There was a time when General Eisenhower had authority over the armies and his word was final, but that time is no more. Only a few days ago another was clothed with this authority, and no soldier is obligated to obey generals whose commissions have expired. Moses was commissioned of God to give a law, and his law was binding upon the Jews for fifteen hundred years; but his commission has expired and no person is bound to obey a single commandment because given by him. We obey him who was clothed with all power, and who supersedes all who had been granted any power whatsoever before his time.

Source of his authority—Given unto me. This authority was given to Jesus. He did not usurp it. Gabriel told Mary that "the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David." (Luke 1: 32.) David pictures Jehovah setting the Messiah upon the throne. (Psalm 2.) Daniel saw the Son of man coming to the ancient of days, "And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." (Dan. 7: 13, 14.) And Jesus said he was under commandment of the Father as to what he should speak. (John 12: 49.) Paul tells us that God raised up Jesus and made him to sit "far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion . . . and put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church." (Eph. 1: 21.)

Exercised in heaven and on earth. Jesus exercises authority in heaven. Angels are subject to him. "Who is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him." (1 Pet. 3: 22.) And Paul says that God put all things in subjection to him, and that nothing was excepted but God himself. (1 Cor. 15: 27, 28.) Again, every knee in heaven as well as on earth must bow to him and confess him. (Phil. 2: 9-11.)

Paul says Christ is Lord both of the living and the dead. (Rom. 14: 9.) And he is to judge the living and the dead. (2 Tim. 4: 1.) He has authority over this world and that which is to come. (Eph. 1: 21.) Satan is the prince of this world, but Jesus overcame him in the resurrection, and is thereby declared to be the Son of God with power. (Rom. 1: 4.) He who claims any authority in the realm of religion must exalt himself above Jesus Christ on this earth and in heaven. Such arrogance on the part of sinful man will not go unpunished.

Exposition of the Text

The traditions of the Elders. (Verses 1-4.) *Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem.* These men had traveled nearly a hundred miles

to find something in Jesus and his disciples to criticize. Likely they had been sent by the Sanhedrin to check both on his teaching and on the attitude of the people toward him. Some people will go farther to criticize than to learn; they will go farther to oppose than they will go to assist. The Pharisees and scribes were sticklers for the details of the law, and for the traditions of prominent teachers of generations past.

Defiled, that is, unwashed hands. The defilement mentioned here is ceremonial defilement. Jesus never criticized anybody for being clean, nor would he have tried to justify his disciples in filthy habits of neglect of cleanliness. But the Jews had the tradition, man-made teaching, that handling of certain articles, touching people who handled the sick or the dead, and many other such things, rendered one ceremonially unclean. And nothing but ceremonial washing would remove that defilement. And to them there was always the possibility of touching some which rendered them unclean when they associated with others, so always they washed when they came from town, and before they ate.

Wash their hands diligently. The Greek word translated *diligently* has given considerable trouble. In the margin we have, "*up to the elbow, Greek with the fist.*" Thayer defines the Greek word to mean *the fist*, and cites this verse, and says, "To wash the hands with the fist, i.e., so that one hand is rubbed with the clenched fist of the other."

Except they bathe themselves. This passage makes a difference between washing their hands before they eat, and coming from the market place. They would not eat without washing (*niptoo*) their hands, but when they came from the market place they bathed (*baptizo*) themselves. Commentators who believe in sprinkling try hard to prove that the Jews did not actually bathe (*immerse*) themselves when they came from the market place. But the same verse says they washed (*baptizo*) cups, and pots, and brazen vessels, and Mark was careful not to use the Greek word *niptoo*, which means to wash only a part of a thing, and careful to use *baptizo*, which means to immerse. If it means to immerse in the case of cups, why not in the case of themselves? And if when the Jews bathed themselves they put water on only a part, why would any one object to saying they washed only a part of the cup?

And many other things there are. This statement was made with reference to the number of traditions the Jews had to govern the people in the details of everyday life. "Note, superstition is an endless thing. If one human invention and institution be admitted, though seemingly ever so innocent, as this washing of hands, *behold, a troop comes*, a door is opened for *many other such things.*" (Matthew Henry.) Such has been demonstrated to be true in the matter of mechanical instruments of music. Brethren who opened the door for their use thought such practice too innocent to do any injury to their cause. But at that same door so *many other such things* have come in that they are plagued with departures on every hand, and there is little resemblance between their worship and the simple spiritual exercises authorized by the word of the Lord.

Disciples freed from tradition. (Verses 5-7.) *Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition?* Jesus had taught his disciples the difference between the tradition of the elders and the law of

Moses under which they lived. They had been freed from the numerous galling, stifling restrictions, and burdensome obligations of the tradition of elders. They were so numerous that one could not possibly keep them all in mind; and, if one was conscientious, he was kept in fear all the time lest he had violated some tradition in ignorance. Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8: 32.) And his disciples had learned the truth, and by it had been made free from the obligation of keeping the traditions, and free from the fear of violating some in ignorance. So disciples of Jesus today ought to be free, and refuse to be entangled in traditions of men. They should be able to distinguish between gospel commandments and traditions; and keep the former, reject the latter.

The tradition of the elders. "The Jews supposed that when Moses was on Mount Sinai, two sets of laws were delivered to him: one, they said, was recorded, and is that contained in the Old Testament; the other was handed down from father to son, and kept uncorrupted to their day. They believed that Moses before he died delivered the law to Joshua; he to the judges; they to the prophets; so that it was kept pure, till it was recorded in the Talmuds." (Barnes.)

This *people honoreth me with their lips*. This is a statement Isaiah made concerning the Jews of his day. It had a near and a remote application. The near application was to the Jews of Isaiah's day, and its remote application was to the Jews of Christ's day. It has been suggested that this condition was characteristic of the Jewish people generally, and that it might well have been said to any generation of them. There were, however, individual exceptions to the rule; and Jesus did not mean to intimate that Isaiah predicted that every individual would be guilty of such vain worship.

In vain do they worship me. The word *vain* means *empty, useless, fruitless*. Their worship was empty; it did not accomplish its purpose. God refused to accept, or be pleased with their worship, because of the human traditions mixed with it. One does not have to reject every item of worship authorized by the Lord to be guilty of vain worship. One act of human tradition mixed with that which the Lord commanded renders worship vain.

Evils of traditions illustrated. (Verses 8-13.) *Ye leave the commandment.* This is the first evil Jesus points out in human traditions. They cause people to leave the commandment of God. God said for us to bury in baptism, but human tradition says to sprinkle or pour. People leave God's commandment to practice their tradition.

Ye reject the commandment. This is the same thought, except put in stronger words; you *reject*, instead of leave; *that ye may keep*, instead of hold fast. When men have to choose between what God says and what their fathers have taught, they reject the former that they may keep the latter; they dishonor God by disobedience to his word, that they may honor the fathers by obedience to their tradition. God's word is the standard of authority, but they reject the standard God gave and set up one of their own making.

If a man shall say to his father or his mother. Jesus begins here the illustration of his point that human traditions free men from the obligation to obey God. He takes the case of a child who has become independent of his parents; he supposes the parents to be in

need, and that they come to the child for food. But when the parents ask for a calf or lamb for food, the son says, Corban. This is a Hebrew word which means, *devoted to God*. A thing devoted to God cannot be used for food, so the child, by use of this human device, escaped the necessity of feeding his parents, and saved his animal too.

Since the commandment was to honor thy father and thy mother, we learn from this that a child who does not care for parents when they are in need does not honor his parents. This is the fifth of the Ten Commandments written with the finger of God upon two tables of stone. These Jews were not afraid to tamper with one of these commandments. They were not afraid to invent a tradition which would make it possible for a person to evade the duty laid upon him by one of these commandments.

Making void the word of God. This word void, means of *no legal force or effect*. Their tradition had rendered the commandment of no legal force or effect; it had kept the commandment from accomplishing its purpose. If the commandment had been unhindered, it would have caused the son to feed his parents and in this way honor them. But the tradition furnished the son a way of escape from that responsibility, and led the son to think he was justified in taking the way of escape, so caused the word of God to be void, or of no legal force or effect.

So today, God says for us to be buried with Jesus in baptism and be raised to walk in a new life (Rom. 6: 4; Col. 2: 12), and if the commandment is unhindered it will lead all honest people to be immersed. But man has invented something which makes void God's word. Man says that sprinkling or pouring will do just as well as being buried and raised. Honest people, who make little investigation for themselves, accept their preacher's word for it and actually think they have done right. Because of human tradition God's word fails to accomplish its purpose in their lives; and because they have acted in harmony with the tradition of men their worship and service to God are vain.

We must realize that God's word given through Christ and his holy apostles is the standard in religion; we must learn to respect it as such. Only in this way can there be that unity of thought, speech, and action for which Jesus prayed, and which Paul taught the church to keep. (John 17: 20-22; 1 Cor. 1: 10; Eph. 4: 3.)

Topics for Discussion

1. Laws are like fences by the roadside, a restraint to those who wish to do evil; but to those who wish to travel, not to trespass, they are guides, not restraints.

2. The authority of our government is behind our standard of weights and measures, and people who disregard them are punished. The highest authority of heaven and earth is behind the standard of authority in religion; offenders will surely be punished.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

Discuss the need for a standard of authority in religion.

Why should the standard of authority in religion be respected, and how?
Is a more liberal standard needed for the twentieth century?

Golden Text Explained

How much authority does Jesus have?
Did Moses ever have authority? For how long?
Illustrate how a man ceases to have authority.
Discuss the source of the authority of Jesus.
What authority does Jesus have in heaven?
What scriptures teach that Jesus has authority on earth?

Traditions of the Elders

Who were most prominent among the critics of Jesus at this time?
From what city had they come, and how far?
What is the meaning of defiled hands?
What is the meaning of washing hands diligently?
In what way did the Jews think they might be defiled?
Discuss the matter of Jewish washings and bathings.
What is the consequence of opening the door for one tradition?

Disciples Freed from Tradition

What had Jesus taught his disciples about traditions?
Discuss the freedom followers of Jesus have.
Where did the Jews believe they got their traditions?
What did Isaiah say of the Jews?
What is vain worship, and how many traditions are necessary to make worship vain?

Evils of Traditions Illustrated

What is the first evil consequence of traditions mentioned?
What is the next consequence?
How do people honor their fathers above God?
What is the meaning of the word Corban?
Explain what Jesus meant by his illustration.
What is meant by making void God's word?
Illustrate how men make void God's word today.
How may we have the unity for which Jesus prayed?
What did you get from the daily Bible readings?
What is there of interest in the topics for discussion?

Lesson VII—May 15, 1949

JESUS AND OTHER RACES

The Lesson Text

Mark 7: 24-37

24 And from thence he arose, and went away into the borders of Tyre and Si'-don. And he entered into a house, and would have no man know it; and he could not be hid.

25 But straightway a woman, whose little daughter had an unclean spirit, having heard of him, came and fell down at his feet.

26 Now the woman was a Greek, a Sy-ro-phoe-ni'-cian by race. And she besought him that he would cast forth the demon out of her daughter.

27 And he said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs.

28 But she answered and saith unto him. Yea, Lord; even the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.

29 And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the demon is gone out of thy daughter.

30 And she went away unto her house, and found the child laid upon the bed, and the demon gone out.

31 And again he went out from the borders of Tyre, and came through Si'-don unto the sea of Gal'-i-lee, through the midst of the borders of De-cap'-o-lis.

32 And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to lay his hand upon him.

33 And he took him aside from the multitude privately, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat, and touched his tongue;

34 And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Eph'-pha-tha, that is, Be opened.

35 And his ears were opened, and the bond of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.

36 And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it.

37 And they were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well; he maketh even the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons."* (Acts 10: 34b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 5: 26-30.

Daily Bible Readings

May 9.	M.....	People in Darkness See Great Light (Isa. 9: 1-7)
May 10.	T.....	Bring Forth Justice to Gentiles (Isa. 42: 1-9)
May 11.	W.....	Many Nations in Jehovah's House (Micah 4: 1-5)
May 12.	T.....	Jesus Goes to Tyre and Sidon (Matt. 15: 21-28)
May 13.	F.....	Paul Turns from Jews to Gentiles (Acts 13: 40-52)
May 14.	S.....	Salvation of God Sent to Gentiles (Acts 28: 23-28)
May 15.	S.....	Paul's Debt and How he Paid It (Rom 1: 8-17)

TIME.—A.D. 29, in the summer.

PLACES.—Tyre, Sidon, and Decapolis.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his disciples, Syrophenician woman, and the deaf man.

Introduction

The race problem in the time of Jesus and his apostles was very difficult. For the purpose of bringing the Messiah into the world God had selected Abraham and his descendants through Isaac. This gave them much advantage in many ways (Rom. 3: 1-4), but it did not follow that the balance of mankind had no chance to be saved. (Rom. 2: 25-29.) The Jews thought they could not be lost simply because they were children of Abraham. (Matt. 3: 7-10.) And they thought Gentiles were lost because they were not children of Abraham. They referred to them as dogs, and as sinners. The phrase *publicans and sinners*, meant those Jews who had lost their national pride so far as to accept the job of collecting Roman taxes, and the Gentiles. Publicans were no better than Gentiles, and both were anathema so far as the strict orthodox Jew was concerned.

This feeling lingered among the best Christians, even the apostles, for several years after Pentecost. Peter had to have a miracle to convince him that it was even a lawful thing for a Jew to go into the house of a Gentile. (Acts 10: 28, 29.) And it was still some time before Peter could treat the Gentiles like he did the Jews, for at Antioch he withdrew and would not eat with them when his friends from Jerusalem arrived. (Gal. 2: 11-14.)

And we have a race problem today which is gradually coming to a head. Our national leaders are using it to get votes. Each party wants the negro vote, and to get it they are offering advantages to the negro which violate customs and distinctions of long standing. All races are entitled to every blessing to be had in Christ. (Gal 3: 28, 29.) Furthermore all races are entitled to an education, to take a part in their government as their ability will permit, and they are entitled to an opportunity to improved living conditions. But this is far from saying that the races should intermarry, or even that their children should be thrown together in the schoolroom and on the playground. There are differences in ideals and moral standards which cannot be disregarded without injury to those who are holding the standards as high as possible. (1 Cor. 15: 33.)

Golden Text Explained

God's character unchanged. If God is no respecter of persons today, we may safely conclude that he never was a respecter of persons. There is no truth more plainly taught than is the immutability, or unchangeableness, of God. "For I, Jehovah, change not; therefore ye, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed." (Mal. 3: 6.) "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning." (James 1: 17.) If he should change it would have to be for the better or worse. If the change were for the better, that would argue that he was not perfect before the change, therefore not God; but if the change be for the worse, it would argue that he is not now perfect and therefore not God. So with God there can be no change in character. It follows that, though God selected Abraham and his children through Isaac for certain purposes, he did not show respect of persons with reference to salvation of individuals or nations. His choice of Abraham from among many, and his choice of Jacob in preference to Esau, were not elections to salvation of the one and to damnation of the other, but choices of individuals through whom his scheme of redemption was to be perfected. (Rom. 9.) But the Jews misunderstood these selections and their purpose, and they thought God was a respecter of persons. It took a miracle to convince Peter it was not so.

Terms Defined. What is meant by being a *respecter of persons*? James says if we cater to the rich and disregard the poor we are showing respect of persons. (James 2: 1-4.) When God blesses the obedient and punishes the disobedient, is he a respecter of persons? Surely not. But if he save one obedient person and punishes another obedient person, he would show respect of persons. Or if he were to save both the obedient and the disobedient alike, he would show respect of persons. "The word used here denotes the act of showing favor to one on account of rank, family, wealth, or partiality arising from any cause. A judge is a respecter of persons when he favors one of the parties on account of private friendship; or because he is a man of rank, influence, or power." (Barnes.) No Jew ever received salvation because he was a child of Abraham; and no Gentile was ever lost because he could not claim Abraham as his father.

Salvation in Christ on same terms. Peter said that Jews and Gentiles are to be saved by grace "in like manner." (Acts 15: 11.) On the day of Pentecost Peter offered salvation to believing Jews on condition they would repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of their sins. (Acts 2: 38.) And according to Peter, this was salvation by grace. Some have the idea that if people have to be baptized to be saved, their salvation is not *by grace*, but of works. However Peter is on record as saying the Jews were saved by grace, and he certainly commanded them to be baptized for the remission of their sins.

And that Gentiles are saved by grace by complying with the same conditions we learn from reeding of Peter's work at the house of Cornelius. The Gentiles believed. (Acts 15: 7.) They repented. (Acts 11: 18.) And they were baptized in the name of Christ. (Acts 10: 48.) So we can say with Peter that God is no respecter of persons, saving Jew and Gentile alike.

Exposition of the Text

Jesus in Gentile Territory. (Verses 24-30.) *Into the borders of Tyre and Sidon.* These cities were situated on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. They were in a territory called Phoenicia. This was a part of old Canaan, which, for some reason not known, was not taken by the Jews when they came into the land under Joshua. The country was never more than one hundred twenty miles long and less than twenty miles wide at its widest point. Some apply the term Phoenicia to a much smaller tract, only twenty-eight miles long with an average width of one mile, and never more than five miles at its widest point. Tyre was thirty-five miles from the Sea of Galilee, and Sidon was fifty-five miles distant. So Jesus did not have a long way to go, but so great were the crowds attending him, and such was the opposition of the Jews, that he decided to retire secretly.

And he could not be hid. When he found a place to stay in the foreign city he could not keep his presence a secret. Whether there were Jews in this city who had seen him working miracles in Jewish territory, or whether one of these Gentiles had been in Jewish territory and had seen him we cannot know. But some one who had seen him before saw him in this city and told others, for this woman of our lesson "heard of him," and came to him with her sorrow.

A Greek, a Syrophenician by race. She was called a Greek because these were Greek cities, this territory having been captured by Alexander the Great about three centuries before. She was Syrophenician because she was born in that country, a descendant of one of the old Canaanite tribes, so called a "Canaanitish woman." (Matt. 15: 22.) This woman came to Jesus asking that Jesus cast a demon out of her daughter.

Let the children first be filled. Does the word *first* indicate that there was a work to be done among the Jews, and that after it had been done the Gentiles would receive attention? Perhaps this may have been in his mind. At least it is the truth, as we learn from what actually happened. Or by it Jesus may simply have meant that his work was among the Jews, and as children are to be fed before the dogs, so he was working among Jews.

Children's bread cast to the dogs. Jesus used a familiar expression here, but it is not to be taken as expressing his personal views of the race problem. He knew he was going to die on the cross for that woman, and that his death was no more necessary to save her than it was to save his disciples. Jesus tried the faith of this woman in two ways. (1) According to Matthew, when she approached him, he gave her no answer. (Matt. 15: 23.) One of little faith, or of much national pride, would have turned away when she got no reply. But her deep concern for her child, and her great faith in him caused her to continue pleading at his feet. (2) He next tried her faith by this statement that he had come to serve the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15: 24), and children's bread is not to be given to the dogs. But her faith would not give up. It should be noticed here that Jesus softened the statement by using a word which means *little dog*, and not the word which was so objectionable.

The dogs eat the children's crumbs. It is true the children are first to be fed, but while the children are eating, some crumbs will fall on the floor, and surely the little dog which plays with the children in the house will not be denied the crumbs. This was a fine

statement of her case; it was the language of determination, or desperation, and of a faith which would not be denied. And the fact that she was not making a selfish plea, but pleading the cause of her unfortunate child, must have touched the heart of the Lord. Though she was not a member of the group Jesus came to serve, yet when he could find no time or place to rest in his own land he had come to the native land of this woman; if he came to them for rest, would it be reasonable to deny them a few blessings?

For this saying go thy way. For this expression of faith. "O woman, great is thy faith: be it done unto thee even as thou wilt." (Matt. 15: 28.) Only two people were commended for "great faith" so far as we know, and both of them were Gentiles. The other was a centurion. (Matt. 8: 10.) This must have made a great impression on the disciples of Jesus, as well as on the people who witnessed it. And the tests of her faith were not for the purpose of finding out whether she had it, for Jesus knew that without tests. But a test of faith is helpful to the one tested, and the greater the trial of faith the deeper the impression made for good on those who witness the test.

Daughter healed from that hour. This statement is taken from Matt. 15: 28b. The healing was done instantly. When weeks or months are needed to effect a cure, people are justified in thinking the person would have recovered without aid. Jesus never left doubt in the minds of those who watched him perform miracles. People went away saying, "We never saw it on this fashion." (Mark 2: 12b.)

Jesus back in Galilee. (Verses 31-37.) *In the midst of the borders of Decapolis.* Sidon was about twenty miles north of Tyre, so Jesus and his disciples took a swing around, out of a direct route, to go by Sidon on their way to the Sea of Galilee. Decapolis was not a city, but a region in which were ten cities. They are listed as, Scythopolis, Hippos, Gadara, Pella, Philadelphia, Gerasa, Dion, Canatha, Damascus, and Raphana. This is Pliny's list. Josephus differs, as well as others. But from this list one may see that the region extended for some distance. However every mention of this region in the New Testament locates it east and southeast of the sea.

Deaf and impediment in speech. Since this man had only an *impediment* in his speech, we wonder if he had been always deaf. Deaf people do not speak, except in rare cases. It is possible, therefore, that this man had lost his hearing. Whether his impediment in speech existed before he became deaf is not known, though it is probable that it was a separate piece of misfortune from what is said in verse 35.

And they beseech him to lay his hand upon him. It is said that "they bring him" to Jesus, and now we are told that "they beseech" Jesus. Some commentators think this man had abandoned himself to hopelessness, and that he did not have enough faith in Jesus, or concern in his own welfare, to go to Jesus without the insistence of his friends, or to ask him to do anything for him. And this seems probable since Jesus used certain visible aids or signs in connection with the cure which were rather unusual, and which would not be needed in the case of one with great faith.

Put his fingers into his ears, and he spat, and touched his tongue. No one doubts that Jesus had the power to heal the man without

doing these things, so these were no part of the healing process; they were not essential to the cure. Why then were they done? These things were done either for the sake of the man who was being healed, or for the sake of the people who were standing by. Since such thing were not usually done for the sake of onlookers, why should they be done in this case. Hence, we rather conclude they were done for the sake of the man being healed. These were aids to faith. It is also said that he took the man aside privately to do these things. It is not necessary to suppose that he took the man out of sight of the people, but far enough away that the man was not disturbed and distracted by their talk.

Looking up to heaven, he sighed. This is another action which was no part of the healing process, but the man could see Jesus as he looked up to heaven, and realize that Jesus was looking to God for the power. Such an idea is expressed in connection with the raising of Lazarus. (John 11: 41, 42.)

Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. Barnes says this word, Ephphatha, is a word of the Syriac language, but Thayer says it is an Aramaic word. The Aramaic was a modified form of Hebrew, the language among the common Jews of that time.

Ears were opened, and bond of tongue was loosed. Whatever had hindered him from hearing was now removed. And the bond of his tongue was loosed; the impediment of his speech was overcome. Was this what we speak of as being "tongue-tied"? If so, it was not caused by losing his hearing, but something which had bothered him from birth. Following this it is said that he spoke plain. This indicates that he could speak before he was brought to Jesus, but not plainly.

He charged them to tell no man. Jesus wished this matter to be kept quiet for reasons of personal safety. There would be enough in the immediate vicinity to heal to confirm his preaching, but if they told of his presence and work people would flock in and there would be another food shortage, and the wrath of the Jewish leaders would be stirred to greater heights.

So much the more a great deal they published. The more he charged, the more they published. It seems that when people receive great blessings they would feel obligated to grant the requests of their benefactor. But it is not usually so. They had little regard for his wishes, not knowing, and perhaps not caring, for the dangers to which he was exposed by their loose talk.

He hath done all things well. This was a great tribute to the work of Jesus. None of us should desire a greater tribute when we have finished our labors.

Topics for Discussion

1. If parents were as careful for the spiritual welfare of their children as this woman for the physical welfare of her daughter, there would be no juvenile delinquency.
2. If the Lord delays to grant requests, it is not because he is unwilling.
3. Does spiritual equality in Christ necessitate social equality of the races?

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What was the Jewish attitude toward the race problem?

When did the apostles get the proper view of the matter?

To what is every citizen entitled from his government?

What is implied by "social equality," and is it taught in scripture?

Golden Text Explained

What is the meaning of immutability?

What does the Bible teach about the immutability of God?

Did God show respect of persons in his choice of Abraham and Jacob? Why?

Define the term "respector of person."

Show that Jews and Gentiles are saved in like manner.

If salvation is by grace, why do we have to do something to be saved?

Jesus in Gentile Territory

What do you know of Phoenicia?

What do you know of Tyre and Sidon?

Why did Jesus go to this country, and why did he accomplish this purpose?

What do you know of this woman's race and nationality?

What is intimated by letting the children "first" be filled?

Explain Jesus' use of the word dog with reference to this woman.

In what ways did Jesus test this woman's faith?

What term did Jesus use which showed his sympathy for this woman?

How did the woman reply to his reference about the dogs?

What did Jesus think of this woman's faith?

What can be said for the cure Jesus wrought?

Jesus Back in Galilee

Point out the route Jesus traveled back to Galilee.

What do you know of the district of Decapolis?

What object of mercy was brought to

What indicates little faith on the part of this man?

What aids to his faith did Jesus use?

How did Jesus indicate that his power was from above?

Did you think the man was deaf from birth?

What do you think was wrong with his speech?

Why would Jesus ask people not to tell of his work?

What did their disregard for his wishes indicate?

What recommendation was made of his work?

What did you get from the daily Bible readings?

What is there of interest in topics for discussion?

Lesson VIII—May 22, 1949

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS

The Lesson Text

Mark 9: 2-13

2 And after six days, Je'-sus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them;

3 And his garments became glistening, exceeding white, so as no fuller on earth can whiten them.

4 And there appeared unto them E-li'-jah with Mó'-ses: and they were talking with Je'-sus.

5 And Peter answereth and saith to Je'-sus, Rab'-bi, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Mo'-ses, and one for E-li'-jah.

6 For he knew not what to answer; for they became sore afraid.

7 And there came a cloud overshadowing them: and there came a voice out of the cloud. This is my beloved Son: near ye him.

8 And suddenly looking round about, they saw no one any more, save Je'-sus only with themselves.

9 And as they were coming down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, save when the Son of man should have risen again from the dead.

10 And they kept the saying, questioning among themselves what the rising again from the dead should mean.

11 And they asked him, saying, *How is it* that the scribes say that E-li'-jah must first come?

12 And he said unto them, E-li'-jah indeed cometh first, and restoreth all things: and how is it written of the Son of man, that he should suffer many things and be set at nought?

13 But I say unto you, that E-li'-jah is come, and they have also done unto him whatsoever they would, even as it is written of him.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."* (Matt. 17: 5b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Heb. 1: 1-9.

Daily Bible Readings

May 16. M.....	The Face of Moses Shone (Ex. 34: 29-35)
May 17. T.....	Death and Burial of Moses (Deut 34: 1-12)
May 18. W.....	Elijah Learns a Lesson at Sinai (1 Kings 19: 9-14)
May 19. T.....	Elijah Taken up Into Heaven (2 Kings 2: 1-12)
May 20. F.....	Matthew Tells of Transfiguration (Matt. 17: 1-8)
May 21. S.....	Luke's Account of Transfiguration (Luke 9: 28-36)
May 22. S.....	Peter Refers to Transfiguration (2 Pet. 1: 12-21)

TIME.—A.D. 29, autumn.

PLACE.—Mount Hermon, though many ancient scholars say Mount Tabor.

PERSONS.—Jesus, Moses, Elijah, Peter, James, and John.

Introduction

Six days previous to the time of our lesson Jesus had plainly told his disciples, "that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again." (Mark 8: 31.) Peter had tried to tell him that none of these things could happen to him, and that he should not expect such things. But Jesus replied that Peter was only being used by Satan to make such arguments, and, with that rebuke, dismissed his efforts. This information had cast a deep gloom over the disciples. Their fondest, brightest hopes were shattered. They believed him to be the Messiah, but their idea of the mission of the Messiah was one of material glory and splendor. They had hopes of being associated with him in a world-wide kingdom, but now that he says he is to be rejected, killed, and buried dashes their hope to the ground. True, he said he would rise again. But the news of his death was so shocking that the word about his resurrection hardly registered. It was so strange, and so far removed from their conception of his mission that it made little, or no, impression. With his disciples in this state of mind something must be done for the encouragement of those who were best prepared to understand. Peter, James, and John were closest to him, and entered most wholeheartedly and sympathetically into his way of thinking. And too, he will need witnesses to relate the things which were to transpire on the mountain to teach great and important lessons to succeeding generations. In this experience they were to learn of the real character and person of Jesus; they were to learn of the reality of life after death, and of the possibility of establishing and maintaining a kingdom after his death. He was not to disappoint them in the matter of a kingdom, but from this experience they were

to learn that the kingdom was to be of a different nature from that which they expected.

Golden Text Explained

Jesus received honor and glory. When outstanding men of national reputation recognize us and introduce us to their friends and associates in national affairs, we feel honored. How then can we measure the honor Jesus will do us when he confesses us before his Father and the angels! But here we see Jesus being honored in a most unusual manner. His Father honored him by confessing him as his Son, his beloved Son, and by saying he was well pleased with him. Peter refers to this incident in the following words: "For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there was borne such a voice to him by the Majestic Glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: and this voice we ourselves heard borne out of heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount." (2 Pet. 1: 17, 18.) At this time Jesus had done the greater part of his work which he was sent to do. This occurred during the last half of the third year of his ministry. With so much of his work behind him, and with a resolute determination to go on to the cross, this was as if the Father had said, Well done my Son; I am well pleased with the manner in which you have conducted yourself in accomplishing the work I sent you to do.

Disciples receive encouragement. Peter also said, "For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty." (2 Pet. 1: 16.) This incident was a great encouragement to them in their present trials. He had just told them of his coming death, and their hopes of a kingdom were dashed to pieces. But when they beheld his glory, transcending that of Moses and Elijah, they were encouraged to hope that death would not defeat his purposes. They received encouragement for future trials as well. When in later years they were enduring persecution, they had but to call to mind the scenes on the mount of transfiguration; and when they remembered the glory in which Moses and Elijah appeared, they could say with Paul, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward." (Rom. 8: 18.) While they were eyewitnesses of this glory, which is an advantage to human beings, yet through faith in their word we can gather strength from a study of these matters; and with the eye of faith see the glories that await all the faithful, and so be encouraged to press onward in spite of hardships.

Disciples received instruction. Moses, Elijah, and Jesus were present when the cloud enveloped them; but when it lifted, only Jesus was present. The voice had instructed the disciples to hear Jesus. It had been their duty to hear Moses. (Luke 16: 29.) They had regarded Elijah as a great prophet, and had considered his instruction as binding. But the time for hearing them is now past; they are to hear Jesus. God in olden time spake to the fathers by the prophets, but now he speaks to us through his Son. (Heb. 1: 1, 2.) And it shall come to pass that every soul who will not hear his words shall be destroyed. (Acts 3: 23.) The word which he speaks shall judge us in the last day. (John 12: 48.) The fact that

the Father declared that he was well pleased with the Son makes it all the more serious to refuse to hear him. If the Father had not been pleased with the Son's teaching, we might feel safe in rejecting it. But God has endorsed it, and we must learn it, believe it, love it, and obey it to be saved.

Exposition of the Text

The transfiguration. After six days. Luke says about eight days. Critics have used this as proof of contradiction. But first, Luke does not pretend to be specific; he says *about eight days*. Next, not counting the day on which the transfiguration happened or the day on which Jesus made the statement referred to, there were six full days. Mark says *after* six days which would indicate he did not count the day on which the statement referred to was made.

Taketh Peter, James, and John. These were his inner circle. Andrew, Peter's brother, is listed with these in every list given in the New Testament, but he did not seem to enjoy the confidence of Jesus as did these three. Jesus was not partial in his dealings with his disciples, but these men qualified themselves through keen interest and sympathy to enjoy a closer communion than the balance of the disciples. Luke says he took them apart to pray, and that it was while he was praying that he was transfigured. (Luke 9: 28, 29.)

Was transfigured before them. The word transfigure means a change of appearance, not a change of the substance of a thing or person. This same Greek word is used with reference to a change which takes place in us, Rom. 12: 2; 2 Cor. 3: 18, where it is translated *transform*. So the appearance of Jesus was changed from that of an ordinary human being of this earth to that of a glorified human being.

His garments became white. The change which came over Jesus was twofold. Mark gives us one in the words of this verse. His garments became whiter than any fuller, which we would call a tailor or bleacher, could make them. Whether he wore white garments or colored garments we do not know, and makes no difference. If they were white, all spots were removed; if colored, they took the appearance of white garments. Matthew adds that his "face did shine as the sun." (Matt. 17: 2.) Being this bright, it was too bright for them to look upon. Like Moses when he came down from the mount with the tables on which the law was written, and he had to put a veil over his face. (Ex. 34: 33, 35.)

Elijah and Moses, talking with Jesus. These men were chosen as representatives of the law and prophets. Moses would be chosen by all to represent the law, but Elijah might not be the universal choice to represent the prophets. It is not worth while to guess why the Lord chose him, but sufficient to say no better choice could have been made. Luke adds to our meager store of information about details here by telling us what they talked about—his decease (exodus) which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem. Was this talk about death for the encouragement and comfort of Jesus? We may suppose that as a human being he could derive comfort from those who have been on the other side. The presence of these who had long since made their exodus from this world was proof that death does not end it all.

It is good for us to be here. The disciples had had trouble staying awake while Jesus prayed. Luke tells us they were heavy with sleep. But when Moses and Elijah came they "were fully awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him." And as Moses and Elijah were departing Peter, afraid and embarrassed, found his tongue and made a statement. But though he spoke, it seems he had not fully found his mind, for we are told he did not know what he was saying. He made two statements. One of them was eminently true, but the other was not worth anything. It was good to be there. But to make tabernacles for the three glorified beings was not very practical. This would have honored Moses and Elijah equally with Jesus. God intended to teach the apostles the very opposite of that; and people who do not get this lesson lose one of the outstanding lessons of this passage. The law and the prophets had been the standard of authority for fifteen hundred years, but their authority was to cease. The commissions of Moses and the prophets as authoritative commanders were to expire, and to Jesus was to be given all authority both in heaven and on earth.

There came a cloud overshadowing them. God's presence has often been manifested by a cloud. It was so on Sinai (Ex. 19: 16); the cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night served as proof of the presence of the Lord; and the cloud at the door of the tent of meeting was a signal of God's presence there. (Ex. 40: 34-38.) The voice came from the cloud on this occasion. The cloud enveloped the disciples as well as the three glorified men.

This is my Son, hear ye him. Moses and Elijah were servants of God, but Jesus was a Son, so entitled to greater honor. (Heb. 3: 1-6.) This honor was shown by the confession of the Father, and by the obedience we are to render in hearing his teaching.

And suddenly looking around. They found themselves alone with Jesus. Matthew adds that Jesus comforted them by saying, Arise, and be not afraid. Such experiences would cause the bravest to fear and tremble, and the Lord's comforting touch and speech were greatly needed.

Difficult Questions. Charged them to tell no man. After being with Jesus for nearly three years only three of the apostles were ready for such a revelation of his glory as was made on the mount of transfiguration, and they did not understand much of its significance. Surely it would be unwise to publish the matter in the ears of all the people. So it is said that these three kept the saying. His charge was that they should not tell it until he had risen from the dead.

Questioning among themselves. Six or eight days before this he had told them plainly that he would be killed, and that he would rise from the dead on the third day. But they seemed not to be able to grasp the idea. Now when he tells them to tell this experience to no man until after he rises from the dead, they question one another what he can mean by such a statement. It is difficult for us to appreciate their difficulties, for we have heard all our lives of his death and resurrection; but this was new to them, and so contrary to their expectations of a Messiah, that they were unable to appreciate it.

The coming of Elijah. Malachi had said, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children,

and the heart of the children to their fathers; lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." (Mal. 4: 5, 6.) The Jews took this prophecy to mean that the prophet Elijah would be raised from the dead and sent before the Messiah. A statement in Mal. 3: 1 speaks of the same thing, though the messenger is not named. It is easy to see why Jews would misunderstand such a statement as this. Either the three apostles did not know of this passage, or Jesus had explained it previously to refer to John. We find such an explanation in Matt. 11: 14. The presence of Elijah at the transfiguration likely brought up the subject at this time, so they simply asked Jesus where the scribes got the idea so prevalent among them that Elijah was to come before the Messiah.

I say unto you, Elijah is come. Jesus suggested that the scribes were right in their statement that Elijah must come before the Messiah; but they were not right in saying that it would be the Elijah of the Old Testament risen from the dead. Matthew adds that Elijah had come and the Jews knew him not, and they had done to him whatsoever they wished. The work of restoration to be done by this Elijah was calling the people to repentance so they would be ready for the kingdom. And since they were expecting the Elijah of the Old Testament, they rejected John as unauthorized, and they put him to death. (Matt. 14.)

How is it written of the Son of man? Matthew's account (Matt. 17: 12, 13) makes these statements easier to understand. Elijah has come and the Jews have done unto him as they pleased, and "even so shall the Son of man also suffer of them." Mark's account seems to suggest that Jesus put this as a question to them, expecting them to remember what he had said six or eight days before on the question of his death. They should have been able to make the connection when they realized that Jesus had John the Baptist in mind when he used the name of Elijah. This was another prediction of his death when he said the Jews would treat the Son of man like they treated John. Jesus seemed anxious to get this thought over to the Jews to prepare them for the events which would try their faith in him and scatter them as sheep without a shepherd.

Topics for Discussion

1. What light does the appearance of Moses and Elijah on this occasion throw on the nature of man? Is man conscious between death and the resurrection?
2. Since the Jews did not understand the prophecy concerning the coming of Elijah before the Messiah, we should be careful to avoid building a theory on what we think is unfulfilled prophecy.
3. If neither Moses nor Elijah were worthy of equal honor with Jesus that tabernacles should be built for them, are people today safe in honoring Joseph Smith, Jr., and Mary Baker Eddy as prophets equally worthy of a hearing?

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction
What had Jesus told the disciples six days before the transfiguration?

How had the apostles received the news?
Why could they not conceive of the death of Jesus?
In the light of this, what were some general purposes of the transfiguration?

Golden Text Explained

In what way was Jesus honored on this occasion? By whom?

Why was Peter so sure when he wrote of the power and coming of the Lord?

What did the transfiguration do for the three apostles?

How could they use this experience to give them courage?

What is there about this incident to encourage us today?

What practical lesson did the three apostles learn?

The Transfiguration

How do the evangelists differ as to the time of the transfiguration?

Was Jesus partial to Peter, James, and John? Why?

What does the word transfigure mean?

Are we to be transfigured in any way?

What two changes were made in the appearance of Jesus?

What is a fuller?

Of what Old Testament character does this brightness of face remind you?

Who appeared talking with Jesus?

What was the subject of their conversation? Why?

Why were Moses and Elijah chosen to appear at the transfiguration?

In what condition were the apostles before the arrival of Moses and Elijah?

What did Peter say about being there?

What did he think good to do for Jesus and his company?

What do you regard the most important lessons of the transfiguration?

What was suggested by the cloud overshadowing them?

In what way was Jesus greater than Moses or Elijah?

Difficult Questions

How did Jesus charge them, and did they keep the charge?

What did they discuss among themselves?

Whom did the Jews expect before the Messiah? Why?

How did Jesus explain this matter?

How did Jesus use John's experience to teach them what would befall himself?

Why was it so difficult for the apostles to understand that Jesus should die?

Why was Jesus anxious for them to understand that he must die?

What did you get from the daily Bible readings?

What is there of interest in topics for discussion?

Lesson IX—May 29, 1949

JESUS PROTECTS THE HOME

The Lesson Text

Mark 10: 2-12

2 And there came unto him Phar-i-sees, and asked him. Is it lawful for a man to put away *his* wife? trying him.

3 And he answered and said unto them. What did Mó'-ses command you?

4 And they said, Mó'-ses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away.

5 But Je'-sus said unto them, For your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment.

6 But from the beginning of the creation, Male and female made he them.

7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife;

8 And the two shall become one flesh: so that they are no more two, but one flesh.

9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

10 And in the house the disciples asked him again of this matter.

11 And he saith unto them. Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her:

12 And if she herself shall put away her husband, and marry another, she committeth adultery.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."* (Mark 10: 9.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Gen. 2: 18-25; Matt. 19: 3-9.

Daily Bible Readings

May 23. M.....	Law of Moses Concerning Divorce (Deut. 24: 1-4)
May 24. T.....	God Hates Divorce (Mal. 2: 10-16)
May 25. W.....	The Sin and Danger of Divorce (Matt. 5: 31, 32)
May 26. T.....	Marriage Bond Lasts Until Death (Rom. 7: 1-6)
May 27. F.....	Paul Teaches Concerning Marriage (1 Cor. 7: 1-24)
May 28. S.....	Husband and Wife as Christ and the Church (Eph. 5: 22-33)
May 29. S.....	Relation Between Husband and Wife (1 Pet. 3: 1-7)

TIME. — A.D. 29 late, or early 30.

PLACE. — In the border of Judaea beyond (east of) Jordan.

PERSONS. — Jesus, his disciples, and the Pharisees.

Introduction

There is a great need for much plain teaching on the subject of this lesson. Easy divorce is one of the greatest sins of America. No nation has ever been able completely to disregard the law of God with reference to morals and long remain great and powerful. Our nation should take warning from the experiences of the past and try to bring its law more in harmony with the law of God on the subject of divorce.

Not only will the nation suffer from easy divorce, but the youth of the land are suffering. And when the youth of the nation suffer, the consequences will show up in the next generation. When nearly three out of every five marriages end in the divorce courts, leaving children without proper home environments, it looks like it is time for the government to do something for the children.

The church is also suffering from the fact that the laws of the land allow divorce to be obtained so easily. Young people, in their "wild oats" sowing period of life, marry and divorce for trivial reasons, and then marry again and rear a family. They hear the gospel preached and wish to obey it, but their marital condition makes it most difficult, and in most cases impossible. However, many in that condition are coming right on into the church, and thus many members of the church are living in open adultery. And it is sad that there are preachers and teachers of the gospel in the church who pervert the scriptures in an effort to adapt the gospel to this unholy condition.

Our lesson subject suggests that the teaching of Jesus on this matter was for the purpose of protecting the home. The law of marriage and divorce is to protect, not to destroy, the home. But let no one think that Jesus intended to protect people who have formed a union contrary to his will. People have married contrary to the law of the Lord, and they call their situation a home; and when the law of the Lord is taught on the subject and obedience to it will destroy that union, the teacher is criticized for destroying a home. If people would obey the teaching of Jesus, the home would be protected; but when people disobey his teaching and live in sin, the only way to correct the situation is to quit living in sin.

Golden Text Explained

Marriage is of God. When speaking of marriage, Jesus says, What God hath joined together. So we conclude that he is the author of the institution. We find the record of the institution of marriage in Gen. 2: 18-25. God made woman to be a helpmeet for man, and

gave her to him that the two should be one flesh. Some of the purposes of this institution are, First, for the propagation of the human race; to bear and rear children, that they in turn may accept these responsibilities in their generation.

Second, marriage was given that the race might be propagated in purity. So far as we know the race might be propagated without marriage, but no one can conceive of the depth of impurity and shame which would result from such a condition.

Third, marriage was instituted for the comfort and pleasure of the man and wife. Those who wish to study further on this point may read 1 Cor. 7: 2-5.

Fourth, marriage is the institution we have of God for the cultivation of purity and refinement which are so necessary in that society where Christianity flourishes. The church could not, with its present standards of purity, live in a society where marriage is unknown.

Fifth, marriage is also the source of good order and other good qualities which make the nation great. When homes are built in harmony with God's law, the nation is great. But when homes are corrupted and family life breaks down, the nation suffers.

Let not man put asunder. Since the institution of marriage is from God, he has the right to regulate it by such laws as he sees fit. Man has no right to make laws contrary to the laws of God. Every state in the union, with one exception, has enacted laws granting divorces for many reasons, thus putting asunder what God has joined, or permitting it to be done. Religious denominations have granted their members the right to divorce and remarry on grounds not authorized by the Lord, so they are permitting and aiding people to put asunder what God has joined.

This institution is of God for man, not merely the church; it is for man universally, for all men whether in the church or out. Since it is for all men, the laws with reference to it are binding upon all men. The laws are as universal as the institution which they regulate. Some brethren have made the mistake of thinking the teaching of Jesus on this matter is binding only on the church. They therefore think people may marry, divorce, and remarry all they wish out of the church without violating this law. But if this teaching does not apply to all men, it will follow that God does not join in marriage anybody but Christians. Surely no one is ready to affirm that people who are not members of the church are not joined in marriage. But if they are joined in marriage by the Lord, they are subject to the law of the Lord which he gave to protect and preserve the union.

Elders of churches have grave responsibilities with reference to these matters. It is their duty to try to save people from disobedience to this law, and it is their duty to save the church from impurity occasioned by adulterers holding membership. They must teach young people these things, and warn them to keep out of adulterous unions, if the future of the church is safeguarded. There is not enough teaching on the subject today.

Exposition of the Text

What Moses taught. There came unto him Pharisees. It is said they came *trying* him. They expected to get him to make a statement which they could use against him.

Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? The Jews were divided on this matter. They had one school which held that a man might divorce his wife for any offense by which she displeased him. This was the school of Hillel. The other held that a man might divorce his wife for moral delinquency only. This was the school of Shammai. It seems the Pharisees thought Jesus would have to hold with one school or the other, and so they would at least put him in opposition with one portion of the Jews.

What did Moses command you? Jesus directed them to their own law. They replied that Moses suffered them to give a wife a bill of divorcement and to put her away. However they did not state the law fully, as they made mention of no condition on which this might be done. Moses said, "If she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some unseemly thing in her." (Deut. 24: 1.) To what the word *unseemly* refers is difficult, perhaps impossible, to determine. Here is where the schools of Hillel and Shammai differed. To Hillel it meant anything which displeased the husband; to Shammai it meant some moral delinquency. It must have meant more than the act of adultery, since Jesus contrasts what Moses taught with what God intended in the beginning, and with what he teaches today. But that it meant all that the school of Hillel put into it seems unlikely.

For the hardness of your heart. A high moral standard could hardly be expected of a slave people such as the Jews were when Moses gave them the law. Women were never respected in the east, and are not today. If a law forbidding divorce had been given them, they would have abused their wives, and even killed them rather than live with them. So for the protection of women from the hardness of Jewish hearts Moses gave them that law. It should be remembered that Moses demanded that they take time to write a bill of divorcement and deliver it to the wife. This was intended as a "cooling off" period. A man might in anger send his wife away and get him another. But if he would take time to get over his anger he would, for the sake of his wife and children, not send her away.

God's law from the beginning. But from the beginning of creation. When God created man he had things just like he wished them to be. And how was it? (1) One man for one woman, and one woman for one man. God did not create two women for Adam, though he had the "residue of the Spirit." (Mal. 2: 15.) And why did he not create two women for Adam? Because he sought a godly seed. (2) He not only did not create two women for Adam to have at one time, but he did not make it possible for Adam to put away Eve and marry another who pleased him better. Jesus reasoned that God did not intend for there to be any divorce, because he did not make provision for it.

A man shall leave his father and mother. This was said about man in general, not about Adam, for Adam did not, and could not, leave his father and mother to marry Eve. The wife is as much obligated to leave her parents to go with her husband. A separate home is to be formed. Many homes have been broken because one or the other did not leave father and mother.

Shall cleave to his wife. The word *cleave* is the translation of a Greek word that means *to glue to*; there is a close and enduring union formed. This has a practical side. If man's parents oppose

and criticize his wife, he is to sympathize with her and take her part, and protect her from injustice. And she is to love him and sympathize with him rather than with her parents if they oppose her husband.

The two shall become one flesh. When Adam saw Eve he said she was bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, and that she was to be called *woman*, because she was taken out of *man*. Therefore, or for this reason, they shall cleave together and be one flesh. (Gen. 2.) The closeness and intimacy of the union constitutes them one flesh in God's sight, as Adam and Eve were one flesh.

So that they are no more two, but one flesh. Mark does not mention the exception to this rule mentioned by Matthew. He tells us Jesus said, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery." (Matt. 19: 9.) Since Matthew mentions the exception, we must believe that Jesus said it; and since he taught it, we must accept it. The fact that Mark does not mention it does not prove that Matthew is wrong in recording it. So we may conclude that they are no more two, but one flesh, except when one commits fornication, or adultery.

What God hath joined together. It is the work of God to bind them together, and for man to divorce his wife is to destroy the work of God.

The law of Christ. Whosoever shall put away his wife. Here Jesus teaches that if a man puts away his wife and marries another, he commits adultery against his wife. It is a sin against his rightful wife as well as a sin against God. Matthew adds, And he who marries her when she is put away commits adultery. This teaching was meant to keep people from settling their differences in the divorce courts. If the husband puts away his wife, he is not allowed to remarry; and when the wife is put away, she is not allowed to marry another. Paul understood this teaching to mean, "But unto the married I give charge, ye a not I, but the Lord, That the wife depart not from her husband (but should she depart, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband); and that the husband leave not his wife." (I Cor. 7: 10, 11.) Paul says this is what the Lord said. If he did not refer to what Mark and Matthew recorded of this conversation with the Pharisees, there is no way of knowing to what he did refer. Husband and wife may separate (it is both dangerous and unwise to do so), but neither can marry another; for marital companionship they must be reconciled.

Paul teaches the same thing in these words, "For the woman that hath a husband is bound by law to the husband while he liveth; but if the husband die, she is discharged from the law of the husband. So then if, while the husband liveth, she be joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if the husband die, she is free from the law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be joined to another man." (Rom. 7: 2, 3.)

And if she shall put away her husband. Mark says this law applies to the wife the same as it does to the husband. Matthew does not throw this light on the subject. Neither writer gives us all the law on the subject of divorce and remarriage. We have to put together all that is said by all the writers to get the full statement of the law.

It may be worth while to notice some objections which are commonly raised to the plain teaching of these passages. There are some who say the exception mentioned by Matthew is of no force now because not mentioned by any writer since Pentecost. If that statement is not binding now, Jesus made an idle statement which never was and never will be binding. It was not binding before his death, for the law of Moses was in effect then. It will not be binding after this Christian age, for in the next world they neither marry nor are given in marriage. So it must be of force now. Matt. 18: 15-17 is binding now, though it is not mentioned by any writer this side of Pentecost.

Another says there is no ground for divorce on account of *adultery*, but there is for *fornication*. There is a technical difference in the meaning of the two words which the reader can get from a good dictionary, but the Bible does not use the words according to such technical definitions. Paul called the sin at Corinth fornication when it was the act of married people. (1 Cor. 5.) Fornication is a general term including all forms of moral uncleanness; while adultery is a specific term.

Another says to divorce for trivial reasons and remarry is to be guilty of adultery, but one may get forgiveness for the sin and continue to live in that union. If a union is adulterous and sinful before one obeys the gospel, why is it a holy union thereafter? If a man is living in polygamy and we teach him the truth and he wishes to obey the gospel and become a Christian, may he go on living in polygamy? Polygamy is one form of adultery; marrying a divorced person who was divorced for trivial reasons, is another form of adultery. If one has to discontinue polygamy to be a Christian, why will he not have to discontinue the other form of adultery to be a Christian? Some object to this because it breaks up homes and brings suffering on innocent children. The Jews who had married foreign women, on the return from the captivity were required to put them away. (Ezra 10; Neh. 13.) This caused no little sorrow to the women and suffering to children, but who will say that it was wrong? or that it should not have been done? The way of the transgressor is hard (Prov. 13: 15), not only on himself, but on all who are associated with him. Shall we set aside a good law, made for the protection of the home and the maintenance of purity, just because it will bring sorrow and suffering on a few because of its violation? To follow that rule would make a mockery of justice, and turn criminals loose from penitentiaries to go back to their families from which their crimes justly separated them.

Topics for Discussion

1. Notice the contrasts Jesus made between his teaching and that of Moses. (Matt. 5.)
2. Notice the effect of divorce as stated in Matt. 5: 32.
3. Does God forgive sin until one repents of his sin? Does repentance include discontinuance of the sin? Can two people living in adultery get forgiveness of that sin as long as they live in that sinful union?

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?
Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of
this lesson.

Introduction

Why is there need for teaching on this subject?
 Why is the church suffering from a lack of teaching on the subject?
 How does this teaching protect the home?

Golden Text Explained

Is the institution of marriage divine? Why?
 Discuss the five purposes of marriage. Any others?
 How have state laws contributed to breaking down marriage laws?
 How have religious leaders contributed to this situation?
 Are God's laws concerning marriage of universal application?
 What duties do elders of churches have in these matters?

What Moses Taught

Why were the Pharisees asking Jesus about divorce?
 How were the Jews divided on the subject of divorce?
 What did Moses teach about divorce?
 Do you think Moses allowed more freedom of divorce than Jesus allows?
 Why did Moses allow this freedom of divorce?
 What is suggested by the hardness of their hearts?
 What was the benefit in requiring a writing of divorcement?

God's Law from the Beginning

How does the creation of man suggest God intended there should be no divorce?

What is meant by leaving father and mother?

What is the meaning of cleaving to the wife?

How are we taught that man and wife shall be one flesh?

Is it ever possible for those who are one to become two again?

Since God joins, how serious is it to get a divorce?

The Law of Christ

Against whom is sin committed when a divorce is obtained?

What is Paul's understanding of this teaching?

It is possible for husband and wife to separate and remain faithful to God?

How does Mark apply this teaching to the wife?

Is the exception mentioned by Matthew binding now? Why?

May a polygamist become a Christian and continue to live in polygamy?

Does this principle apply to one living in adultery on account of remarriage?

May the law be set aside in any particular case because compliance with it will entail suffering and hardship?

What example do we have of this in the Old Testament?

What have you learned from the daily Bible readings?

What points of interest in the topics for discussion?

Lesson X—June 5, 1949

JESUS AND THE RICH YOUNG RULER

The Lesson Text

Mark 10: 17-31

17 And as he was going forth into the way, there ran one to him, and kneeled to him, and asked him. Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

18 And Je'-sus said unto him. Why callest thou me good? none is good save one, *even God*.

19 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not kill. Do not commit adultery. Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor thy father and mother.

20 And he said unto him. Teacher, all these things have I observed from my youth.

21 And Je'-sus looking upon him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.

22 But his countenance fell at the saying, and he went away sorrowful: for he was one that had great possessions.

23 And Je'-sus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples. How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

24 And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Je'-sus answereth again, and saith unto them. Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

25 It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

26 And they were astonished exceedingly, saying unto him, Then who can be saved?

27 Je-sus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for all things are possible with God.

28 Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.

29 Je-sus said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or lands, for my sake, and for the gospel's sake,

30 But he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

31 But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."* (Luke 12: 15b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—John 15: 8-16.

Daily Bible Readings

May 30. M.....	Riches Bring no Lasting Peace (Eccles. 5: 10-17)
May 31. T.....	No Lasting Profit from Great Wealth (Eccles. 2: 1-11)
June 1. W.....	Youth are to Remember Their Creator (Eccles. 12: 1-14)
June 2. T.....	Obedience to God Brings Life (Matt. 19: 16-22)
June 3. F.....	Beware of Covetousness (Luke 12: 13-21)
June 4. S.....	The Secret of Contentment (Phil. 4: 10-20)
June 5. S.....	Paul's Warning Concerning Wealth (1 Tim. 6: 6-19)

TIME.—A.D. 30, perhaps in March.

PLACE.—Beyond Jordan in Peraea.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, and the rich young ruler.

Introduction

The interest which this young man had in his eternal salvation was commendable. But the value which he placed upon eternal life as compared to that which he placed upon his wealth is both revealing and disappointing. The incidents from the life of Jesus selected by the Holy Spirit for our instruction are applicable to the average human being. The value of the Bible for the average man is derived from the fact that its examples and its principles fit the average man. And it is true today that the average man wishes to have eternal life, when he can't stay here any longer, but he is still not willing to pay a very big price for it. People wish to flavor everything they do with a little religion. They wish to mix religion with their pleasure, their business, and their politics; but they do not wish to mix enough to cause them to make sacrifices, or deny themselves very much worldliness and ungodliness. This young man wished to have eternal life provided he could keep and enjoy his money as long as he lived on earth. And there are many people today who wish to have eternal life provided they can have their worldly pleasures on earth. And as this young man refused to accept eternal life on the condition that he part with his money, so people today turn their back upon eternal life when they learn it is to be gained through sacrifice and self-denial.

This young man is to be commended too for the fact that he came to Jesus to learn how to gain eternal life. It showed his faith in Jesus as a teacher of truth. There were many religious teachers of that day proposing to tell people the answer to his question, but

he showed his wisdom in seeking the answer from Jesus, who is the way, the truth, and the life. (John 14: 6.) The world is looking just about any place and to any one today except to Jesus for the answer to the one great and all-important question. Philosophers, psychiatrists, councils, synods, and conferences are proposing various things to bring peace and happiness in this life and in the world to come, and people are going from one to the other in vain efforts to gain that for which they seek. They will not come to Jesus because his way is the hard way; but they do not gain what they seek from these human sources, because they have not the power to give eternal life.

Golden Text Explained

Wealth not essential to happiness. From the way many people live one would get the idea that wealth is absolutely essential to happiness here in this life, if not in the life to come. But wealth is not at all essential to our happiness and well-being here. When once we have learned the secret of being content with such things as we have (Phil. 4: 12), *we* may be just as happy in our humble abode as is the millionaire in his mansion. David said, "Better is a little that the righteous hath than the abundance of many wicked." (Psalm 37: 16.) And Solomon said, "Better is little, with the fear of Jehovah, than great treasure and trouble therewith." (Prov. 15: 16.) This does not mean that wealthy people cannot be happy; but we should not get the idea that poor people cannot be happy. Those who fear the Lord and do right have the approval of God, and this is the true basis of genuine happiness.

Wealth brings temptations. Solomon said, "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance, with increase: this also is vanity. When goods increase, they are increased that eat them; and what advantage is there to the owner thereof, save the beholding of them with his eyes? The sleep of a laboring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much; but the fulness of the rich will not suffer him to sleep." (Eccles. 5: 10-12.) The thirst for more is insatiable. Even the desire for wealth brings temptations which drown men in destruction and perdition. (1 Tim. 6: 9, 10.) Men who have longed for riches have suddenly realized their desires only to find that there were so many bitters with the sweet that they could not enjoy their wealth. Wealth is a stewardship from God which one must handle wisely. If they give way to the usual temptations they forget God and learn to trust in their riches, and fail to lay up treasures in heaven. (1 Tim. 6: 17-19.) Wealth throws the average person into company with people who do not love the Lord, and this brings new temptations which are apt to lead one away from God.

Spiritual food necessary to spiritual growth. Our text was spoken as part of a warning against covetousness, and following this Jesus gave a parable concerning a man who forgot that he was a dual being; he worked only for that which could be used for the physical man. He thought he was really living if he had about him everything his physical man needed, though he was destitute of the things which the spiritual being must have to grow. He had to learn the lesson that his soul could not feast on grain and such things as can be stored in barns. Man shall not live by bread alone—things which minister to the physical man—but upon every word which

proceeds from the mouth of God. We are to desire the sincere milk of the word that we may grow thereby. (1 Pet. 2: 1, 2.) So life does not consist in the abundance of material wealth one has; but life really consists in being right with God. The one who is right with God can be happy whether rich or poor; but the rich man cannot be happy whether right or wrong with God. And he who trades the favor of God for wealth will not long be happy.

Exposition of the Text

Conditions of eternal life. Good Teacher, what shall I do? It is said that this young man ran to Jesus to ask this question. It is said that it takes something most unusual and important to cause an oriental to "break his slow, sedate, dignified walk." His manner of address shows that he recognized Jesus as a teacher, and as a good, or most excellent, teacher.

That I may inherit eternal life. This young man had the idea he had to do something to inherit eternal life. There are some who think because eternal life is a gift (Rom. 6: 23), there is nothing to do to get it; they think if they must do something they would merit eternal life, and therefore it could not be a gift. But since the thing done does not merit the life, we conclude that it is but a condition imposed upon us for the manifestation of our faith, and our submission to God.

None is good save one, even God. Jesus asked the man why he had called him good, the term being used in the absolute sense. The Jews recognized Jesus as only a man, but this man had called him by a title that is applicable to God only. We might with equal propriety today say, Why callest thou me reverend? none is reverend save one, even God. Jesus forbids the use of all such titles as apply to God. (Matt. 23: 8-12.)

Thou knowest the commandments. Matthew says, if thou wouldst enter into life, keep the commandments. With the exception of one, Do not defraud, these commandments are from the Decalogue as given by Moses. Hence we conclude that eternal life in the time of the law of Moses was conditioned upon obedience to the law of Moses. Then, as now, allowance was made for human frailty, and proper sacrifices were made for ignorance of the law and the weaknesses of the flesh.

All these have I observed from my youth. This young man did not mean that he had kept these commandments perfectly. That would have been presumption and self-righteousness which would have kept Jesus from having the attitude toward him that he had. But barring human frailties, he had lived by these rules of conduct. From this we conclude, (1) He was clean morally; (2) his home life was right, for he honored his parents; (3) his community life was good, for he did not steal, kill, lie, or defraud his neighbor; and (4) he was not a reformed reprobate, for he had lived that way from his youth. Perhaps no one can claim a better, cleaner character than this young man could. But in spite of this fine character, he did not have the hope of eternal life.

Jesus loved him. Jesus loves all men, so this statement must be taken in a sense in which Jesus does not love all men. He had such a fine character, and was so near to the kingdom, that Jesus loved him for what he was and hated to lose him for what he could

do for the Lord. There are many fine people today whose characters are as good as any in the church, but they are lost because they rebel at some one thing the Lord commands.

One *thing thou lackest*. If it were not for one thing, Jesus intimates, you could have eternal life for which you seek. So near, and yet so far away! Just one thing more is necessary, but he refuses to do that.

Sell . . . give . . . and come. This was a test as to whether he loved his money or his Lord supremely. You have treasure on earth; convert it to treasures in heaven. You are giving your time and interest to material wealth; give it to Jesus and his kingdom. Do this and you can have eternal life.

His countenance fell at the saying. He has been tested for complete submission to the Lord, and he has failed. Sadly he turned away from Jesus and from eternal life that he might enjoy his earthly riches. If he would not obey this commandment, he did not obey the others primarily because they were of God. He obeyed the others because he was willing to do so; he refused to obey this one because he was unwilling to sell his property. He showed a disposition to do his own will when there was a conflict between his will and that of God. He was not completely submissive to the will of God.

The Danger of Riches. (Verses 23-27.) *How hardly shall they that have riches*. It is most difficult for those who have great wealth to go to heaven. There are too many temptations associated with wealth for many to escape them. In this connection read a sensible prayer in Prov. 30: 7-9. The statement about it being hard for the rich to enter heaven is repeated for emphasis, to impress his disciples with the fact that riches usually keep people out of heaven.

It is easier for a camel. The camel was about the largest animal with which the Jews were acquainted, and the eye of the needle about the smallest thing. So this was a proverb among them, and was their way of saying that a thing was impossible. This is seen to be the meaning of it from the conversation which follows. The idea that there was a gate in the wall around Jerusalem called the Needle's Eye, and that a camel could not go through it without taking off its load and getting down on its knees is unfounded.

Who then can be saved? If the rich man cannot enter the kingdom of God, who can be saved. From this we learn that entering the kingdom is equal to being saved; only the saved enter the kingdom. It may be well to point out that Jesus put the emphasis on *trust in riches* when he repeated his statement in verse 24.

With men it is impossible. This shows that the disciples understood the proverb about the camel and needle's eye to mean an impossibility. And it is impossible for men who put their trust in riches to go to heaven. Solomon says the man who trusts in riches shall fall (Prov. 11: 28), and David has a fine statement against such trust. (Psalm 49: 1-12.)

All things are possible with God. The connection in which this statement is found forces the conclusion that it is possible for God to save a rich man. If he properly uses his wealth, he can be saved. But we might raise the question about how rich he will be if he uses his money properly. While there are millions of people who have never heard the gospel, thousands of them going into eternity every day unprepared to meet God, we wonder how love for lost souls will

allow us to keep wealth unused, or to live in the luxury in which many of us live.

The reward of sacrifice. (Verses 28-31.) *Lo, we have left all.* These apostles had left their business, their means of gaining a living for themselves and families. They had done as much as Jesus commanded the rich young ruler to do, though their scanty possessions would not help the poor. Was their choice a poor one? was it a foolish choice? If a man were to do the same thing now, what would people think of him? Was the need for doing such any greater then than it is now? If Jesus were on earth now, do you think he would ask some to make such a sacrifice? Would you be willing to make that sacrifice if Jesus asked you to do it?

He shall receive a hundredfold now in this time. Certainly Jesus does not mean that a man who forsakes his father and mother for Christ shall receive a hundred fathers and mothers; if he forsakes his wife to obey the Lord he will be given a hundred wives; so sacrificing money does not mean we shall receive a hundred times as much as we give. But that which we gain by making these sacrifices is worth a hundredfold more than that which we lose in the sacrifice. Or that the Lord will bless us in his own good way to make up a hundred times for what we sacrificed. This hundredfold blessing is said to be in this time. People are glad to lend money for a much smaller rate of interest than that. Why not lend money and service to God for a hundredfold increase.

In the world to come eternal life. Added to the hundredfold in this life, we get eternal life in the next world. Those who believe in the impossibility of apostasy try to prove that we have eternal life in actual possession on earth. Jesus says the righteous go away from the judgment into eternal life. (Matt. 25: 46.) We have spiritual life here, but not eternal life. Eternal life is a state of bliss into which the children of God go, and in which they spend eternity with God and all the redeemed, so certainly we cannot have that in actual possession on this earth.

First shall be last, last first. This was given as a warning to the apostles. They still had imperfect ideas of the kingdom, and they expected to get high positions in the kingdom when it should come. So Jesus warns them that some who are first to give up all to follow him may be last in the matter of rewards. Jesus will reward according as we deserve; he will not play favorites. Some one who comes into the kingdom later may be first in the matter of rewards. Some think Paul is an illustration of this. He came into the service much later than the first apostles, yet he was preferred above them in the work he was privileged to do, and the revelations the Lord gave him.

Topics for Discussion

1. The proper use of money, little or much, determines one's destiny. If we sow—use our money—to the flesh, we shall reap corruption. (Gal. 6: 8.)

2. To be face to face with a duty, and then deliberately turn from it, refusing to do what the Lord commands one to do, is a fearful thing. One does not have to rebel at every thing the Lord commands to be a rebel; one is enough. And there is no room for a rebel in heaven.

3. The rich young ruler will get no reward in judgment for being such a fine character, because he will be condemned for rebelling at the Lord's command. So good men today who refuse to accept Christ will not be given credit in judgment for their goodness on account of their sin of rejecting Christ.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What is the average attitude toward eternal life?

How did the young man of our lesson show his wisdom?

To whom are many looking today for eternal life?

Why do many reject the Lord's way of gaining eternal life?

Golden Text Explained

Can poor people have real happiness?

What is the true basis of genuine happiness?

Does the possession of wealth guarantee happiness?

What dangers are connected with wealth?

What responsibilities are connected with wealth?

What are the needs of the dual nature of man?

Of what does a man's life really consist?

Conditions of Eternal Life

What question did the young ruler ask?

What idea did his question reveal?

What did Jesus teach him about titles applied only to God?

What can you say for the character of this young man?

What was the attitude of Jesus toward this man?

What did Jesus tell this man to do?

Why did Jesus give this man this particular answer?

How did the young man respond to the answer?

Do you think the man was really obedient to God in other matters?

The Danger of Riches

What did Jesus say about the rich going to heaven?

What was meant by the camel and needle's eye?

What did Jesus teach about the possibility of the rich being saved?

Considering the difficulty in going to heaven, do you still want to be rich?

The Reward of Sacrifice

How much had the apostles sacrificed?

How many would be willing to do as much today?

What is the reward of such sacrifice in this life?

Will the reward be in kind with the things sacrificed?

What is the difference between spiritual life and eternal life?

Where do we enjoy eternal life?

What is the meaning of the last being first, and first last?

What have you learned from the daily Bible readings?

What is there of interest in topics for discussion?

Lesson XI—June 12, 1949

THE PARABLE OF THE HUSBANDMAN

The Lesson Text

Mark 12: 1-12

1 And he began to speak unto them in parables. A man planted a vineyard, and set a hedge about it, and digged a pit for the winepress, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into another country.

2 And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruits of the vineyard.

3 And they took him, and beat him, and sent him away empty.

4 And again he sent unto them another servant; and him they wounded in the head, and handled shamefully.

5 And he sent another; and him they killed: and many others; beating some, and killing some.

6 He had yet one, a beloved son: he sent him last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son.

7 But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.

8 And they took him, and killed him, and cast him forth out of the vineyard.

9 What therefore will the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others.

10 Have ye not read even this scripture: The stone which the builders rejected, The same was made the head of the corner;

11 This was from the Lord, And it is marvellous in our eyes?

12 And they sought to lay hold on him; and they feared the multitude; for they perceived that he spake the parable against them: and they left him, and went away.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."* (1 Cor. 4: 2.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rom. 13: 1-7.

Daily Bible Readings

June 6. M.....	The Stone the Builders Rejected (Psalm 118: 14-29)
June 7. T.....	God's Messengers Mocked and Despised (2 Chron. 36: 14-21)
June 8. W.....	Continuing Crimes of the Fathers (Luke 11: 45-52)
June 9. T.....	Stephen Accuses the Jews (Acts 7: 51-60)
June 10. F.....	The Son Rejected and Killed (Mark 15: 1-20)
June 11. S.....	The Fall of the Jews (Rom. 11: 1-24)
June 12. S.....	How First God Visited the Gentiles (Acts 15: 7-21)

TIME.—A.D. 30, April.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus and the Jews.

Introduction

The parable in our lesson this week was given during the last week of the life of our Lord. He spent this last week in Jerusalem debating with the Jews and teaching all who would listen to him. This has been called "the busy week" of his ministry. It begins with his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, supposed to be on Sunday, and ended with his death on Friday following, though scholars may not know the exact days on which some of these things occurred. And Wednesday and most of Thursday cannot be accounted for according to the way Bible chronologists have worked out the matters.

The Jews have always been a disobedient people, and their rejection had been foreseen by prophets. Even Moses predicted, not only their captivity in Babylon, but sufferings beyond that captivity. (Deut. 28.) And Paul quotes the prophecies to prove that the Jews had been a disobedient and gainsaying people in spite of the goodness of God. (Rom. 10: 18-21.) Then in Romans, eleventh chapter, Paul argues at length the fall of the Jews as a nation of chosen people, though many individuals were still among the elect. This chapter should be studied carefully in connection with this lesson, for it shows why the Jews were rejected, how and why the Gentiles were grafted in, and on what condition they stand in the favor of God. Jesus also foretold the fall of the Jews and the destruction of Jerusalem which would do away with their temple worship. (Matt. 24: 3-28.) Sin seems to be accumulative, at least in its consequences, and the generation which crucified Christ "filled up the measure of their fathers" so that upon them came the consequence of the slaying of the prophets of days gone by. (Matt. 23: 29-36.) It was that generation which filled to overflowing the cup of iniquity, and upon

that generation the wrath of God was poured out to its uttermost. (1 Thess. 2: 14-16.) The destruction of Jerusalem and the suffering of the Jews from that time even until now are due to the disobedience and rebellion of the Jews, and as long as they remain in unbelief they will continue to suffer.

Golden Text Explained

The office of steward. The word *steward* is the translation of a compound Greek word (*oikonomos*), made up of *oikos* and *nemoo*. The first part means a house, and the last part means management. So the word literally means *the management of a house*. Thayer defines the word as follows: "*The manager of a household or of household affairs; esp. a steward, manager, superintendent*, (whether free-born, or, as was usually the case, a freed-man or slave) to whom the head of the house or proprietor had intrusted the management of his affairs, the care of receipts and expenditures, and the duty of dealing out the proper portion to every servant and even to the children not yet of age." Joseph held such a position in Potiphar's house, and it is said that Potiphar "knew not aught that was with him, save the bread which he did eat." (Gen. 39: 3-6.) Paul said he was a steward of the mysteries of God, so it was his duty to deal to each one that portion needed. Teachers and preachers are stewards of the word of God, and they have the duty of taking that which God supplies and using it wisely for the Lord to the best advantage of those under their influence. Elders are stewards of God; they are managers, superintendents, of the churches of God, so it is their duty to manage the affairs of the congregations in such way as to honor God.

Faithfulness required. The word *require* means "to demand; to claim as by right and authority . . . 2. To demand or exact as necessary or appropriate." (Webster.) God requires faithfulness; he demands it; he claims it as by right and authority. Having redeemed us, we belong to the Lord; we are his slaves. So he has a right to demand things of us. We are citizens in his kingdom; he is the king and we are citizens. As king he has authority to require anything of us he sees fit. So he requires that stewards be faithful.

He does not require that all stewards have the same ability, and that they all accomplish the same amount of good. He does not demand that one save as many souls as another. He requires that each one be faithful in the use of what ability he has. The two talent man was given the same blessing the five talent man was given, though he had not made as much money for his master. But he had been as faithful in the use of his lord's money as the five talent man had been. The one talent man was not faithful in the use of what he had. He was an unfaithful steward.

The Jewish nation was chosen of God for certain purposes. They were to keep alive the true worship of God, but they drifted into idolatry; they were to exemplify goodness, kindness, and purity, but they were evil, oppressive of the poor, and they were guilty of all the impurity of the nations about them. (Isa. 5: 1-7.) They were to bring the Messiah into the world. This they did, but they promptly rejected and crucified him. They were unfaithful stewards of the manifold grace of God. And since it is required that stewards be faithful, they were rejected as a consequence of their unfaithfulness.

We should learn from this the lesson that if we are not faithful to our stewardship, we will be rejected and punished for that unfaithfulness. As surely as the Jews were cast off, and as surely as the one talent man was cast out, so surely we will be lost if we prove unfaithful to our Lord.

Exposition of the Text

Planting the vineyard. *A man planted a vineyard.* It is said that when this vineyard was planted the man set a hedge about it, dug a pit for the wine press, and built a tower. Some of these may be regarded simply as "drapery" to fill in the parable, so we are not supposed to find something in the fulfillment to correspond with each item, though we might do so without doing violence to any principle of scripture or teaching anything that is false. But the idea intended here is that God selected the Jews for a peculiar work; they were his vineyard. We have a beautiful statement of this in Isa. 5: 1-7, parts of which follow: "My wellbeloved had a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and he digged it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also hewed out a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes . . . For the vineyard of Jehovah of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for justice, but, behold, oppression; for righteousness, but, behold, a cry." So in our parable the Lord refers to the selection of the Jews to accomplish the works of God. Jesus said, He let it out to husbandmen. This simply means that God made the Jews responsible for using his favors to honor and glorify him. If we look at the nation as the vineyard, we might look upon the leaders as the men to whom God let his vineyard. And certainly the national leaders were responsible for the character of the nation, and whether it was an honor or dishonor to God.

Collecting the Rent. *At the season he sent a servant.* When a vineyard was let out to husbandmen, which means the farmers or those who cultivated the vineyard, there was an agreement between the owner and the farmers as to how much rent would be paid. Sometimes the rent was paid in money, and sometimes it was paid by giving the owner a certain portion of the produce. But regardless of how it was paid, there was a legal agreement or covenant, which was binding upon both parties. At the time for gathering the grapes this owner sent a servant to collect the fruits of the vineyard, the amount specified in the contract. It was good business on the part of the owner to send at this time; he was prompt in his dealings.

They beat him, sent him away empty. This was, of course, a violation of their contract with the owner. He had a right to deal firmly and take strong measures against them at this time. But the owner was long-suffering toward the husbandmen.

Wounded in the head, handled shamefully. This is the treatment received by the second servant the owner sent to the husbandmen to collect the rent due him. This was worse than the treatment received by the first. Since the owner was easy and indulgent in his attitude toward them, they took advantage of him and got rougher with the second servant.

Sent another, him they killed. It will be noticed that they got rougher with each servant as the owner sent them. Long-suffering and goodness have no appeal to some people; they only take advantage of them to do even worse things against him who manifests such godly characteristics. This is a picture of the Jews and their treatment of God's servants, the prophets, who tried to get the people to render unto God what was due him. They rejected the message of the prophets; soon they mistreated them by persecuting them; and then they became bold enough to put the prophets to death. It is though that Isaiah was sawn asunder. Jeremiah was lowered into a pit of slime. There is a list of many things they suffered recorded in Heb. 11: 32-40.

A beloved son, he sent him. When it became obvious that the husbandmen were not going to respect his servants, the owner decided to send his beloved son in the hope that they would respect him. The owner was merciful and gracious that he did not come against those husbandmen with sufficient police force to destroy them. All of this was put into the parable to impress his hearers that God had been long-suffering, even beyond what they had a right to expect, in his dealings with the people. He was not only being true to the history of this case, but he was constructing his parable in such way as to leave his hearers without excuse for their actions when the application should be made.

Let us kill him. When these wicked husbandmen saw the son coming, they agreed among themselves to kill him so that the vineyard would become their property. This was both daring and wicked, but they had become so hardened in their sins against the owner that they were equal to the occasion. This, of course, brought the parable up to date, and even a few days ahead of what had actually been done at that time. But plans were being made to kill the son, and no doubt some of these Jews were among those plotting his death, and when the application was made to them they realized that Jesus saw through their plans.

Punishment for unfaithfulness. What will the lord of the vineyard do? Jesus has completed his parable; he is now ready to make his application to his hearers. But he wishes to draw them out to commit themselves as to what should be done to such wicked characters as have been described in the parable. This manner of dealing with these Jews reminds us of Nathan's manner of dealing with David when he wished to bring him to a knowledge of his sin. (2 Sam. 12: 1-14.) Without delay, according to Matthew, the Jews answered his question, "He will miserably destroy those miserable men." (Matt. 21: 41.)

He will give the vineyard unto others. In each of three records of this parable two consequences are stated. (1) The men will be destroyed; and, (2) the vineyard will be taken away from them and given to others who will pay their rent. Luke adds that when the Jews saw that this applied to them, they said, God forbid. (Luke 20: 16.) They could see that it would be the just and righteous thing to do to destroy men who would kill the servants, and even the son of the owner of a vineyard, rather than pay the rents they had agreed to pay; but they refused to admit that it would be right for God to destroy them and take the kingdom from them because they had broken their covenant with God and had not rendered him the honor and glory justly due him.

The stone which the builders rejected. There is a tradition that, while the temple of Solomon was being built, a stone was rejected because no place was found for it at that time; but before the completion of the temple they had to find that stone and use it. No such statement is made in the Bible, so far as this writer knows. A certain fraternal order among us has fostered the tradition. The statement was simply a proverb, or a common saying among people of that day. The tradition usually makes the rejected stone the key-stone at the crown of an arch, but scripture says this stone rejected became the head of the corner; and Peter associates it with another scripture which calls it a cornerstone. (1 Pet. 2: 6-8.) So the only stone we read anything about in the Bible which was rejected, was made the head of the corner and not the keystone in the arch over a doorway. This, of course, refers to Jesus who was rejected by the Jews, but accepted of God as the foundation stone, tried and found true, upon which his church should be built. It should be noticed that the stone was first rejected, and then after the rejection it was made the head of the corner, or became the cornerstone for the support of the church. If the church was built before the death of Christ, the cornerstone would have to have been laid before it was rejected. This is conclusive proof that the building of the church was after the death, or rejection of Jesus.

They sought to lay hold on him. When they saw he had led them into pronouncing condemnation upon themselves including their own destruction as well as the loss of the kingdom, they were ready to do to him what their fathers had done to the servants and prophets of God; they were willing to do what they had condemned the husbandmen in the parable for doing.

They feared the multitude. People from all over the then known world had come to Jerusalem for the Feast of Passover, and many of them had not heard and seen enough of Jesus to be worked up to the point where they were willing to kill him, though they did not accept him as the Messiah. So these leaders were afraid to kill Jesus openly for fear of what the people would say and do about it. But they planned to "take him with subtlety, and kill him: for they said, Not during the feast, lest haply there shall be a tumult of the people." (Mark 14: 1, 2.) They seemed not to care what God thought about their treatment of his son, but they did fear the multitude. Public opinion is often a greater force in the lives of people than God's opinion.

Topics for Discussion

1. Would you treat God like these Jews did? Would you reject his servants, and crucify his Son? If you are not a Christian, that is what you are doing. Men often say they would have had no part in the rejection and crucifixion of Jesus, when at that time they are serving the devil who brought about the death of Christ.

2. God's right to our stewardship is based on the facts of creation, preservation, and redemption. Surely none can deny his right to our services.

3. A man who will demand rent for the use of his property is self-condemned if he refuses to serve God. God has more right to our service than we have to rent on our property which is used by others.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

Had the rejection of the Jews been foretold? By whom?

What did Jesus say about their destruction?

What came upon that generation for the sins of the Jews?

Will the Jews ever be the chosen people of God again?

Golden Text Explained

What is the meaning of the word steward?

Name some men who were stewards.

In what way are people stewards of God today?

What is the meaning of the word require?

What right does the Lord have to require things of us?

Does the Lord require the same of all?

For what purpose was the Jewish nation selected?

In what ways were they unfaithful as stewards?

Planting the Vineyard

In the application of this parable, who was the owner of the vineyard?

What was the Lord's vineyard?

What did God expect of his vineyard? What did he get?

Who were the servants sent to collect the rent?

How was the goodness of God illustrated in the parable?

What reputation did the Jews have for killing the servants of God?

According to the parable, what was their crowning act of disobedience?

Punishment for Unfaithfulness

How did Jesus lead the Jews to condemn themselves?

What prophet of old used this same method, and on whom?

In what two things did the punishment of the offenders consist?

In what way did the Jews manifest inconsistency?

What did Jesus say about the stone which was rejected?

What do you know of the history of that statement?

What is suggested here with reference to the time of the building of the church?

What did the Jews seek to do with Jesus?

What kept them from killing him at that time?

What have you learned from the daily Bible readings?

What is there of interest in topics for discussion?

Lesson XII—June 19, 1949

JESUS TEACHES IN THE TEMPLE

The Lesson Text

Mark 12: 35-44

35 And Je'-sus answered and said, as he taught in the temple. How say the scribes that the Christ is the son of David?

36 David himself said in the Holy Spirit, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand. Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.

37 David himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he his son? And the common people heard him gladly.

38 And in his teaching he said, Beware of the scribes, who desire to walk in long robes, and to have salutations in the marketplaces,

39 And chief seats in the synagogues, and chief places at feasts:

40 They that devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; these shall receive greater condemnation.

41 And he sat down over against the treasury, and beheld how the multitude cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much.

42 And there came a poor widow, and she cast in two mites, which make a farthing.

43 And he called unto him his disciples, and said unto them. Verily I say unto you, This poor widow cast in more than all they that are casting into the treasury:

44 For they all did cast in of their superfluity; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, *even* all her living.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"For he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes"* (Matt. 7: 29.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Mark 12: 28-34.

Daily Bible Readings

June 13. M.....	David Calls Messiah his Lord (Psalm 110)
June 14. T.....	Jesus Son of David and Son of God (Luke 1: 26-35)
June 15. W.....	Paul's Teaching About Christ (Rom. 1: 1-4; 9: 1-5)
June 16. T.....	Seven Woes on the Jews (Matt. 23: 13-36)
June 17. F.....	Sacrificial Giving Commended (2 Cor. 8: 1-7)
June 18. S.....	Giving According to Purpose (2 Cor. 9: 1-9)
June 19. S.....	Each to Give as Prospered (1 Cor. 16: 1-9)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, the Jews, and a poor widow.

Introduction

The matters of this lesson belong to the last day of the public teaching of our Lord. There is much that Mark does not record, such as the parable of the marriage feast, the parable of the ten virgins, the parable of the talents, and the judgment scene; and he gives a very abbreviated report of the seven woes pronounced upon the Jewish leaders. Knowing that his time had come, he is no longer careful to keep from incurring the wrath of the Jews. He accepts their challenge to discuss any and all questions. He even talked with them about paying tribute to Caesar. They had hoped to get sufficient evidence in this discussion to charge him with disloyalty to the Roman government, but were disappointed when he said for them to render to Caesar that which belongs to him.

The courage and self-possession of Jesus on this last day of his public ministry are marvelous. In fact his conduct during the whole of this last week, when he was so busy in Jerusalem, is remarkable. He knew he had come to Jerusalem for the last time; he knew that betrayal, mockings, scourging, and crucifixion awaited him. Yet in the face of all he knew was ahead of him, he was able to do his work in his usual masterful manner. The average human being would have been too distracted to concentrate sufficiently to meet the arguments the Jews were making. But Jesus not only answered their questions in such way as to silence them, but he proposed questions for them to answer which he knew they would not be able to answer. His submission to the will of his Father, his love for people and for the truth, and his desire to make use of every possible opportunity gave him the strength for the occasion.

Golden Text Explained

Jesus the Great Teacher. Jesus could have established a kingdom on earth by force, but he did not choose to do so. He chose to accomplish his purposes through teaching. He could have given his apostles all their preparation in a miraculous manner, but he chose to qualify them as far as they were capable of being qualified for their work by teaching them. Jesus could have arranged for his kingdom to be perpetuated through force, or through miraculous demonstration, but he chose the instrument of teaching instead.

Not only did Jesus prefer to accomplish things during his ministry by teaching, but he determined that his church should carry on in this manner. He told the apostles to go into all the world and teach people to become Christians. He could have converted them by a direct operation of the Holy Spirit, but he prefers to convert them by teaching them. Then when people become Christians he wants them to be taught to observe all things he has commanded that they may grow into his likeness. This growth is called sanctification. So far as we know Jesus could sanctify people through a direct operation of the Holy Spirit, but he chooses to sanctify through the word. (John 17: 17.) They cannot be sanctified through the word unless they are taught the word. God provided for the perfection of the saints that they might grow to full manhood in Christ, and be no longer children tossed about by every wind of doctrine. (Eph. 4: 11-16.) When a church ceases to carry on a full program of teaching, it ceases to be a church of Christ; it ceases to carry on the program of Christ; and will fail to accomplish the purposes of Christ in this world.

Authoritative Teaching. It is said that the scribes gave some eminent father as their authority for even the least details of their teaching. Jesus never one time referred to the great Jewish teachers of the past as authority for what he taught. He rarely made reference to Moses as an authority, and at times even dared to contrast his teaching with that of Moses. (Matt. 5.) This was shocking to the Jews, and all the more so since they regarded him as being nothing more than a human being.

Following this example of Jesus, preachers of the gospel should teach as those who have authority. It is not meant that they have authority in the same way or degree that Jesus had it, but the following suggestions will help the reader to get the point. (1) They should never preach anything for which there is no authority. Human opinions have no place in the pulpit. Preachers have the ears of the public so seldom, and for such a little time, that they cannot afford to use precious time spreading their opinions. (2) Be positive in the presentation of that which rests on the authority of Jesus Christ. It is possible to preach the truth in such a weak, uncertain, fearful manner as to render it ineffective. There are some who fear they are going to offend some one in the audience, so they take a halfhearted stand for the truth, and as a result they convince nobody. Some are afraid of being accused of being dogmatic. In matters of opinion it is unwise to be dogmatic. But when telling people what the Lord says we should never be mealy-mouthed. He either taught a principle, or he did not; if he did not clearly teach it, we ought not to take people's time talking about it; but if the principle is taught by the Lord, we ought to make a positive statement of it and give the scripture to prove it. (3) Declare the whole counsel of God without fear or favor. Preach all the truth if it drives away the biggest contributor, or if it condemns your best friend, even your own family. Perverters of God's word shall suffer; it does not pay to pervert or compromise for your best friend.

Exposition of the Text

Scribes embarrassed. (Verses 35-37.) *Scribes say the Christ is the son of David.* Matthew says this question was put to the Phari-

sees. Jesus had refuted the Sadducees on the subject of the resurrection, and then the Pharisees thought they could give Jesus a question about the law which he could not answer. He answered their question with such complete satisfaction that they made no reply. And while he had their attention he put this question to them about the Christ. They answered Jesus by saying that the Christ (not meaning Jesus of Nazareth, but the one whom God would designate as his anointed) is the son of David. By this they meant that he was to be a descendant of David. The Jews thought the Christ would be an ordinary human being, and that God would anoint him for his work. Since the Greek word *Christ* and the Hebrew word *Messiah* mean *anointed*, the one whom God would choose for this particular work would be anointed, so would be the Christ. And according to Psalm 110, they expected God to choose a descendant of David for this work.

David said in the Holy Spirit. To say a thing in *the Holy Spirit* is to say it under the guidance of, being moved by, the Holy Spirit. (See 1 Cor. 12: 3.) This is the key to the understanding and explanation of 1 Cor. 12: 13 where we read that "in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body." David was inspired when he said the Christ was to be his Lord, so he was speaking in the Spirit.

The Lord said unto my Lord. The first word "Lord" refers to Jehovah, the Father; the second word "Lord" refers to the Messiah. The Jews accepted this Psalm as referring to the Messiah. So the question of Jesus was, How can the son of David be David's Lord? The word son here refers to a distant descendant, and that makes it all the more difficult. From the Jewish point of view this would be an absolute impossibility. If the Messiah was to be an ordinary human being until he was anointed by Jehovah in some special way for the work of the Messiah, or Christ, it would follow that he could not possibly be David's Lord. But David was speaking by inspiration when he called the Messiah his Lord. Therefore, there was a sense in which the Messiah was David's Lord, or inspiration has erred. This is still a thorn in the flesh of the Jews; they are still as helpless as those old Pharisees in their efforts to answer the question. The dual nature of Jesus Christ, being Son of man and Son of God, is the only answer that can possibly be given. He was David's son according to the flesh; he was David's Lord according to the Spirit. Paul gives us the answer in Rom. 1: 3, 4; 9: 5, "Who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead."

Timely warning. (Verses 38-40.) **Beware of the scribes.** Matthew links the Pharisees with the scribes as being the objects of this criticism. (Matt. 23: 13-36.) Scribes were the writers and teachers of the law. A scribe might be either a Sadducee or a Pharisee, but most of them were Pharisees in their religious beliefs, and for this reason they were usually associated with the Pharisees.

Walk in long robes, and have salutations. This reproves their love of distinction. They dressed differently from other people, and they enjoyed having people salute them in such manner as to do honor to them. This looks like certain religious orders today who dress in long robes when officiating at religious ceremonies, and who love to be called *reverend*. They might as well ask people to call them *Almighty*, since *reverend* is no more applicable than *almighty*.

Chief seats in synagogues and feasts. This reproved them for their pride and arrogance. They exalted themselves and wished other people to look up to them as being worthy of special honors. They got pleasure out of others showing them unusual respect.

They devour widows' houses. There were a number of ways in which this might have been done. They could have charged unreasonable fees for services rendered. Widows of that time especially were not well versed in business matters. Upon the death of the husband the widow would select a leader at the synagogue she attended to help her manage her business affairs. Jesus said instead of helping, they devoured the widow's wealth. Or they might lend her money and encourage her to make promises of repayment they knew she would not be able to keep, so foreclose the mortgage and take the property. And their tribe is with us still.

For a pretence make long prayers. The long prayers were used to try to cover up the sins of which they were guilty. They would appear earnest in their prayers, hoping people would think that a man who prays so earnestly cannot be guilty of what the widows accused them of when they took all their property.

Shall receive greater condemnation. This greater condemnation refers to those who do wrong and then use prayer in an effort to cover their sin. It is bad enough to do wrong, but it is still much worse to try to cover it up by using such a sacred thing as prayer. Their offense is doubled, hence the condemnation is greater. If hell is going to be alike to all who go there, as some contend, how can some receive greater condemnation?

Jesus commends sacrifice. (Verses 41-44.) **Over against the treasury.** In the court of the women in the temple there were several, one authority says thirteen, coffer with trumpet-shaped mouths into which people cast money to be used principally for the care of the poor. It is said that Jesus sat down "over against" the treasury, that is, opposite from it, so that he might observe those who cast in their money. It has been suggested that he is still "over against" the treasury, and that he is observing every contribution we make, taking note as to how it compares with what he knows we ought to give. If we could remember each time the contribution is being taken that Jesus is watching, and if we would remember that our eternal happiness may depend upon whether he is pleased with that gift, we would undoubtedly do better.

The rich cast in much. There is no intimation that they were insincere, or that they were giving for show at this time. The fact that Jesus could see how much they were giving does not prove they were making a show; for he saw how much the poor widow gave, and no one entertains the idea she was making a vain show of what she was able to do.

A poor widow cast in two mites. This was indeed a very poor widow, since she had only two mites. Albert Barnes says a mite was worth about one third of a cent. But a standard dictionary at hand gives its value at one eighth of a cent.

Poor widow cast in more than all. Jesus said the widow had given more than all the rich people put together. God does not measure a gift by the amount of money given; he measures the gift by the amount of money one has left after the gift is made. According to this standard, the widow had given more than all the rest,

because she had nothing left and they still had plenty left on which to live. They could still look to a bank account for their daily bread, but the poor widow had nowhere to look but to God who has a special interest in the poor. Theoretically we say the widow was more sure of her daily bread than the rich, but practically we say it is best to have a bank account to look to.

They of their superfluity. The rich gave of their abundance, and they would hardly miss what they had given. It did not alter their standard of living, it did not cause them to do without a meal, or wear a suit a day longer than they would have done if they had not given. How well that describes many church people today! Their gifts do not mean a sacrifice. They give that which they do not have to use to maintain the standard of living of those with whom they associate.

All *she had, even all her living.* She might well have said, If I give these two mites I'll be completely without money and so be an object of charity. But there must have been some who were in greater need than she was. Undoubtedly she had her health and a chance to work for more, while there were many who had neither health nor a chance to work for a living. Or she could have said, Those who administer the treasury may not use it wisely, so the little I have I'll see personally that it gets to some worthy person. But she did not hide behind any excuse; she gave freely and liberally. And Jesus commended her for her gift. It is better to give more than we are able to give and be commended for it by the Lord, than it is to give less than we are able to give and be condemned for it.

Topics for Discussion

1. What think you of Christ? If he was an impostor, have nothing to do with him; if he was merely a good man, respect him; if he was only a prophet from God, believe and practice what he preached; if he was David's Lord, the Son of God, worship him and bow submissively to his authority in all things pertaining to life and godliness.
2. To screen themselves from the suspicion of dishonesty, some people put on the mask of piety; "and that they might not be thought as bad as the worst, they are studious to seem as good as the best."
3. People often say, I can't give much, but I'll give the widow's mite. If all members of the church should give the widow's mite, all they have, the gospel could be taken into all the world. The Lord does not demand the widow's mite of us, but he does expect us to make a reasonable sacrifice.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What do you know of the attitude of Jesus during his last week of teaching?

What can you say of his courage and self-possession?

What enabled him to carry on as he did?

Golden Text Explained

What means did Jesus use in accomplishing his purposes?

What is the instrument of conversion? and sanctification?

What is the responsibility of the church in these matters?

How did the teaching of Jesus differ from that of the scribes?

Discuss three necessary characteristics of our teaching today.

Scribes Embarrassed

What question did Jesus ask the scribes?

What was their answer, and was it right?

What is meant by speaking "in the Spirit"?

What question did Jesus ask the scribes that they could not answer?

Why could they not answer that question?

Explain how Christ can be both the Son and Lord of David.

Timely Warning

What is the difference between a Pharisee and a Sadducee?

What was a scribe?

Might he be either Pharisee or Sadducee?

What was the Lord's first charge against these scribes?

What was the second charge Jesus brought against the scribes?

What was the third thing he accused them of doing?

Did this teaching of Jesus stop this practice in the world?

How did these scribes attempt to cover up their sins?

Can one receive greater condemnation in hell than another?

Jesus Commends Sacrifice

What do you know of the treasury of the Jews?

What suggests Jesus' interest in our gifts?

Is there anything to suggest that the rich were giving for show?

What is the value of a mite?

By what standard is the value of a gift determined?

What is meant by giving of one's superfluity?

Is giving of one's superfluity acceptable to God today?

What excuses could the widow have offered for keeping her two mites?

Did she 'act wisely in giving all she had?

What did you learn from the daily Bible readings?

What did you get from the topics for discussion?

Lesson XIII—June 26, 1949

JESUS ANOINTED IN BETHANY

The Lesson Text

Mark 14: 1-9

1 Now after two days was *the feast of the passover* and the unleavened bread; and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him with subtlety, and kill him:

2 For they said, Not during the feast, lest haply there shall be a tumult of the people.

3 And while he was in Beth'-a-ny in the house of Si'-mon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster cruse of ointment of pure nard very costly; and she brake the cruse, and poured it over his head.

4 But there were some that had indignation among themselves, saying, To what purpose hath this waste of the ointment been made?

5 For this ointment might have been sold for above three hundred shillings, and given to the poor. And they murmured against her.

6 But Je'-sus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me.

7 For ye have the poor always with you, and whensoever ye will ye can do them good: but me ye have not always.

8 She hath done what she could; she hath anointed my body beforehand for the burying.

9 And verily I say unto you, Whosoever the gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"She hath done what she could; she hath anointed my body beforehand for the burying."* (Mark 14: 8.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 116: 1-14.

Daily Bible Readings

June 20. M.....A Woman Serves God's Prophet (2 Kings 4: 8-16)

June 21. T.....A Little Girl Does What She Can (2 Kings 5: 1-7)

June 22. W.....Abigail Does What She Can for David (1 Sam. 25: 18-31)

June 23. T.....	The Worthy Woman Serves (Prov. 31: 10-31)
June 24. F.....	A Sinful Woman Did What She Could (Luke 7: 36-50)
June 25.	S. Dorcas Did the Best She Could (Acts 9: 36-43)
June 26. S.....	Women Who Labored With Paul (Rom. 16: 1-12)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Bethany.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his disciples, Simon, and Mary.

Introduction

It was a woman who anointed Jesus in Bethany. Women have figured prominently in religious affairs in all ages. When we take into consideration the position women held in affairs generally, and when we remember that in most nations she was little more than mere chattel, we almost wonder at the prominence given woman in the Bible. Sarah had her rights which were respected (Gen. 21: 10); Miriam had a prominent place in the affairs of Israel (Ex. 15: 19-21); and Deborah was a judge in Israel. (Judges 4: 4.)

When we come into the New Testament we find women playing a part in the development of God's plans. Elisabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, figure prominently in the affairs, both in word and deed. And there is Anna, a prophetess, who had been many years in the temple worshipping with fastings and supplications night and day. (Luke 2: 36.) And Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, and many other women, ministered unto Jesus and his disciples during his personal ministry. (Luke 8:

3.) Much of the money which Judas carried in the bag was contributed by these women who loved the Lord and wished to have some part in the good work he was doing. No record was kept here so we may know how much they gave, nor can we measure the sacrifices they made; but God has a record of their gifts and of the sacrifices they made, and their treasure in heaven will be in keeping with the sacrifices made here. Women were the first to tell of the resurrection of our Lord. (Matt. 28: 7; Luke 24: 8-12.) Women were among the number who waited for the coming of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1: 14.) Joel said the Lord would pour out his Spirit upon all flesh, and that women would prophesy. (Acts 2: 17, 18.) And Philip's four daughters prophesied. (Acts 21: 9.) Priscilla had a part in teaching Apollos the way of the Lord more accurately. (Acts 18: 26.) And women were laborers together with the apostle Paul in several places. (Phil. 4: 2, 3.) They are given a subordinate place in the home and in the work of the church (1 Tim. 2), but they have a place, and an important work to do both in the home and in the church, and neither the home nor the church can function properly unless they do their part.

Golden Text Explained

Service limited by ability. Jesus said of this woman. She hath done what she could. She did what she was able to do. If she had had greater ability, she would have done more. And if she had had greater ability, Jesus would have been glad to accept more from her. "For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according as a man hath, not according as he hath not." (2 Cor. 8: 12.) She had the readiness, or was willing, to do to the limit of her ability.

Not many people are willing to go to the limit of their ability. It is human to minimize our ability so that we may evade our responsibilities. Paul exhorts us to have a just and sober estimate of our own ability and to act accordingly. "For I say, through the grace that was given me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but so to think, as to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to each man a measure of faith." (Rom. 12: 3.) So it is inexcusable for a person to conclude that he has no ability at all, and that, therefore, he cannot do anything at all. And it is unwise for one to have too high opinion of his ability and embarrass himself and the church by trying to do things one cannot do. But it is better to try and fail, than to refuse to make an attempt to do anything.

It is worthy of notice here that Jesus knew the ability of this woman. So he knows the ability of each one in his service. We may be able to deceive ourselves and the brethren who plan the program of the church, and so keep our names off the roll for service; but we will not be able to deceive the Lord who has given us our ability. When the final day of reckoning comes we will have to answer for not using the ability he gave us and knows we possess. But the sad thing is that it will be too late then to correct our mistakes.

Taking thought for the future. Jesus said this woman had anointed his "body beforehand for the burying." It seems that this woman, Mary, had grasped the idea of the death of the Lord more clearly than had his apostles. There was much talk among the disciples about what he had said about being killed by the Jews. It was inconsistent with their ideas of his Messiahship, but this woman had been able to take him at his word and believe what he had said about it. And in view of coming events she dared to do what she could to show her love for him and to encourage him for the ordeal ahead of him.

As Mary looked ahead and made preparations for coming events, so ought we to do. No lesson is taught more clearly, and no lesson is needed more today than the lesson of preparation for the future. There is service to perform in the Master's vineyard, and trained servants are needed. Young people should be willing to be taught and trained for service. And then there is the judgment day when each one shall give account of himself to God. And for that day much preparation should be made in order for us to meet God in peace. Those who make no preparation for meeting God will be lost eternally. So let us look ahead that we may see what is before us, and make preparation for coming events.

Exposition of the Text

Jews plan death of Jesus. (Verses 1, 2.) *Now after two days was the Passover.* These first two verses of our lesson deal with events which happened three or four days after the events related in verses 3 to 9. John says the feast made for Jesus at Bethany where Mary anointed him was six days before the Passover. (John 12: 1.) The Passover was on Thursday night, which was counted Friday by the Jews, the day beginning at 6 p.m. So the two days mentioned here would be Wednesday and Thursday, and the events of this section occurred on Tuesday of the last week Jesus lived on this earth.

Passover and unleavened bread. The Feast of the Passover was instituted in Egypt when the Lord slew all the first born in Egypt except among the Jews where blood was put on the doorposts. (Ex. 12.) The feast lasted seven days, from the fifteenth to the twenty-first Of the month of Abib or Nisan. During these seven days there was to be no leaven in their houses; they were to eat only unleavened bread. (Lev. 23: 4-8.) For this reason it was often called the feast of unleavened bread.

Sought how they might take him with subtlety. This was an admission of the unjustness of their cause. If they had had good cause for taking Jesus, they would not have felt the need of doing it with subtlety. To do a thing with subtlety means to do it cunningly or craftily; using guile, deceit, and secrecy. "And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reproved. But he that, doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, that they have been wrought in God." (John 3: 19-21.)

Lest there should be a tumult of the people. Many people from all over Palestine were in Jerusalem for the feast, and many of these people had seen Jesus work miracles; no doubt many of them had been fed by him in a miraculous way; and likely there were many who had been healed by him. Then there were pious Jews from all over the world in Jerusalem for the feast. They would object to seeing their leaders kill an innocent man. Well might these Jews fear that a tumult would be raised among the people. Barnes says that it is estimated that as many as three million Jews gathered in and around Jerusalem for this feast, and that tumults were common. But they had never dealt with a person so well and favorably known as was Jesus, so it was necessary that great caution be used in handling him.

The feast in Bethany. While he was in Bethany. From Mark's record we might get the idea that this feast and his anointing by this woman took place two days before the Passover. But from John we learn that it was six days before the Feast of Passover. Bethany was the home of Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha. Bethany was about a mile beyond the summit of the Mount of Olives. It was east of Jerusalem, and on, or near, the road that led from Jerusalem to Jericho. John says it was fifteen furlongs, or one and seven eighth miles, from Jerusalem. (John 11: 18.)

In the house of Simon the leper. Who this Simon was we have no way of knowing, but it is thought he was connected some way with the family of Lazarus and his sisters. He is called a leper, though he obviously did not have the disease at this time, for it was unlawful for a leper to be in company with people who did not have the disease. (Lev. 13: 45, 46.) There is little doubt that Jesus had healed Simon, and this was his way of showing appreciation.

There came a woman. Mark does not give us her name, but John tells us that it was Mary, the sister of Lazarus. Martha played her usual part by serving at the feast, and Mary was interested in the higher things as usual. (John 12: 2, 3.)

An alabaster cruse of ointment of pure nard. The word *alabaster* refers to the kind of material in this cruse, vessel, containing the oint-

ment. There were two kinds of alabaster. One was what we call gypsum, "a hydrous sulphate of lime, and forms, when calcined and ground, the well-known substance called *plaster of Paris*." The other kind, and the one used by Mary, was "a fibrous carbonate of lime." This was considered the best for keeping of ointments and perfumes. It was also more beautiful on account of the "variety of colored streakings, red, yellow, gray, etc., which it owes for the most part to the admixture of oxides of iron." (*Smith's Bible Dictionary*.)

This pure nard was a liquid perfume taken from a plant which grows in the Indies. We might get some idea of how precious it was when we consider that it takes one hundred fifty pounds of rose petals to make one ounce of attar or perfume. The scarcity of the plant from which it was made added to its cost.

Brake the cruse and poured over his head. Whether she broke the seal to pour out the perfume, or broke the neck of the bottle is not known, but the latter seems probable.

Some had indignation. Mark does not tell us who had indignation, but Matthew says it was the disciples; and John tells us that Judas suggested that the nard should have been sold and the money given to the poor; and he adds that Judas did not care for the poor, but wished to get his hands on the money. People often become indignant when things are not done to suit them, and they usually have ulterior motives which they never express. Some of them thought there was a waste of ointment. From this we may suppose they would not have criticized Mary for using a reasonable amount. John tells us Mary used a pound of nard, which was nearly twelve ounces, a Greek litra.

Might have been sold for three hundred shillings. A shilling was worth nearly seventeen cents in our money, so the price of the nard was about \$51. However the relative value of money would multiply its value several times so that her gift was perhaps ten times that amount.

Let her alone; she hath wrought a good work. In this connection may be taken the verse which serves as our Golden Text, and the thought of anointing his body for the burial. The disciples who were indignant about such waste would not have considered that amount a waste if he had been dead and they were preparing his body for burial. Mary anticipated his death, and was doing for him while he could appreciate it what the others would have been willing to do for him after his death. Some one has said, "If my friends have alabaster boxes full of the fragrant perfume of sympathy and affection laid away, which they intend to break over my body, I would rather they would bring them out in my weary and troubled hours, and open them, that I may be refreshed and cheered by them while I need them." Who have the bad habit of keeping our praise and affection until people are dead. It is much better to do as Mary instead of waiting, as the disciples wished to do, until he was dead.

Ye have the poor always with you. The days of opportunity for showing love for the Master were few, and Mary made good use of her time. There will never be a time when there will be no poor people, and we may do good to them any time. But then, as now, those who objected to Mary's use of the nard would do little for the poor at any time. And those who would do so much for Jesus, would also do much for the poor. The only way we can do for him

now is to do something for the poor, and those who will not care for the poor would not do anything for Jesus if he were here on earth.

Wheresoever the gospel shall be preached. Jesus did not intend that we should get the idea that the gospel cannot be preached without telling of this incident, but he did predict that the incident would go everywhere the gospel goes. It was an act of such sincere love and devotion, it was such a costly manifestation of love, and so much like that love of Jesus who gave himself to suffer in our place, that the story would live on and on as long as the gospel story lives. Three of the gospel writers recorded the story, and so it lives on, and will continue to live as long as the Bible is circulated. If the disciples had been left to their judgment they would not have told this story. They thought it was a waste of money, and people are prone to cover up the mistakes made by those associated with them. But the Lord's estimate of the value of a deed differs from our estimate many times. This manifestation of love on the part of Mary was so much like the love of God in the gift of his Son, that Jesus wanted it told everywhere.

For a memorial of her. The things we do and say here are like monuments raised to our memory. And our deeds and words live on after we are gone to remind people of us. We have it in our power to raise a worthy monument, but it will take love, devotion to right, and a willingness to sacrifice for others. All of us will leave memorials of some kind for the next generation to read. What will the next generation think of you?

Topics for Discussion

1. If a thing has to be done under cover, it is not worth doing. The Jews dared not take Jesus openly, and in this they were self-condemned.
2. May we use this expensive anointing of Jesus to justify extravagant expenditures of money in erecting fine church buildings? Is it better to spend less on church houses and more for the poor and spread of the gospel?
3. The telling of this story of what Mary did for Jesus has meant more to the poor through the ages than many times that amount of money could possibly have done. Jesus can take our unworthy deeds and make them serve most worthy ends.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What prominent women of the Old Testament do you know?

Name some prominent women of the New Testament.

How did women help Jesus and his disciples?

Contrast woman's condition in gospel lands with that in heathen lands.

Golden Text Explained

What determines the limit of our service?

How do many people evade responsibility?

What estimate should we have of ourselves?

What suggests that Jesus knew this woman's ability, and our ability?

How Mary's action looks to the future?

What lessons are suggested for us about preparing for the future?

Jews Plan Death of Jesus

Discuss the matter of the time of the events of our lesson.

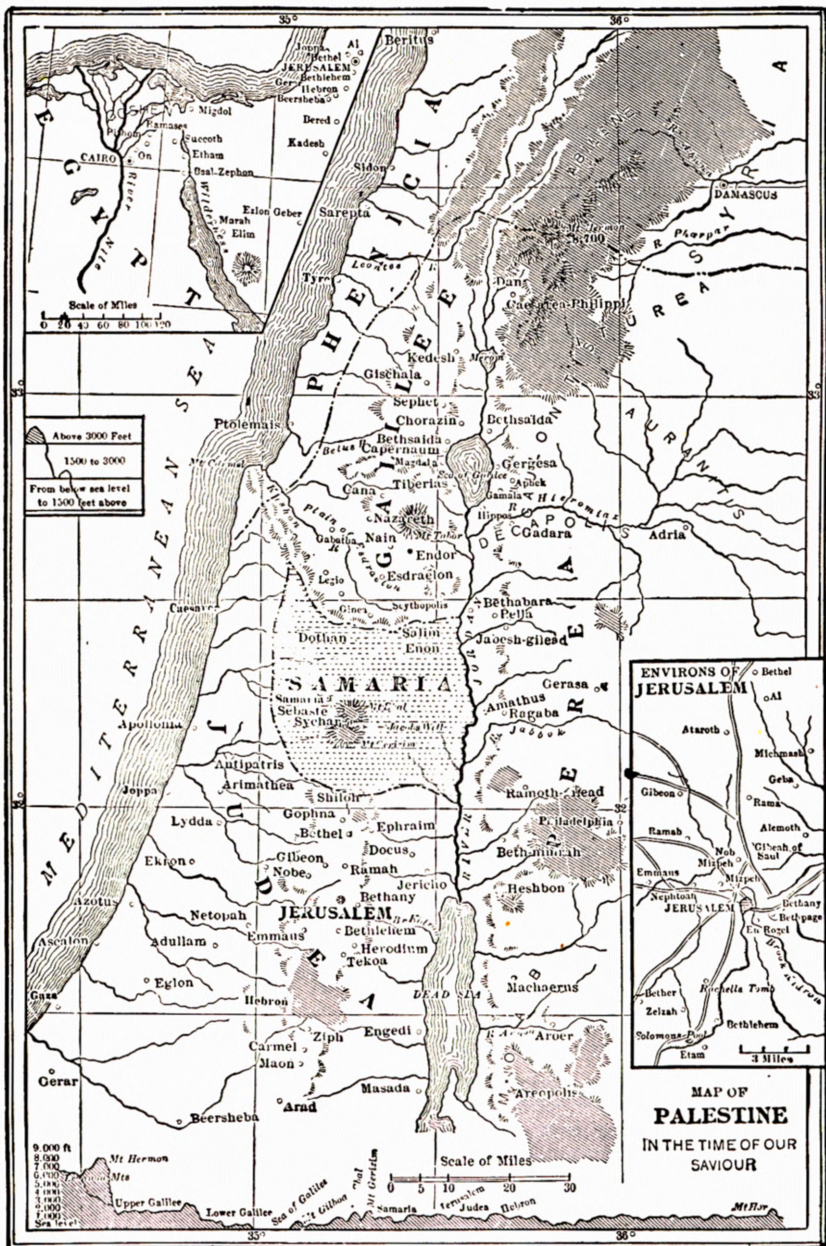
By what other name was the Pass-over called? Why?

What action of the Jews proved their motives unholy?
What is the meaning of the word "subtlety"?
What did the Jews fear from the people if they should kill Jesus?
Why did the Jews think a tumult would be raised?

The Feast in Bethany

What do you know of the location of Bethany?
In whose home was the feast made, and what do you know of Simon?
Who was the woman who anointed Jesus?
What do you know about alabaster?
What do you know about nard?
Who was indignant about the anointing?

How much nard did Mary use, and what was it worth?
What do you know about the source of nard?
Why did Jesus call the anointing a good work?
Do we give more flowers before or after death?
What did Jesus say about the poor?
Why has the story of this anointing lived so long?
Measured by this memorial, what do you think of Mary's character?
What do you think the next generation will think of you, if you are measured by the memorials you leave behind?
What did you learn from the daily Bible readings?
What did you get from the topics for discussion?



THIRD QUARTER

STUDIES IN LUKE

AIM.—*From a study of Luke's gospel to learn the love, sympathy, and helpfulness of Jesus in meeting human needs; to set forth the ways in which he meets these same needs today; and to inspire his followers to service for others in the name and spirit of Jesus.*

Lesson I—July 3, 1949

THE BOYHOOD OF JESUS

The Lesson Text

Luke 2: 40-52

40 And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

41 And his parents went every year to Je-ru'-sa-lem at the feast of the passover.

42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up after the custom of the feast:

43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they were returning, the boy Je'-sus tarried behind in Je-ru'-sa-lem; and his parents knew it not;

44 But supposing him to be in the company, they went a day's journey; and they sought for him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance:

45 And when they found him not, they returned to Je-ru'-sa-lem, seeking for him.

46 And it came to pass, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them, and asking them questions:

47 And all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

48 And when they saw him, they were astonished; and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing.

49 And he said unto them. How is it that ye sought me? knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?

50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

51 And he went down with them, and came to Naz'-a-reth; and he was subject unto them: and his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

52 And Je'-sus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."* (Luke 2: 52.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Eph. 6: 1-4.

Daily Bible Readings

June 27. M.....	Joseph as a Boy (Gen. 37: 1-11)
June 28. T.....	Samuel as a Boy (1 Sam. 3: 1-21)
June 29. W.....	David as a Boy (1 Sam. 16: 6-23)
June 30. T.....	Solomon in His Youth (1 Kings 3: 4-15)
July 1. F.....	Josiah in His Youth (2 Chron. 34: 1-13)
July 2. S.....	Josiah's Regard for the Bible (2 Chron. 34: 14-33)
July 3. S.....	Timothy as a Youth (1 Tim 4: 12-16)

TIME.—A.D. 9.

PLACES.—Jerusalem and Nazareth.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his parents, and Jewish teachers.

Introduction

It will be worth while to consider the environment in which Jesus grew up as a boy. (1) Jesus grew up in a rough rugged country, full of beauty and purity. He lived in a small village, not in a large city. (2) Jesus grew up under Roman dominion which was irksome and galling to the average Jew. Taxes were heavy, and tax collectors were as a rule harsh and unreasonable men. When Jesus was ten years of age there was an insurrection in Galilee. (Acts 5: 37.) (3) Within a short distance of his home there were many places of historic interest about which his parents could tell him many stories of prophets, priests, and kings. "There could not be a national history, nor even romance, to compare with that by which a Jewish mother might hold her child entranced. And it was his own history—that of his tribe, clan, perhaps family." (Edersheim.) (4) His schooling was that of the average boy of his day; it was public school and Bible school all in one. He learned to write by writing statements from the scriptures; he learned to read by reading the scriptures; and great portions of scripture had to be memorized by the children. The synagogue was his schoolhouse, and the priest and scribes were his teachers. (5) His home training was what every faithful Jewish father and mother would give their child. Beside the teaching they would give him out of the law and the prophets, he was taught a trade. Joseph was a carpenter, so Jesus learned the trade. To him it meant a worker of wood, whether building a house or making cabinets and furniture. "From the first days of his existence a religious atmosphere surrounded the child of Jewish parents. And this atmosphere is the most important element in the training of a child. Family religion is the foundation of the church, Sunday school, and the morality and prosperity of the nation." (Peloubet.)

Golden Text Explained

Growth of the Person. Jesus advanced in wisdom. The word *advance* is from a word which was used of men who cleared a path through forests and jungle for a marching army. He made advance, or cut a path, into new territory. It is said first that he advanced in wisdom. We are not to take the order of words here to mean that he advanced in wisdom before he did in stature; the growth in both was gradual and simultaneous. Though the eternal Spirit, the second person of the Godhead was in him, yet this eternal Spirit did not use his mind in the same way and to the same degree in his boyhood as in his maturity. He was allowed to grow naturally as all children grow. His divine nature did not assert itself during boyhood in such way as to approach the miraculous. Even his answering of questions in Jerusalem in such way as to astonish the teachers was not necessarily a use of miraculous knowledge. Some apocryphal books tell a story of Jesus making mud into the form of birds on the Sabbath, and about to be caught at it, he gave them life and caused them to fly away. But there is no inspired basis for such conclusions that Jesus exercised a wisdom beyond that which was attainable in natural ways. If children would give themselves to study with all their strength, and use all their time to the best advantage, which course we believe Jesus followed, they could show much more progress than the average child shows. His second advance was in

his physical stature. His parents gave him the proper food, he worked with Joseph in the shop, and he played with other children for diversion. He kept his body free from poison of strong drink; he did not abuse his body with filthy mental or physical habits, so his growth would be as nearly perfect as nature could make it. No doubt his mother gave him all that parents can give a child in the way of a clean healthful start in life.

Growth in Favor. To grow in favor of God need not suggest that he was less in favor of God at one time than at another; but as he grew older he became more and more what God expected him to be. And as he grew from boyhood into manhood he developed that personality and character which made it possible for his Father to say, I am well pleased. And we grow in the favor of God as we develop more and more in the likeness of his Son.

Next, Jesus grew in favor with men. His life was clean, his mind was active, and his attitude toward his parents and neighbors was good. All this rendered him a favorite to older people who observed him. He was all they could expect of a child, so naturally they admired him. People admire goodness in a child when they might be jealous of, or feel condemned by, the same degree of goodness in one of their same age. So the people who admired Jesus as a boy hated him when he was old enough to make them ashamed of the way they were living. To develop Christlikeness is still the most beautiful and admirable way to live, and it will win friends among those who love the Lord, but will make enemies of those who do not love the Lord and do not wish to be exposed by holy living or scriptural teaching.

Exposition of the Text

Jesus goes to the feast. His parents went every year. All males were required to go three times a year to Jerusalem, to Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. Women were not required to go, but many went, and the great teacher Hillel, born about one hundred years B.C., recommended that women go. Children whose parents attend religious services regularly have a better chance to grow up to be Christians than those whose parents do not. It is distressing to see children born into this world into homes and social circles that will make it practically impossible for them to get to heaven.

When he was twelve years old. We are not told that this is his first trip to Jerusalem, but from the preceding statement we may well conclude that this is not his first. Jewish children were expected to begin to keep the law regarding fasts and feasts at the age of twelve, and at thirteen he was called a **son of the commandment**, and was expected to study the law and begin to keep it as did adults. We usually consider children old enough at twelve to obey the gospel; they have reached the age of accountability, know right from wrong, and should begin to live for the Lord. Parents should prepare their children to obey the gospel at about twelve years of age, not because of this incident in the life of Jesus, but because of their mental and spiritual development.

Went up after the custom of the feast. The law required that this feast be held from the fourteenth to the twenty-first day of Abib, the first month of the Jewish sacred calendar. It corresponds with the latter part of March and the first part of April in our calendar. It was their custom to take along some first fruits to offer before the

Lord in appreciation of his bounties and as an indication that the whole of the harvest was devoted to him. (Lev. 23: 10-15.)

When they had fulfilled their days. It was permissible for Jews to go home after two days of the feast, but these godly people fulfilled their days, they stayed for all the feast. The worship of God and the association and fellowship of kindred spirits were good for them. Piety will cause people to linger; worldliness will cause people to rush away from the worship of God.

Jesus in Jerusalem. Jesus tarried behind. It is idle to speculate on whether he knew his parents were gone. One writer suggests that he may have had some thought of offering himself to the people as their Messiah as Moses offered himself to the Jews as their deliverer forty years before his time. (Acts 7: 23-30.) But this is worse than idle speculation. Jesus was a child with unusual interest in spiritual matters; he loved to go to the temple as all godly men of his day. Pious people tried to go by the temple as they left for their homes. Doubtless his parents went by the temple as they left the city, and Jesus engaging the teachers in conversation, was too interested to break away, so tarried behind.

His parents knew it not. We need not accuse them of negligence. He was used to their mode of travel, he had showed signs of being able to stay with the company on other trips and on this trip to the city. People traveled in large companies for safety and for good fellowship. Children would naturally group themselves together, and they would not expect to see him until time to eat or to go to bed.

Supposing him to be in the company. Some give this a secondary and spiritual turn which suggests a good lesson. People go along year after year supposing Jesus to be in their company. If you suggest to them that they teach and practice things which make his presence impossible they become offended. They continue to suppose him to be with them in spite of doing things contrary to his will.

Sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. It is a difficult thing for people to realize that Jesus is not with them or with their kinsfolk. We are inclined to regard our parents, brothers and sisters, and other relatives as being acceptable to the Lord whether they have obeyed the gospel or not. But God is no respecter of persons, and will punish our parents for disobedience the same as he will punish the parents of others.

They returned to Jerusalem, seeking for him. When they were unable to find him in their company, they went back to the city, looking for him, of course, on the return trip. Continuing our spiritual interpretation of these matters, we have a very practical lesson in a return to Jerusalem as the starting point of the church. When Jesus is excluded from a company of religious people today on account of false doctrines and unscriptural practices, there is little need to look among kinsfolk and acquaintances; just go back to Jerusalem for your faith and practice. The new Testament tells us how the church started in that city and how its work and worship were carried on; it tells us of the organization of the church; it tells us the name it wore and the name worn by individual disciples of the Lord. If we wish to be right, we can go back to the beginning and start anew with Jesus; and if we allow him to direct our footsteps we will never go astray.

They found him in the temple. After three days, usually considered as the third day after they left the city, though it may have been the fourth day. They found him engaged in hearing and asking questions. He was not taking the lead and teaching them things beyond their ability to understand, but he was showing a knowledge unusual for his age by the questions he could ask and the answers he could give their questions. Knowledge can be manifested by the kind of questions one asks as well as by the answers he gives.

Why hast thou thus dealt with us? Why had he not told them he was going to spend some time with the teachers? Jesus did not answer the question, and neither can we. Mary had been quite disturbed; they had sought him sorrowing, "searching with aching hearts." Only a mother can imagine what fears ran through Mary's heart. The Lord had committed a child to her in a most unusual way, and now she has lost him; it was enough to cause her sorrow. In this statement Mary called Joseph the father of Jesus. No doubt Jesus was taught to call him father, and it is doubtful if at this age he knew of his miraculous conception.

How is it that ye sought me? These are the first recorded words of Jesus. His first recorded independent action is going to the house of God, and his first words show surprise that anyone who knew him would think to look anywhere else for him. His parents had taught him by precept and example to go to the house of worship, where else would they expect to find him? Where do parents usually expect to find their children today when they are not in their place at home? The difference is a sad commentary on the way people rear their children, and the way the average child responds to proper teaching.

I must be in my Father's house. Whether Jesus meant he should be about his Father's business or in his Father's house is not clear; the margin reads, "in the things of my Father." Mary had called Joseph his father, but he called God his Father, and maybe in such connection as to warrant the conclusion that he drew a contrast, letting them understand that he recognized God as his Father.

Jesus goes back to Nazareth. They understood not the saying. Had Mary forgotten the miraculous conception? Had she forgotten what the angel said about her son? In spite of these things she could not grasp the full import of his words and actions on this occasion.

He was subject unto them. This expresses all we know about his life for eighteen years, except for what we have in the last verse of the lesson, our Golden Text. He grew as any boy would grow, mentally, physically, and spiritually. He obeyed his parents as any boy would be expected to do. Parents should use this passage to teach their children the lesson of obedience. Most children have a desire to be like Jesus, and when they learn that he was obedient to his parents, it will make a good impression on them. Jesus stayed with his parents until he was thirty years old. It is thought that Joseph died during this period, and that likely Jesus had the responsibility of providing for his mother and her other children until they were old enough to take over that responsibility.

His mother kept all these sayings in her heart. Mary also pondered the things said by the shepherds in her heart. (Luke 2: 19.) No doubt she put them all together with these sayings and tried to

figure out just what they all meant. What a blessed occupation of the mind to put together different sayings of the Lord to learn the full meaning of them. The minds of Christians today would be much better occupied with such meditations than with the average thoughts suggested by the radio to which some listen several hours per day. It is a natural thing for a mother to keep the unusual saying and deeds of her children, but what a store of such things Mary had to ponder in her heart after Jesus had gone back to his Father. No woman ever had such a rich store of memories as Mary had. No wonder the angel said she was highly favored! And no wonder Elisabeth could say, "Blessed art thou among women." (Luke 1: 28, 42.)

Topics for Discussion

1. Parents have the responsibility of training their children to be more interested in spiritual things than they are in the things of this world. With the environment of school and society in general it is a difficult thing, but still a necessary thing.

2. Children should never go where they would not like for their parents to find them, and should never engage in things they would not like their parents see them do.

3. Jesus, a country boy in a big city, found the house of God. When people move to the city their first duty is to find the place of worship and attend it regularly thereafter. Too many people backslide when they go from the country to the city.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Discuss the aim of the lessons of this quarter.

Introduction

In what natural environment did Jesus grow up?

Under what political conditions did he grow up?

What do you know of his school advantages?

What do you know of his home training?

Golden Text Explained

Discuss the growth of Jesus in wisdom and stature.

Discuss the things which prevent growth of youth today mentally and physically.

How do we grow in the favor of God?

Why did Jesus as a boy have the favor of men, and why did he lose that favor later?

Jesus Goes to the Feast

Who were required to attend the feasts, and how many?

What makes it difficult for some children to be saved?

What was Jewish practice concerning twelve-year-old children?

What do you know about this feast Jesus attended?

What good was derived from staying until the end of the feast?

Jesus in Jerusalem

In what place in Jerusalem did Jesus have peculiar delight?

When did his parents miss him from their company?

What spiritual application of this point can you make?

Where did they seek first to find him?

What application can you make of this point?

What lesson can you draw from the fact that they returned to Jerusalem to seek him?

Where did they find him, and how occupied?

In what mental condition were his parents?

What are the first recorded words of Jesus?

At what was Jesus surprised in his parents?

Where would the average child today be found?

What conception do you think Jesus had at this time of his relation to Joseph and to God?

Jesus Goes Back to Nazareth

Did his parents understand why he stayed in the temple?

What do you know of Jesus for the next eighteen years?

How was Mary affected by these things?

What was Mary's peculiar heritage in later life?

What did you get from the daily Bible readings?

Lesson II—July 10, 1949

JESUS ANNOUNCES HIS MISSION

The Lesson Text

Luke 4: 16-30

16 And he came to Naz'-a-reth, where he had been brought up: and he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read.

17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet I-sa'-iah. And he opened the book, and found the place where it was written,

18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.

Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor:

He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,

And recovering of sight to the blind,

To set at liberty them that are bruised,

19 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

20 And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down: and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on him.

21 And he began to say unto them, To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears.

22 And all bare him witness, and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of his mouth: and they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

23 And he said unto them, Doubtless ye will say unto me this parable. Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done at Ca-per'-na-um, do also here in thine own country.

24 And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is acceptable in his own country.

25 But of a truth I say unto you, There were many widows in Is'-ra-el in the days of E-li'-jah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there came a great famine over all the land;

26 And unto none of them was E-li'-jah sent, but only to Zar'-e-phath, in the land of Si'-don, unto a woman that was a widow.

27 And there were many lepers in Is'-ra-el in the time of E-li'-sha the prophet: and none of them was cleansed, but only Na'-a-man the Syr'-i-an.

28 And they were all filled with wrath in the synagogue, as they heard these things;

29 And they rose up, and cast him forth: out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong.

30 But he passing through the midst of them went his way.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost."* (Luke 19: 10.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 61: 1-3.

Daily Bible Readings

July	4. M.....	Elijah Blesses Widow at Zarephath (1 Kings 17: 8-24)
July	5. T.....	Elisha Heals the Syrian Leper (2 Kings 5: 1-14)
July	6. W.....	Why Jesus Used Parables (Matt. 12: 10-17)
July	7. T.....	Consequence of Unbelief at Nazareth (Matt. 13: 54-58)
July	8. F.....	Prophets Without Honor at Home (Mark 6: 1-6)
July	9. S.....	Difficult to Believe in One of Lowly Birth (John 6: 41-51)
July	10. S.....	God Chooses the Lowly to Confound the Mighty (1 Cor. 1: 20-31)

Time.—A.D. 28.

Place.—Nazareth.

Persons.—Jesus and the people of Nazareth.

Introduction

From Luke's order of relating these events in the life of Christ one would get the idea that this preaching of Jesus in Nazareth followed immediately his temptation. But about a year of time passed between verses 13 and 14 of this chapter 4. He did a little

work in Galilee after his baptism and temptation, at which time he turned the water into wine at Cana; then he went to Jerusalem for a feast, and stayed there for a short ministry. The people of Judaea were much more orthodox in their views than were the people of Galilee, and for this reason opposition was expressed much more quickly. Not wishing to stir up too much opposition this early in his ministry, Jesus went back to Galilee where a greater foreign population had broadened the views of the people and made them more tolerant of new doctrines. Nor did he go first to Nazareth at this time, for we read in verse 14 that a fame went out concerning him "through all the region round about." He had chosen his twelve apostles, preached the Sermon on the Mount, and had given his great group of parables, and had healed many people, including Peter's mother-in-law, before the events of our lesson.

The reason for doing this work in other sections of the country is obvious when we see how the people of Nazareth reacted toward him. He had to establish a reputation before he had a chance to reach his home people, and even then he was able to reach but very few of them. It is difficult for his own mother to understand him in spite of the fact that she had been visited by an angel, had given birth to a son begotten by the Holy Spirit, and had been told by prophets and angels that he was to be the Son of the Most High, and was to sit on the throne of his father David. If it was difficult for her to understand him, we need not be surprised that people who did not know these things would find it hard to believe that a common carpenter boy of their neighborhood was divine in nature and origin. So he prepared his neighbors in Nazareth by teaching and working miracles in surrounding territory and allowing time for the news of such works to reach them. By the time of this visit related in our lesson they had heard enough about him to be prepared in heart for the lesson he taught them, so were without excuse for their unbelief.

Golden Text Explained

That which was lost. Man's record on this earth is not at all flattering. He was placed in Eden and was visited regularly by the Lord. But man sinned, lost his home in Eden, and brought death with its long train of miseries upon him and his posterity. How much restraining influence Jehovah exercised on man we know not, but in spite of it all man drifted into such a wicked condition that God was forced to destroy him with a flood, and start over again with eight people who were righteous. If we expect that man shall profit by the mistakes of the past we shall be disappointed. For the waters of the flood were scarcely gone until Noah sinned. His posterity did no better. God selected one man from among the many to start a nation through which he could redeem the world. But Abraham's posterity made no better record than those who had gone before. In spite of a captivity for their sins, they finished their career as a nation by rejecting and crucifying the Lord. All have sinned, and have fallen short of his glory. It was a world like this which Jesus came to seek and save.

Jesus came seeking. What condescension! what humility! what love! Is it possible that one so long sinned against, so long rejected and despised, will now come seeking those who have deliberately turned their backs upon him and gone away? As the shepherd seeks

in the mountains cold and wild, our loving Shepherd seeks for his lost. But all are lost, so there is not much seeking to do. Though all are lost, not all realize it. So he must seek out those who know they are lost and in need of a Saviour. Not all who are sick realize they need a physician. And not all who realize the need of a physician will allow the doctor to tell them what is wrong with them and what they need as a remedy. So not all sinners know they are lost; and many who admit they are lost will not listen to what Jesus says about why they are lost; neither will they listen to what he tells them to do to be saved. He must seek for those who will listen to him and do what he teaches them to do.

Jesus came saving. He was called Jesus, for he was to be the Saviour. (Matt. 1: 21.) He is our Saviour because he has the power to save. "He is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Heb. 7: 25.) None have sinned so much that he cannot save them; none have sinned so little that they do not need his mediation. Again, he is our Saviour because he is willing to save all.

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise . . . not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Pet. 3: 9.) "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Tim. 2: 3, 4.) Last, he is our Saviour because he has made provision for the salvation of all. Not one human being has been left out of his provision; all have been provided for, and if any are lost it will be their own fault. "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world." (1 John 2: 2.) Again, "The Father hath sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." (1 John 4: 14.) "He died for all." (2 Cor. 5: 15a.) Our Golden Text is the greatest news this sin-sick world has ever heard. It is a pity that so few realize its value and profit by it.

Exposition of the Text

Jesus preaches in Nazareth. (Verses 16-21.) *He came to Nazareth.* This was a city of Galilee west of the main traveled road from north to south Palestine, and north of the main traveled road from east to west. It was on a hill surrounded by fifteen other higher hills. It was a notorious place, for even a Galilaean asked if any good thing could come out of Nazareth. (John 1: 46.) A more unlikely spot, from the human point of view, could not have been chosen as the home of the Prophet, Priest, King. The fact that Luke adds "where he had been brought up" suggests that he was not writing for Jews who were familiar with his history.

Entered synagogue as was his custom. The phrase, "as was his custom," is a revealing one. He was a regular attendant at worship. Those who are too lazy to get up Sunday morning to go to worship can find no comfort in the habits or teaching of Jesus. Those who prefer to go on pleasure trips or to places of amusement rather than attend worship will find nothing in the life or teaching of Jesus to encourage them.

He stood up to read. Synagogues were built so the worshipers faced Jerusalem. In the center of the house was a platform large enough to accommodate several persons. In the center of this was the pulpit where the reader stood. Men sat on one side and women

on the other of this platform. In the end of the building toward Jerusalem was a chest which held the rolls of scripture, and a servant brought the roll which the reader indicated. This end of the building was the honored part, and in it were the "chief seats" which the Pharisees loved. (Matt. 23: 6.) A light was kept burning continually, and late Friday evening several were lighted and kept burning until the close of the Sabbath. The people stood when the scriptures were read, and all sat, even the speaker, during the sermon. They stood to show their respect for the word of God.

The book of the prophet Isaiah. The word for book here is the diminutive form and means *little book*, or *roll*. And the word translated *opened* literally means *unrolled*. Two sticks were used, and one end of the parchment was fastened to one stick and the other end to the second stick. By turning these sticks toward each other the parchment was rolled on them. And by rolling the parchment on one and off the other stick, the reader could find the passage he wished to read.

Where it was written. This statement comes from Isa. 61: 1, 2, and perhaps 58: 6. It was taken from the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament), and differs somewhat from our translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. This portion of Isaiah was written for the encouragement of the Jews in captivity, but its remote application was to the Messiah, and so the Jews understood it. The work of the Messiah is outlined as (1) preaching to the poor;

(2) proclaiming release to captives, those held in the bondage of sin; (3) giving sight to the blind, opening their eyes to their sin and the way out of their lost condition; (4) to set at liberty them that are bruised, those in sorrow, the brokenhearted; (5) and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, that now is the time for the promises of the Lord to be fulfilled. Many of these things had a double fulfillment in the work of Jesus, for he opened the physical as well as spiritual eyes of the people; and he released people from the possession of demons and forgave their sins.

He closed the book and sat down. He did not take a seat among the audience; he sat on the platform, denoting that he intended to speak. His gracious manner attracted the attention of all, and they fastened their eyes upon him.

Today hath this scripture been fulfilled. No scripture was more commonly accepted as Messianic than the one he read. No plainer statement could have been made concerning its fulfillment. So in no uncertain terms Jesus claimed to be the Messiah of the Old Testament for whom the people were looking. He undoubtedly enlarged upon the statement, giving proof of its scripturalness. He would not expect the people to accept a statement without proof.

Argument following sermon. (Verses 22-27.) *Is not this Joseph's son?* Though they marveled at the words of grace he spoke, they could not forget that these words came from a home-town boy. He had worked among them; some of them perhaps had pieces of his workmanship in their homes; his brothers and sisters were still among them and they were ordinary human beings: surely he can be no more than they.

Physician, heal thyself. The meaning of this parable, or proverb, is a little difficult. It might be taken to mean that he was to get right before he taught others. But from the connection we learn

its meaning is, You Claim to be the Messiah who, according to Isaiah, is to perform wonders; you claim to have performed such wonders at Capernaum; if you expect us to believe in you, do some of these miracles in your own home town.

No prophet is acceptable in his own country. And Mark adds, "among his own kin, and in his own house." Whether Jesus meant to allow any exceptions to the rule is not known. If there is an exception to it, Samuel would likely head the list. But as the last child in the family never ceases to be the baby to the parents, so the boy who makes good never ceases to be the youngster who worked in the shop, stole watermelons, or is related to certain people who have remained in the community.

Many widows in Israel. Jesus proceeds to illustrate the meaning of the proverb he had used. There were many widows in Israel who needed help during the long drouth in the days of Elijah, but God sent him to none of them; rather he sent Elijah to a Gentile woman in the city of Zarephath in the land of Sidon. So God had sent Jesus to Capernaum and other places to work miracles because they were more worthy of his attention than the unbelieving people of his home town. And he gives a second application in the case of Naaman the leper. There were many lepers in Israel, but Elisha did not heal them. He healed Naaman, the Gentile. Why? The implication is that Naaman was more worthy of the services of the prophet than the Jews. And the application is identical with the other—the cities where Jesus had worked were more worthy of his time and service than were the people of Nazareth.

Results of his teaching. They were all filled with wrath. "The Nazarenes were jealous enough of the claims of Jesus when put in their most modest dress; but when Jesus placed himself alongside Elijah and Elisha, and likened his hearers to widows for want, and lepers for uncleanness, they were ready to dash him to pieces." (McGarvey.)

Cast him forth out of the city. It is clearly implied here that they laid hold on him, and in their frame of mind, we would not expect them to handle him with care. They would not have in their city a man who (1) claimed to be the Messiah when they knew his humble source and surroundings; (2) would make a display of his power in cities far away, but would not do the same in his home town; (3) would suggest that even Gentiles were proper subjects of the gospel and of the grace of God.

The brow of the hill. "Nazareth spreads itself out upon the eastern face of a mountain, where there is a perpendicular wall of rock from forty to fifty feet high." (Peloubet.) The word *brow* here is a medical term, and is peculiar to Luke who was a physician.

That they might throw him headlong. This statement throws light on the character of the people among whom Jesus was reared. They were quick to get angry; they were cruel; and they would stoop to murder. They had no authority to execute a man known to be a criminal, nor did they take time to conduct a trial of Jesus. This was mob excitement, worse than anything he had encountered in Jerusalem.

Passing through the midst of them. Was this a miraculous deliverance? We have no way of knowing how Jesus was delivered from that mob. If natural means were used, it is possible that some

opposed such treatment of him, and while the matter was being settled he walked out. Paul created such a confusion on one occasion to escape a beating. (Acts 23.) If unnatural or miraculous means were used, he simply exercised an influence over the minds and action of the people. That he had the power to do so none will doubt, and since his hour had not yet come to die for the sins of the world, he would not give himself to a sinful mob that they might satisfy wounded pride.

Topics for Discussion

1. Jesus made a real effort to bring salvation to his home town. It is good to be mission minded, but we must not forget those with whom we live. A young man once offered himself for mission work in China. His father asked Why? The son replied, Because I love the lost Chinese. The father said, I don't believe it, because you have never tried to save even one in the Chinese section of our city.

2. Destroying the preacher does not correct the situation which called forth his censure. These people thought they could make things right by getting rid of the man who showed them their sin. People today sometimes "fire" the preacher when he tells them of their sins too often and too plainly. But "firing" the preacher never did purify a life nor correct ugly situations in the church.

3. We are prone to think little of things with which we are familiar. We have heard the gospel all our lives, and, like the people who had known Jesus all his life, we fail to realize its divinity. As they thrust from them the only one who could give them what they needed, so people today neglect the only book which can bring them true happiness here and eternal happiness in the life to come.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

Where did Jesus work between his temptation and this visit to Nazareth?

Why did Jesus work in other places first?

Why was it difficult for the people of Nazareth to accept him as Messiah?

Golden Text Explained

Discuss man's record for righteousness from the beginning.

What shows the humility and love of Jesus?

Why seek people to save them?

What is the meaning of the word Jesus?

What is said about his ability to save?

What is said of his willingness to save?

What is said of his provision for the salvation of man?

Jesus Preaches in Nazareth

What do you know of the city of Nazareth?

What custom did Jesus have on the Sabbath? Make application of the lesson.

What do you know of the synagogues in which Jesus worshiped?

What position did the reader and speaker take in the synagogue?

What do you know of the book from which Jesus read?

How did Isaiah describe the work of the Messiah?

What claim did Jesus make concerning this scripture?

Argument Following Sermon

What objection did the people raise to his sermon?

What parable did Jesus use against them?

What application did Jesus make of this parable?

What great prophets did Jesus use in his application?

What lesson did Jesus intend for his hearers to get?

Results of His Teaching

How were the people affected by his sermon?

What in his sermon caused them to be so angry?

What did the people intend to do with Jesus?

What does this reveal as the character of the people?

How did Jesus escape from them?

What did you get from the daily Bible readings?

Lesson III—July 17, 1949

PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

The Lesson Text

Luke 10: 25-37

25 And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and made trial of him, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

26 And he said unto him, What is written in the law? how readeest thou?

27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.

28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

29 But he, desiring to justify himself, said unto Je'-sus, And who is my neighbor?

30 Je'-sus made answer and said, A certain man was going down from Je'-ru'-sa-lem to Jer'-i-cho; and he fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

31 And by chance a certain priest was going down that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

32 And in like manner a Le'-vite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side.

33 But a certain Sa-mar'-i-tan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion,

34 And came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on *them* oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

35 And on the morrow he took out two shillings, and gave them to the host, and said, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back again, will repay thee.

36 Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers?

37 And he said, He that showed mercy on him. And Je'-sus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself."* (Luke 10: 27.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Lev. 19: 13-18.

Daily Bible Readings

July 11. M.....	The Greatest Commandments of the Law (Matt. 22: 34-40>
July 12. T.....	Love the Fulfillment of the Law (Rom. 13: 8-14>
July 13. W.....	Fulfilling the Royal Law (James 2: 1-13>
July 14. T.....	Teaching of the Law and Prophets (Matt. 7: 7-14)
July 15. F.....	Love and Bless all Men (Luke 6: 27-38)
July 16. S.....	Do Good Unto all Men (Gal. 6: 6-10)
July 17. S.....	Ministering to the Saints (Rom. 12: 9-21>

TIME.—Fall of A.D. 29.

PLACE.—Judaea, probably in Bethany.

PERSONS.—Jesus and a lawyer.

Introduction

The Jews had a legalistic conception of the law under which they lived. And to the lawyers especially, who were the interpreters of the law, it was a system of ceremonial performances. It seems not to have occurred to them that it was a rule of conduct for everyday living. They gave the most attention to the rites and ceremonies, and forgot or overlooked the weightier matters of the law, such as love, mercy, and justice. (Matt. 23: 23, 24.) So Jesus took advantage of

this opportunity to teach the lawyer the true view to take of the law. He wished for him to see that the law was a rule of conduct, and that his very attitudes were to be determined by it, even in the details of everyday life.

Again, there was an enmity between Jews and Samaritans which was not good. Ever since the days when the kingdom divided after the death of Solomon this enmity had existed. And when the people returned from Babylon the Samaritans widened the breach by trying to take advantage of the Jews. (See the story in Ezra and Nehemiah.) From a human point of view there was some ground for their differences, but Jesus wished the Jews to get the divine point of view and learn to love their enemies, even the hated Samaritans. So he used this opportunity to break down this wall of partition between them.

In the third place, Jesus used this opportunity to teach world-wide brotherhood. The despised of the earth can do good, and when they do they are to be respected. Race, color, nationality, social or political differences are to be forgotten in the spiritual realm. We are as much obligated to feed the black child as the white; we are as duty bound to look after the colored orphan as the white. Social differences there are, and it would be unwise, perhaps unsafe, to ignore them; but to teach them the way of life and to work for their physical, mental, and moral betterment we are obligated to all alike. And Jesus used this opportunity to teach this lesson to the Jews.

Golden Text Explained

The Great Commandment. When asked what is the great commandment, Jesus replied in nearly the words of our text. (Matt. 22: 37.) But love is not a mere sentiment; it is action. The Greek word translated by our word love is derived from words which signify action. "Hence it appears that, by *this love*, the soul *eagerly cleaves to*, *affectionately admires*, and *constantly rests* in God, supremely *pleased* and *satisfied* with him as its portion: that it acts *from* him, as its *author*; *for* him, as its *master*; and *to* him, as its end. That, *by* it, all the powers and faculties of the mind are *concentrated* in the Lord of the universe. That, *by* it, the whole man is willingly surrendered to the Most High: and that, *through* it, an *identity*, or *sameness*, of spirit with the Lord is acquired—the man being made a partaker of the divine nature, having the mind in him which was in Christ, and thus dwelling in God, and God in him." (A. Clarke.)

1. To love God with all the heart means to make him the supreme object of our affections; to enthrone him in our heart above all others, and to be willing to give up all others to go through life without their love and respect before we would cease to love and serve God. It means to delight in the things which please him.

2. To love God with all the soul is to be ready to sacrifice life for him. The word soul means life. We are to love God so much that we will endure hardships, meet temptations bravely, and wear out our lives in his service. To reserve mental and physical vigor to be used in selfish enjoyments is an indication of a lack of love.

3. To love God with all our strength is to give him all our abilities. Some feel they have talents for speaking which are too great to waste in the church, so they prepare for a political or educational

career. God needs men of great abilities who love him enough to use all he has given them for his glory and honor.

4. To love God with all the mind is to have him continually in our thoughts, to meditate upon him and his word day and night; to use our intellect to learn his will, to search out ways and opportunities to do his will; and to keep our minds free from evil intentions, motives, and desires. "In a word, he who sees God in all things, thinks of him at all times, having his mind continually fixed upon God, acknowledging him in all his ways, who begins, continues, and ends all his thoughts, words, and works, to the glory of his name: this is the person who loves God with all his *heart, life, strength, and intellect.*"

The Second Commandment. We are required to love God supremely, but we are told to love our neighbor as ourselves. This is what Jesus called the second, or next to the greatest, commandment. If we love our neighbor as we love ourselves, we will feed him when hungry, clothe him when he is naked, and minister to him when he is sick. We will be kind and sympathetic toward him in all the affairs of life; we will give him the benefit of the doubt when we think he might be out of line; we will put the charitable interpretation on his motives and deeds when there is a doubt. If we love our neighbor as we love ourselves we will not peddle gossip about him, but we will defend his good name against misrepresentation. If he does something wrong we will restore him in the spirit of meekness instead of condemning him, and telling others of his mistake. Love for God and man will cause us to obey every commandment binding upon us; it is our whole duty.

Exposition of the Text

The Question Stated. A certain lawyer stood up. The word lawyer signifies one learned in the law of Moses. It is possible that this was a term applied to scribes who were not mere copyists but able to interpret the law. (See Luke 11: 45-52.) By this act of standing it is likely that this was a formal meeting Jesus was conducting.

What shall I do to inherit eternal life? This was a common question among the Jews. (Matt. 19: 16.) From this question it is evident that eternal life is conditional, and yet the things we must do have no merit about them; we do not earn, or merit, eternal life.

What is written in the law? On one occasion Jesus suggested a number of commandments which must be obeyed (Matt. 19: 16-19), but this time he leads this lawyer to answer his own question. Being a lawyer, he ought to be able to tell what the law said on the question.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God. The lawyer felt obligated, in defense of his reputation as an interpreter of the law, to give the best answer he could. So he gave the answer which includes all man's revealed duties. If we love God supremely, we will worship him as directed and serve him according to our ability; and if we love our neighbor as ourselves, we will help him in distress and refrain from doing him any injury. The keeping of these two commandments is the fulfilling of the royal law.

This do, and thou shalt live. Jesus placed emphasis on *doing*. The lawyer was right theoretically. One cannot be right practically without being right theoretically; but one can be right theoretically

without practicing what he knows. This was the condition of the lawyers of that time, for Jesus said they loaded men with grievous burdens but they would not so much as move a little finger to help them. (Luke 11: 46.)

Desiring to justify himself. Self-justification is a prevalent sin. It is human to try to justify one's self in his course of life, even if he is in the wrong. Pride is the thing which causes men to try to justify themselves. It requires humility to confess mistakes, to concede that one has been in the wrong. When Jesus told the lawyer to practice what he had taught, the implication was that he had not been doing that. It amounted to an accusation on the part of Jesus to that effect. So the lawyer had to say something to keep his friends from knowing he realized the force of the accusation.

Who is my neighbor? This shows the astuteness of this lawyer; he was a quick thinker; he knew the art of evasion; and he knew how to get out of a dilemma and put his opponent on the defensive. All Jews considered Gentiles, and especially Samaritans, as not being neighbors. From a foreigner they could take interest on money lent, but not from a fellow Jew (Deut. 23: 19, 20); and from this and other regulations they concluded that only Jews were their neighbors in the sense of loving their neighbor. Now, if Jesus says other people are neighbors, he will offend the Jews. But Jesus was too wise to take the direct approach to the matter, so he put a problem to the lawyer in such terms as would lead him, or force him, to determine correctly just who was his neighbor.

The Parable Stated. Down from Jerusalem to Jericho. Jericho is eighteen miles distant from Jerusalem, and is three thousand five hundred feet lower. The road makes the descent from Bethany to Jericho. The territory was rough and largely uninhabited. It was suited, as a hide-out for robbers. Josephus says Herod the Great had dismissed forty thousand men from public works, and that many of them turned to robbing for an existence.

A certain priest was going down. A colony of twelve thousand priests lived in and near Jericho. They served in courses in Jerusalem, so there was continual passing to and from by these priests. But the priest passed without giving the injured man assistance. This priest might have had plenty of excuses, such as ceremonial defilement, to offer if we could have questioned him. But even this lawyer admits that he was without reason for his unneighborly deed.

In like manner a Levite also. All priests were Levites, but not all Levites were priests. The priests were sons of Aaron, and of course were of the tribe of Levi. But the Levites were the descendants of Levi, divided into three families, Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. It was their duty to assist the priests in offerings, and to keep the temple. Like the priests, they gave their time to religious work and lived off the tithes of Jews. If anybody would render service to a wounded man, it looks like these men who serve the Lord and live off the offerings of the people would be obligated to do so. But not so.

A certain Samaritan. The mention of the Samaritan was the master stroke on the part of Jesus. If he had bluntly said that a Samaritan could be a neighbor, he would have had opposition; but he told a story in which a Samaritan played a part which was so commendable that even a lawyer could not criticize him. Notice that

all three men saw the man, but only the Samaritan did anything. First, he had compassion; next, he administered first aid; next, he took care of the man over night; and last, he provided for future care of the man. He thought of everything. The two shillings, thirty-four cents, which the Samaritan offered the host suggests the poverty of the Samaritan. And since he was a poor man his goodness is even more commendable. Priests and Levites were usually poor, but no poorer than this Samaritan. He also offered to pay more if more was needed by the host, and this suggests the reputation the Samaritan had for taking care of his obligations.

The lesson drawn. Which of the three proved neighbor? After telling the story, Jesus put the lawyer's question back to him in such way that he could not possibly give the wrong answer without ruining his reputation as a teacher of the law.

In this connection it will be well to note three philosophies of life suggested by this parable. (1) That of the robbers, *What is thine is mine, and I will get it if I have to injure you.* (2) That of the priest and Levite, *What is mine is mine, and I will keep it regardless of how needy you are.* (3) That of the Samaritan, *What is mine is thine, and I will share it with you.* Which is the neighborly attitude? Which is the good neighbor policy? Many people have the philosophy of the robbers in a mild form; they will not do you bodily injury, but they will hurt you financially to get what you have. And there are many more who have the philosophy of the priest and Levite. Selfishness and covetousness are signs of this philosophy.

He that showed mercy on him. The lawyer would not soil his lips by calling the despised name of Samaritan; he could not bring himself to speak commendably of one of that race. But he could not afford to say before his friends that the priest or the Levite had acted in a neighborly fashion. There was but one answer for him to make. Who then is my neighbor? And when do I act in a neighborly fashion? To whom do I prove myself a neighbor? Whom should I love as myself? The lawyer would have answered this question quite differently before the story to what he did after the story was told.

Go, and do thou likewise. Here again the emphasis is on the *doing*. It is not enough to be able to determine what is right in a matter. The priest and Levite knew what was right, but they excused themselves from their responsibilities, or flatly refused to do their duty. The Samaritan felt his obligation and did his duty. Jesus commends this course to the lawyer. You know your duty; now do as well as you know. It should be kept in mind that the lawyer asked what he must do to inherit eternal life. The lawyer, when Jesus turned the question on him, said one must love God with all his being. There was no argument about what this meant. But the lawyer added that one must love his neighbor. To this Jesus said, Do and you shall live. Then the lawyer raised the question as to who is our neighbor. The parable was given to teach him who his neighbor is. Then when that question was settled, Jesus repeats his directions given in verse 28. Eternal life is to be enjoyed by those who love God supremely, and who love their neighbors enough to do good to them regardless of race or color.

Topics for Discussion

1. The robbers saw in the unfortunate man an opportunity for *exploitation*. They represent that class of people whose only use for friendship is to get something out of you, and when they can no longer profit by your association they are through with you. They are on the receiving end; they never give. They always profit, but never bless.

2. The priest and Levite in this lesson saw in the unfortunate man some one to *ignore*. The man could not contribute to their happiness, so they ignored him. They would not kick him, nor say anything harmful about him; but they would not help him. They would live their lives just as if the poor man did not exist. So many people, church members, ignore the poor and those whose names are not on the social register. They never invite them to their feasts; they invite those only who are able to return the invitation.

3. The Samaritan saw in this unfortunate man an opportunity to *serve*. He was of the class who rather serve others than to be served by others. With him it was more blessed to give than to receive. On our road from Jerusalem to Jericho we will find people living and struggling; will you exploit, ignore, or serve them?

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What did Jesus teach the lawyer about the law?

What does this story do for the relation between Jews and Samaritans?

What is the third thing Jesus wishes to accomplish with this lesson?

Golden Text Explained

What is the greatest commandment?

What is love?

What is meant by loving God with all the heart?

How do we love God with all the soul?

What does loving God with all our strength mean?

How do we love God with all the mind?

What is the second commandment, and how do we obey it?

The Question Stated

What is the meaning of the word lawyer?

What was the lawyer's question, and what did it imply?

How did Jesus answer the lawyer's question?

How comprehensive was the lawyer's answer?

What did Jesus say the lawyer should do?

What effort did the lawyer make in his own behalf?

Who were considered neighbors by the Jews? Why?

The Parable Stated

What do you know of the country between Jerusalem and Jericho?

Was it a common thing for priests to travel that road? Why?

Distinguish between priests and Levites.

Was there a peculiar reason why they should have served this wounded man?

Why did Jesus bring a Samaritan into his story?

What did the Samaritan do which proved him to be a good neighbor?

The Lesson Drawn

What responsibility did Jesus put on this lawyer?

Discuss the three philosophies of life suggested by this story.

What is suggested by the lawyer's reply as to which was neighbor?

What advice did Jesus finally give the lawyer?

What is emphasized in the parable repeatedly?

What do you say one must do to inherit eternal life?

What did you get from the daily Bible readings?

What is there of interest in the topics for discussion?

Lesson IV—July 24, 1949

JESUS TEACHES TRUE VALUES

The Lesson Text

Luke 12: 22-34

22 And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you. Be not anxious for *your* life, what ye shall eat; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on.

23 For the life is more than the food, and the body than the raiment.

24 Consider the ravens, that they sow not. neither reap; which have no store-chamber nor barn; and God feedeth them: of how much more value are ye than the birds!

25 And which of you by being anxious can add a cubit unto the measure of his life?

26 If then ye are not able to do even that which is least, why are ye anxious concerning the rest?

27 Consider the lilies, how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin; yet I say unto you, Even So!—o-mén in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

28 But if God doth so clothe the grass in the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more shall he clothe you, O ye of little faith?

29 And seek not ye what ye shall eat, and what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.

30 For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: but your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

31 Yet seek ye his kingdom, and these things shall be added unto you.

32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

33 Sell that which ye have, and give alms; make for yourselves purses which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief draweth near, neither moth destroyeth.

34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?"* (Matt. 16: 26.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—John 6: 25-40.

Daily Bible Readings

July 18. M.....In Nothing be Anxious (Phil. 4: 4-20)
 July 19. T.....Contentment is Great Gain (1 Tim. 6: 3-10)
 July 20. W.....God Cares for His Creatures (Matt. 6: 25-34)
 July 21. T.....Adornment of Inner Man (1 Pet. 3: 1-7)
 July 22. F.....Laying up Treasures in Heaven (Matt. 6: 19-24)
 July 23. S.....Affections on Heavenly Things (Col. 3: 1-11)
 July 24. S.....Love Not the World (1 John 2: 12-17)

TIME.—A.D. 29.

PLACE.—Somewhere in Galilee.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, and a great multitude.

Introduction

The teaching in our lesson for this week was called forth by the incident related in verses 13 to 21, the paragraph preceding our lesson text. One of the multitude listening to Jesus asked the Lord to see that his brother divided the inheritance with him. Jesus reminded the man that he was not a judge in the ordinary affairs of life, and that it was not his business to settle estates, or to settle disputes arising from such settlements.

He then gave them the parable of the man whose farm produced so much one year that he had to wreck his old barns and build big-

ger barns to store his produce. This man acted as if he were wholly physical; he made provision for his physical nature only. He forgot there was an inner man, a spiritual nature, for which he ought to make provision. From this Jesus taught the lesson that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

Another mistake made by this man in the parable was that he left God out of his plans and calculations. He would be his own provider; he would determine his own destiny. He felt that he had enough laid up to keep him securely for many years. But God said he was foolish, for his life would be required of him that very night. He was well supplied with the things necessary for his physical man, but very poor indeed, entirely lacking, in those things essential to the welfare of the spiritual man. Having left God out of his plans and his life, he was poor in spite of the abundance of material wealth. From this Jesus drew the conclusion, "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." And lest his disciples make the same mistakes he had pictured in this man, he turns to them and teaches them the things contained in our lesson.

Golden Text Explained

The value of the soul. The value of the soul may be reckoned from two considerations. (1) Satan is God's enemy and is determined to do all the damage he can. The fact that Satan makes continual attacks upon the souls of men is an indication that he knows God regards our souls of great value. (2) The fact that Jesus gave his life on Calvary is an indication of the great value heaven attaches to our souls. If they could have been redeemed at less cost, surely God would not have paid so great a price.

What is there about the soul of man which makes it so valuable in God's sight? (1) It is the offspring of God. (Acts 17: 29.) It is the part of man made in God's image and likeness. (Gen. 1: 26.) (2) The soul is that part of man which possesses the greatest and most valuable faculties. It is the thinking, desiring, loving, willing and directing part of man. Since it directs the actions, it is the God-honoring part of man. (3) The soul is capable of doing good, honoring God, and glorifying his holy name on earth, and of bringing glory to God throughout eternity. (4) The soul is indestructible, it is eternal. The body is physical, made of dust, and will return to the dust; but the soul is the offspring of God and will live forever. These and other considerations prove the value of the soul.

The value of the world. The word world here includes wealth of every form. (1) There is material wealth such as precious stones, metals, and minerals. (2) There is commercial wealth such as real estate, stocks, bonds, and every form of money. (3) There is political, social, and racial prestige which men count as of great value, and is a part of this world. Are these things valuable? and from one point of view all have to admit that they are. But is there a point of view from which they are worthless? (1) They are worthless to atone for sin. They have no merit, no value, as an offering for the sin of the soul. (2) The combined wealth in all its forms of all the world cannot buy immunity from temptation and sin. Satan attacks the rich and poor alike. (3) All the wealth of all the world cannot constitute a person Christlike. Wealth is not essential to Christ-

likeness, nor does it make Christlikeness impossible, though usually it is quite a hindrance. (4) The wealth of this world is temporal. All forms of wealth derive their value from this temporal arrangement in which we live. When this world comes to an end, there will be none of this wealth. When we die we leave it behind. The only way worldly wealth can do us any good is to use it here for the glory of God, and it will accumulate in heaven to our account.

How will you trade? Traders often start a deal by asking, How will you trade? They mean to ask on what conditions will you trade. The life of our text means eternal life. If a man gains all the wealth of the world, but in the gaining he neglects, or forfeits, his eternal life, he has made his biggest mistake. For what will people exchange their eternal life? (1) Some exchange it for pleasures which are fleeting, cannot bring satisfaction, and even bring sorrow and suffering in this life. (2) Some exchange life for wealth. They will forget God and the church in their efforts to gain it. Some will employ methods of gaining it that make it impossible for them to be saved. (3) Some exchange life for the satisfaction of hating and hurting their fellow man. They cannot hate him and go to heaven too, so they make their choice, and a miserable choice it is. And the bad thing about this exchange is that when we stand in the judgment and see that we have made a miserable choice, it will be too late to start over. This exchange is final, so be sure you don't make a bad trade.

Exposition of the Text

Exhortation to trust God. (Verses 22, 23.) *Be not anxious for your life.* Proper thought and planning for temporal necessities cannot be included in this statement, but it is possible that what many look upon as necessities would not be so considered by our Lord. We try to maintain certain standards of living set by the world about us. But on the same income as those about us it is hard to live as well as they live and have a reasonable portion left to contribute to the Lord. We are exhorted not to be worried about these temporal necessities.

The life is more than food, and the body than raiment. The Lord has given us life, and surely he will supply that which is necessary to sustain the life he has given. Jesus reasoned from the point of view that if God has given us the greater, we can surely trust him to give the lesser which is essential to sustain the greater gift. Likewise, he says the body is more important than the raiment to cover and protect it. But God has given us a body well proportioned and adapted to our needs. Surely he would not give us this body and then withhold the raiment necessary to comfort and adornment of that body. If he will be so generous in giving the greater, we can trust him to supply the lesser, especially since the lesser is essential to the sustaining of the greater gift. So on this basis we are to put our trust in God to keep us from hunger and want.

Proof that God is to be trusted. (Verses 24-28.) *Consider the ravens.* This is the first illustration Jesus brings up to prove that God is to be trusted to provide for our temporal necessities. The raven was a common bird in Palestine; it was black. Our crow is of the same general family. They do not sow to provide for their food; nor do they reap and put their food into store-barns. Yet the God who created them provides for them. Jesus did not mean to teach

us to quit sowing and reaping, and make absolutely no provision for the physical man. Such indolence is sinful. (2 Thess. 3: 7-13; 1 Tim. 5: 8.)

Of how much more value are ye than birds? If God provides for the birds which do not sow and reap, so are wholly dependent upon his goodness, surely we can depend on him. But our assurance is based on the fact that we are of more value than birds. They, like other creatures without reason are born to be taken and destroyed (2 Pet. 2: 12), are not to be compared in value with creatures made in the image of God to live forever. And just to the extent that man is of more value than birds, we can depend on God to be more careful for their preservation and happiness.

Add a cubit to the measure of his life. Of what use is anxiety? Can we through being anxious add a cubit to the length of life? A cubit is a small unit of measure, about eighteen inches, and compared to the length of life that is not much. The determination of such matters is in other hands, and nothing we do can bring about a change. If, then, we have not the ability to bring about such slight changes, why should we worry about greater things? If we leave such matters as the measure of life to God, why can we not learn to leave such things as food and raiment to God? The God who does one well can be trusted to do the other just as well.

Consider the lilies. The birds have wings to carry them for their food, and they have eyes to look for it. So now consider the lilies which have neither eyes to locate food nor wings to carry them to it. They grow; they have all the food they need. The God who gave them a being supports that being in this world. Not only do they have food for growth, they have raiment, though they neither toil nor spin. Their lack of toiling and spinning are mentioned to show how wholly dependent upon their maker they are.

Solomon in all his glory. The reign of Solomon was the most glorious in all the history of Israel when measured by human standards. He had gold almost beyond counting, and silver was as common in Jerusalem as stones. Kings and queens came from distant lands to see him and his court and to hear his wisdom, and when they had seen and heard they were made to exclaim that the half had not been told them. (1 Kings 10.) But yet the common little lilies of the field exceeded even Solomon in glory. There were several varieties of lilies in Palestine, some pure white, while others with color in them. Men have speculated on which Jesus had in mind. Why speculate when the statement is true with reference to the most common flower of them all.

Tomorrow is cast into the oven. There were different types of ovens in use in Palestine. Some were made by digging a hole and walling it with brick or rock. A fire was built and the rocks heated; then the fire was taken out and the food placed in the oven to cook. Another type of oven was made of clay, sometimes earthenware covered with clay. It was larger at the bottom than the top. Fire was made in the bottom and when the sides were well heated the dough was placed on the side and allowed to cook. Grass and small limbs of trees were used for fuel. Lilies were used when they were dead and dry. The argument is that if God clothed these lilies with more glory than Solomon knew, though they were soon to die and

be burned in the oven, surely he will clothe his children made in his image and living for his honor.

How to show our trust. Seek not what ye shall eat. By this he means that we are not to make this our chief interest. If we make material needs our chief interest, we manifest our lack of trust in God. To be of doubtful mind is to have a double mind; to be torn between two things. We realize our obligation to trust God, but we are afraid to leave the matter to him, so we try to hold to him and the world at the same time.

The nations of the world seek after. This is given as another reason why we are not to make material needs our chief interest. The nations of the world, people who are not children of God and have no right to look to him for such providential care, make material things their chief interest. If we do the same thing, we are no better than they; we show we have no more trust in God than they.

Seek ye his kingdom. We show our trust by refusing to do some things, but next we show our trust by doing certain other things. The first is to seek his kingdom. Look after the interest of the kingdom; be thoughtful of its growth and progress; accept places of responsibility in the kingdom; and make contributions of time, energy, and money to the progress of the kingdom. Put it first in your life instead of material necessities. If you will do that, God will be sure to supply your material necessities.

Fear not, little flock. This was of limited application as it was addressed to his disciples, and as the kingdom had not at that time been given. But he assured them that it was God's good pleasure to give it to them. And this he did after his death at Pentecost.

Sell that which ye have, and give alms. If we remember the parable of the rich man in this chapter who hoarded his money, we will understand what Jesus meant by selling what we have and giving alms. It is a warning against covetous hoarding, and an exhortation to generous giving to those in need. There was a time in the life of the church when people actually sold their possessions and gave the money to the support of the poor. (Acts 4: 32-37.) But this practice came to an end under the guidance of inspired apostles, and we are taught to give liberally for the spread of the gospel and the care of the poor. To hoard our money is to publish our distrust of God; to give liberally is to show our trust.

Treasure in the heavens. To hoard money here is to lose it. If the bank does not fail, or if we do not invest unwisely, we may keep it until we die. But we will lose it at that time certainly. But to give it for gospel purposes is to keep it. Only in this way can we lay up money for eternal enjoyment. When we give money it becomes a treasure laid up in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroy, nor thieves break in to steal.

Where your treasure is. Paul tells us to set our mind, affection, on things above. (Col. 3: 1, 2.) There is only one sure way to do that. If we will put our treasures there, our hearts will be there. People who invest their money in farms and ranches talk farms and ranches, and they spend a lot of time looking after them. People who invest in stocks and bonds spend a lot of time reading the papers and getting reports on the rise and fall of prices of the market.

And people who invest a lot of time and money in the church will talk about the church and its progress when you are with them. One's general topic of conversation will indicate where he has put his treasure. Locate a man's heart, his greatest interest, and you will have located his treasure.

Topics for Discussion

1. Jesus "had reason to know the price of *souls*, for he redeemed them; nor would he underrate the world, for he made it." (M. Henry.) Since we know neither the price of souls, nor the value of the world, we should take his word in these matters and be careful that we lose not our souls to gain something of infinitely less value.

2. Orphans are to be excused for being fearful of their temporal welfare. But many of God's children act like orphans by being fearful about the things their heavenly Father has promised to supply generously.

3. "The best things in life are free," if we have the faith to lay hold of them. It takes the eyes of faith to see them, the mind of faith to appreciate them, and the obedience of faith to appropriate them to our enjoyment.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What incident called forth the teaching of this lesson?

Of what did Jesus say a man's life consists?

What great mistake did this foolish man make?

How can we be rich toward God?

Golden Text Explained

How may the value of the soul be reckoned?

Name and discuss four, or more, things which make the soul valuable.

Name the various forms of the wealth of this world.

In what sense are these worldly values worthless?

How can man make his biggest mistake in life?

Name and discuss things for which people exchange eternal life.

What is so bad about such an exchange?

Exhortation to Trust God

What difficulty do we have in maintaining earthly standards of living?

How did Jesus argue that God will supply material necessities?

What basis do we have for trusting God to care for us?

Proof That God Is to be Trusted

What use does Jesus make of the ravens?

What does Jesus say anxiety cannot do?

How does he use this fact to teach us to trust God?

What use does Jesus make of the lilies of the field?

What do you know of Solomon's glory?

What do you know of ovens, and the use Jesus made of them here?

How to Show Our Trust

What are we not to do to show our trust?

In what way do we become like the nations of this world?

What are we to seek to show our trust?

How do we seek the kingdom first in our life?

What is meant by selling what we have and giving alms?

How can we keep our money forever?

Where does Paul tell us to place our affections?

How does Jesus teach us to be sure our affections are there?

What did you get from the daily Bible readings?

What is there of interest in the topics for discussion?

Lesson V—July 31, 1949

JESUS EXPLAINS THE KINGDOM

The Lesson Text

Luke 13: 18-30

18 He said therefore, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I liken it?

19 It is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his own garden; and it grew, and became a tree; and the birds of the heaven lodged in the branches thereof.

20 And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God?

21 It is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened.

22 And he went on his way through cities and villages, teaching, and journeying on unto Je-ru'-sa-lem.

23 And one said unto him, Lord, are they few that are saved? And he said unto them,

24 Strive to enter in by the narrow door: for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

25 When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, open to us; and he shall answer and say to you, I know you not whence ye are;

26 Then shall ye begin to say, We did eat and drink in thy presence, and thou didst teach in our streets;

27 And he shall say, I tell you, I know not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

28 There shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and I-saac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and yourselves cast forth without.

29 And they shall come from the east and west, and from the north and south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.

30 And behold, there are last who shall be first, and there are first who shall be last.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"And they shall come from the east and west, and from the north and south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God."* (Luke 13; 29.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 62: 1-7.

Daily Bible Readings

July 25. M..... The Kingdom in Parables (Matt. 13: 1-23)
 July 26. T..... The Good Seed and the Tares (Matt. 13: 24-43)
 July 27. W..... Other Parables on the Kingdom (Matt. 13: 44-53)
 July 28. T..... Teaching as to Coming of Kingdom (Luke 19: 11-27)
 July 29. F..... Nature of the Kingdom (Rom. 14: 13-23)
 July 30. S..... Things Which Exclude from the Kingdom (Gal. 5: 16-24)
 July 31. S..... How to Enter Eternal Kingdom (2 Pet. 1: 1-11)

TIME.—A.D. 29.

PLACE.—En route to Jerusalem, probably in Perea.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, and worshipers in a synagogue.

Introduction

The Jews seemed to know nothing about the kingdom, and all the opinions held by them were wrong. As to the time of the coming of the kingdom we learn that even the disciples of Jesus held incorrect views late in the ministry of Jesus. When Jesus was going up to Jerusalem the last time he noticed that they were expecting the kingdom to appear immediately, so he gave them a parable in which he showed them that the king had to go away to receive his kingdom.

(Luke 19: 11-15.) Those who teach that the kingdom was established during the personal ministry of Jesus should give attention to this scripture.

But the Jews were also mistaken as to the nature of the kingdom. They expected it to be a temporal affair with the king enthroned in Jerusalem and ruling over all the world. To correct this mistaken idea Jesus taught them that the "kingdom of God cometh not with observation: . . . the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17: 20, 21.) By this he meant that the kingdom is not a temporal setup which makes a physical show or demonstration; it is the reign of God within; it is "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." (Rom. 14: 17.)

The Jews were also mistaken as to the way to become citizens of the kingdom. They expected to be accepted as citizens on the ground that they were the children of Abraham. When John came preaching the near approach of the kingdom, he refused to baptize many because they trusted in their relationship to Abraham, and refused to show forth the fruits of genuine repentance in their lives. (Matt. 3: 4-12.) Nicodemus had difficulty understanding that he, a ruler among the Jews, would have to be born again. (John 3: 1-8.) And there are people today who have trouble understanding why morality and good works will not give them citizenship in the kingdom of God. To confess that they are lost sinners and have need of the regenerating forces of the gospel of Christ is humiliating to them. And there are some who are willing to submit to a new birth if they be allowed to determine how that birth shall be accomplished. They wish to have it accomplished in some mysterious, miraculous manner, and when they are told that it is a simple, humble compliance with the will of God as expressed in the commandments of the gospel, they turn away in as great rage as Naaman turned away from the prophet when told to dip seven times in Jordan. (2 Kings 5.)

Golden Text Explained

The universality of the kingdom. The Jews were a narrow, bigoted people, hence it was necessary for Jesus to use every opportunity to give them broader views of the goodness and mercy of God. So he tells them that people shall come from the east and west, and from the north and south to become citizens of the kingdom of God. This is not to be taken literally. People do not have to come from all parts of the globe to one central point to become citizens of the kingdom, if the kingdom on this earth is intended. They can become citizens of the kingdom in any and every part of the earth. But if this refers to the eternal kingdom, and the reference to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob being in the kingdom strongly suggests this, it is true that they will actually come from all parts of the earth to a central point—heaven.

But the point Jesus stresses here is that Gentiles as well as Jews will enjoy the blessings and privileges of the kingdom. He told the Jews that the kingdom would be taken away from them. (Matt. 21: 43.) The prophets had foretold the fact that "all nations" would flow into the kingdom. (Isa. 2: 2, 3.) And Daniel had said that when the Son of man received his kingdom from the ancient of days "all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him." (Dan. 7:

14.) In fulfillment of these Peter said the promise of gospel blessings is to you and "your children, and to all that are afar off." (Acts 2: 39.) And Paul said Jesus broke down the middle wall of partition to make of Jew and Gentile one new man. (Eph. 2: 15.) For that reason he declared that Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners, but are fellow citizens in the kingdom, members of the household of God, and fellow partakers of the promise through the gospel. (Eph. 3: 6.)

Blessings to be enjoyed in the kingdom. Jesus said people from all parts of the earth "shall sit down in the kingdom." Matthew adds that they shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Matt. 8: 11), and this is implied in our text when he says these ancient worthies shall be seen in the kingdom. This suggests rest from labors. When people have worked hard for a long time, they enjoy sitting down for rest. Next, to sit down with Abraham and other worthies suggests honors to be enjoyed in the kingdom. It will mean promotion from lowly tasks to a place of honor by the side of great men. And again, feasting is suggested here. The word for "sit down" means to recline. This was the posture common when eating. So the picture of a feast to which Abraham and all of like precious faith have been invited, and they are reclining on the left elbow and partaking of a feast of good things prepared for them. So many from all nations, races, colors, and grades of society will recline at the feast God is preparing for the faithful. There will be no distinctions in heaven, except in the rewards gained through suffering and sacrifice and which will be according as our works have been. Nor will there be any desire on the part of any to be above or before others, for all will be humble. Those who are proud and selfish enough to wish preferences shown will not be there.

Exposition of the Text

Kingdom Like Mustard Seed. What is the kingdom of God like?

When trying to teach one about something he has never seen and about which he knows nothing, it is best to liken it to something with which he is familiar. And this Jesus did many times. Another thing to keep in mind is that there is usually only one point of similarity between the kingdom and that which Jesus uses to illustrate it. And furthermore, that point of similarity does not exhaust the characteristics of the kingdom. So the kingdom may be likened to many things which are quite different from each other. There is no similarity between mustard seed and leaven, but each of these has at least one characteristic in common with the kingdom.

Like unto a grain of mustard seed. What is the point of similarity? In the first place the mustard seed is small, "less than all seeds" (Matt. 13: 32), but it produces a plant which may truly be called a tree, reaching a height of ten feet. So it was not impossible, nor uncommon, for birds to rest on its branches. The Jews expected the kingdom to come with conquering force at the very beginning, but Jesus teaches that it is to have a small and insignificant beginning. And even the glorious beginning at Pentecost was small as compared to the territory to be covered, and the numbers who were to be saved. And the little beginning Jesus made during his personal ministry is a still more striking illustration of the small beginning the kingdom was to make in this world.

And became a tree. But for the encouragement of his disciples he pointed out the fact that though the mustard seed is the smallest of its kind, it produces a large plant capable of sheltering the birds of the heaven. So in spite of the small beginning of the kingdom they need not be discouraged, for in time it will grow to such proportions that it will be able to shelter all who care to rest in its provisions. And this should be considered today by the enemies of the kingdom, and by those who despise it because of its humble pretensions. It shall one day be conqueror over all its enemies who shall at that time regret that they ever gave favorable consideration to being enemies of the kingdom.

Kingdom like leaven. It is like unto leaven. The Jews expected the kingdom to be temporal in its nature, and to use physical and visible means of growth and propagation. They thought the Messiah would enlist and equip great armies with which the kingdom would be established and maintain itself. But Jesus taught them that the kingdom would work like leaven, that is, in a quiet unassuming way, yet with irresistible force. First, the smallness of its beginning is suggested here; second its quiet, unimpressive manner of growth is taught; and third, the type of work it would do is suggested. Leaven has the power to change flour or meal into its own nature. So the kingdom is placed in the world. It is small as compared to the size of the world; it works quietly and slowly, and sometimes so slowly that men become discouraged and impatient; and it spreads by changing the world into its own nature.

Till it was all leavened. Perhaps this should not be pressed too far, as some have done, to prove that the whole world will sometime be converted to Christ. But it certainly does suggest growth, spread; it suggests victorious outcome of the strife between the kingdom of God and the world in which it has been established. This should encourage citizens of the kingdom to be faithful, and it should serve as a warning to the enemies of the kingdom who despise it and oppose it.

Salvation in the kingdom. And he went on his way. Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. In verse 10 we learn that he had been to a synagogue for worship, and it is probable that the teaching about the mustard seed and the leaven was given in the synagogue. And the question which follows suggests that the material of this division of our lesson followed immediately.

Are they few that are saved? This question was brought out either by the teaching as to the small beginning of the kingdom, or by what Jesus taught as to the manner of life to be lived by citizens in the kingdom. On one occasion he told them of the difficulties of getting to heaven, and they asked, Who then can be saved? (Matt. 19: 25.) From this we conclude that citizenship in the kingdom amounts to salvation. So outside of the kingdom there is no salvation. (John 3: 5.) The good moral man who depends on his good deeds and lack of vulgarity in speech and habits to take him to heaven in spite of the fact that he has never been born of water and the Spirit will be disappointed in the judgment.

Strive to enter in by the narrow door. The word *strive* is that used to describe the exertions of an athlete and suggests the use of all the strength and attention one is capable of exercising. The door leading into the feast of good things prepared by the Lord for the

faithful is a narrow door. It admits only those who are prepared and are acceptable to the doorkeeper. The careless, indifferent, pleasure-loving people who give most of their time and attention to the affairs of this world, will never be able to enter such a narrow door.

Many shall seek to enter. Contrast the *many* of this statement with the *few* of the question Jesus was asked. Some think the seeking here should be connected with the thought in the next verse, and that their seeking was too late. This may be what Jesus said, for we are told here and in other places (Matt. 7: 21-23), that there will be some who will argue with the Lord in the judgment that they should be allowed to enter because of certain things they have done. But if the seeking mentioned here refers to this life, it is to be understood that they did not seek in the Lord's appointed way. And true it is that there are many seeking entrance into heaven by following traditions of men. Regardless of their honesty and good intentions they will not be allowed to enter unless they turn from the ways of men and accept and walk in the way of the Lord.

Lord, open unto us. When the feast is ready and those who are prepared have entered, then the master of the house, Jesus Christ, will shut the door, and no man shall open it. (Rev. 3: 7.) One of the saddest scenes Jesus ever pictured in his teaching is that of the virgins who went away to get oil for their lamps, and while they were gone the bridegroom came and those prepared went into the feast with him, and the door was shut. In that day Jesus says many shall seek, shall knock, and call upon the master of the house to open the narrow door. But, like the five foolish virgins they have wasted the time of preparation; there is nothing left for them but to spend eternity outside of heaven.

I know not whence ye are. The master will deny that he knows them. Then they will tell him that they ate and drank in his presence, and he preached in their cities. But again he denies any knowledge of them. The same lesson is taught in Matt. 7: 21-23, but in slightly different words. There they tell him of the good works they have done, but even that does not gain them entrance. In both passages he calls them workers of iniquity. That which is contrary to the Lord's will, and that which is added to his revelation, is a work of iniquity. These people evidently were religious, but their religion consisted in doing that which was either contrary to, or an addition to, the revealed will of God.

There shall be weeping. Weeping and gnashing of teeth are terms used to picture the sorrow and suffering, the anguish and agony, of those who are refused an entrance into the kingdom by the narrow door. This should be a mighty restraining force in our lives to keep us from doing things we know to be wrong.

Shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom. Whether the wicked can actually see the righteous enjoying the blessings of heaven we do not know. But the rich man is said to have seen Abraham and Lazarus in his bosom. (Luke 16: 23.) If they can actually see the righteous enjoying the good things of heaven, it will be an added torment to endure.

There are last who shall be first. By the last is meant those we least expected to be there. And this is stated from the Jewish point of view. Those whom the Jews judged unworthy of salvation will

be among the first, or greatest, in the kingdom. And those whom they judged most worthy of salvation will not even be among those who enter the kingdom. This is still true from the world's point of view. Those whom the world calls great, and to whom it gives highest honors and greatest rewards may be among the last to enter the kingdom, and may even be left outside when the door is finally shut. While those who are unnoticed by the world, and their deeds of love and mercy unsung in the halls of fame, may be counted most worthy of salvation in the day of judgment. Man judges on the basis of outward demonstration and by worldly standards; Jesus judges by what is in the heart, and by heavenly standards. (John 7: 24; 8: 15.)

Topics for Discussion

1. The premillennial view of the kingdom contradicts the teaching of Jesus in the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven as to its small and unobserved beginning. According to that theory its beginning will be the greatest and most wonderful event of this world, and its growth anything but slow and silent.

2. To enter the kingdom one must be born of water and the Spirit; to be saved one must be in the kingdom; therefore, to be saved one must be born of water and the Spirit. The birth of water and the Spirit includes baptism, for that is the only religious act in which water is used. Therefore, to be saved in the kingdom one must be baptized.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What did Jesus teach the Jews about the time to establish the kingdom?

What did he teach them about the nature of the kingdom?

What did Jesus teach about how to become citizens in the kingdom?

What mistakes do people make today in these matters?

Golden Text Explained

What narrow views did the Jews hold with reference to the kingdom?

How did Jesus try to give them a broader view?

What did prophets and apostles teach along this line?

What is meant by sitting down in the kingdom?

By whose worthy presence shall we be honored?

Why will there be no place seeking in heaven?

Kingdom Like Mustard Seed

What rules must we keep in mind when studying parables?

Why is the kingdom like a mustard seed?

What was there about this parable to encourage his disciples?

What is there in this for the enemies of the kingdom to consider?

Kingdom Like Leaven

How did the Jews expect the Messiah to establish his kingdom?

Why is the kingdom like leaven?

What encouragement for us, and what warning for the enemies of Jesus?

Salvation in the Kingdom

What question was Jesus asked in the way?

What do you think caused this question to be asked?

Why does citizenship in the kingdom amount to salvation?

According to this, why will the man who depends on his morality fail?

Does Jesus teach that it is easy to go to heaven?

Why will some seek but fail to enter the kingdom?

What request will the unprepared make in that day?

What will be the answer given them?

What is a work of iniquity?

How is the punishment of the wicked described?

What is meant by the last being first, and the first being last?

What did you get from the daily Bible readings?

What is there of interest in the topics for discussion?

Lesson VI—August 7, 1949

THE GREAT INVITATION

The Lesson Text

Luke 14: 15-24

15 And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

16 But he said unto him, A certain man made a great supper; and he bade many:

17 And he sent forth his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden. Come; for all things are now ready.

18 And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a field, and I must needs go out and see it; I pray thee have me excused.

19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee have me excused.

20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

21 And the servant came, and told his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant. Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and maimed and blind and lame.

22 And the servant said. Lord, what thou didst command is done, and yet there is room.

23 And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and constrain them to come in, that my house may be filled.

24 For I say unto you, that none of those men that were bidden shall taste of my supper.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Matt. 11: 28.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 55: 1-7.

Daily Bible Readings

August 1. M..... The Lord's Yoke Is Easy (Matt. 11: 25-30)

August 2. T..... No Pleasure in Death of Wicked (Ezek. 18: 19-24)

August 3. W..... The Lord's Ways are Equal (Ezek. 18: 25-32)

August 4. T..... Jesus Asks First Place (Luke 9: 57-62)

August 5. F..... We are Warned to Count the Cost (Luke 14: 25-35)

August 6. S..... The Heavenly City Prepared (Rev. 21: 9-27)

August 7. S..... The Last and Great Invitation (Rev. 22: 16-20)

TIME.—A.D. 29.

PLACE.—Probably in Perea.

PERSONS.—Jesus, lawyers, and Pharisees.

Introduction

It should be kept in mind that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. He seems to be in no hurry, having plenty of time to teach along the way to the city. The events of this lesson occur on a Sabbath day. He had been to the synagogue for worship and now was eating bread in the house of one of the rulers of the synagogue, who was a Pharisee. There was present a man who had the dropsy, which afforded Jesus an opportunity to do good, as well as to teach a needed lesson. So he asked the lawyers and Pharisees if it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath? And when he had healed the man, he asked them if they would pull an ox or an ass out of a well if they should fall in on the Sabbath. This they knew they would do to save their animals. The conclusion was obvious. If

was lawful to rescue an animal on the Sabbath, surely it was lawful to heal a man on the Sabbath.

Then Jesus taught them some very strange things about feasts—strange to them, and perhaps as strange to us today. He said when they wished to make a feast they should invite the poor, maimed, lame, and blind, who were not able to return the invitation. From this we do not gather that it was sinful to entertain one's friends, for Jesus himself ate with his close personal friends. But to invite friends over and over again, and never make a feast for the poor was the thing Jesus censured. And that is the thing people today, even in the church do over and over again. Then Jesus suggested that one's recompense would come, not from a return invitation of some friend, but in the resurrection of the just. This is likely the statement which introduced the matter of our lesson. The Jews had an idea that when the Messiah came to set up his kingdom some ancient worthies would be present, thus suggesting a resurrection, and so the connection between this verse and the first verse of our lesson text.

Golden Text Explained

The one inviting. This text has been referred to as The Great Invitation. We may say that it is great, first, because of the one who invites. The Lord has issued the invitation. That we frail mortals should be so highly honored as to be invited to a great feast made by the Lord is difficult to understand. We have the habit of inviting our friends; he invites his enemies. We have the habit of inviting those who are respectable; he invites those who are defiled and corrupted by sin. Such mercy and condescension are beyond us; it is a demonstration of too great a love for us to comprehend fully. But that any would hesitate to accept such a full and free invitation is almost as difficult to understand. If we were invited to a supper by the mayor of the city, the governor of the state, or by the president of the nation, surely there is not one among us who would reject it. We would feel that we had been highly honored. Also, we would feel an obligation to accept lest we offend the one who invited us. But men reject the invitation of the Lord as if it were a light thing.

Those who are invited. Those who are laboring under heavy burdens are the ones invited, "All ye that labor and are heavy laden." This might well have applied to the Jews laboring under the yoke of ceremonial laws, which Peter said that neither they nor their fathers were able to bear. (Acts 15: 10.) And in addition to all that, they were loaded down with traditions of the fathers, burdens more grievous than the law itself. (Luke 11: 46.) And today the invitation is just as much in place from this point of view as it was then. People are priest-ridden today; human traditions and religious customs are as many and as burdensome now as in the days of Jesus. To all such he still says, Come unto me and find rest from all this. But perhaps the first and most important application of the lesson is to those who are burdened with sin, regardless of whether it be traditions and human customs, or sins of every kind. The sinner is unable to atone for his sins, and the longer he lives the greater his load of sin becomes; to all such Jesus says, Come unto me, you shall find rest.

The blessings promised. I will give you rest, says Jesus. (1) It is rest from the power of sin. Sin is represented as a cruel slave master driving the sinner on to more and greater sins. Satan has them in his kingdom and is exercising dominion over them. But in Christ sin no more shall have dominion over them. (Rom. 6: 14.)

(2) It is rest from the pollution of sin. Sin is a defiling thing. One cannot engage in sin without becoming defiled and corrupted. And from that defilement there is no rest, or freedom, except in the cleansing blood of Jesus. So he says, Come unto me and I will free you from the pollution of sins. (3) It is rest from the practice of sin. Paul says Jesus gave himself for us to deliver us from this present evil world. (Gal. 1:4.) The world is viewed as an evil thing which is not satisfied to be evil itself, but is trying to entangle us in evil too. But through the death of Jesus we are freed from the world and given strength to live above its evil course. He died that we might live unto him. (2 Cor. 5: 15; 1 Pet. 2: 24.) (4) It is rest from the penalty of sin. The wages of sin is death, but Jesus died in our place, and he offers rest from the penalty to all who accept him. (5) It is rest from the presence of sin. Sin is a revolting thing which the righteous abhor. Some day Jesus will take his own to a place of purity where no sin shall be allowed to enter.

Exposition of the Text

Blessings in the kingdom. When one heard these things. As Jesus and others sat at the table eating, these matters were being discussed. It is interesting to notice how well Jesus occupied his time. How little of his time was frittered away in senseless conversation; and how much of our time is given to things which do not instruct or encourage anybody. The things referred to here are what he had said about feeding the lame and the blind, and the recompense for such at the resurrection of the just.

Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom. This is a statement made by one who sat at meat with Jesus. It seems that the things just said by Jesus suggested the kingdom to be established to this man. The connection is rather remote, and some see no connection at all, contending that the man intended to pass from those things to the idea of the kingdom. It is likely that the feasting mentioned by Jesus, which by the Jews was connected with the idea of the kingdom, or the resurrection of the just, suggested the idea of the kingdom of this man. But whatever gave him the idea of the kingdom, he expressed a great truth with reference to it. Those who partake of the blessings of the kingdom of the Lord are a blessed lot, a happy people. To "eat bread" in the kingdom means to partake of the blessings provided by the king in the kingdom; it has no reference to eating the bread of the Lord's Supper.

Certain man made a great supper. Jesus proceeds to give a parable which will correct some views of the man who made the above statement, and teach other needed lessons. The Jews supposed that they would have places in the kingdom when it was established on account of being the children of Abraham. The man was really saying, from the Jewish point of view, What a fortunate group of people we Jews are; the Lord will establish his kingdom and we shall be honored guests to eat at his table in his kingdom! Then Jesus as much as said to him, Don't be too sure of yourself, for an

invitation has been given and for many and insufficient reasons not many of you Jews have accepted that invitation. Yes, the Lord had bidden many, but very few of them had accepted.

Sent forth his servant at supper time. When those bidden seemed slow to arrive, the servant was sent forth to announce and to remind them that it was time for supper. There was nothing wrong in the guests waiting for this announcement that the supper was ready, for it was the usual custom for the host to make such announcement. But they were supposed to be prepared to drop whatever they were doing and go immediately to the feast to which they had been invited.

The indifference of humanity. With one consent began to make excuse. We shall lose the force of the lesson here if we fail to notice that the "bade many" of verse 16 is different from and prior to the "Come; for all things are now ready," of verse 17. And the purchases and plans made by these men were made without giving any regard whatsoever to the invitation extended to them. They had been invited, and were expected to hold themselves in readiness to go when the servant should announce that the supper was ready. But they made their business plans just as if no supper was being planned for their benefit. This is an indication of the esteem in which they held the one inviting them.

I have bought a field. Commentators usually say it is suggested here that the man bought the field without looking at it, and now he wished to see it. There is nothing to indicate that he bought it without seeing it; but having bought it, he wished to look it over. People give more attention to a car, house, or property of any kind soon after purchase than they do after they have had it a long time. This man had bought a field and he simply wished to go after work hours and look over it, and either make plans to use it for his profit or sell it for a profit. So people today turn down the invitation of the Lord on account of their interest in material affairs. Love of lands and houses so fill the heart that there is no room for the kingdom.

I have bought five yoke of oxen. A yoke of oxen means two oxen, since two were linked together by a yoke, which was a piece of wood fitted over the necks of the animals to which the load pulled was attached. To "prove" them meant to see if they would work together so as to serve his purposes. This could have been postponed if he had wished to go to the supper, and the fact that he did not postpone this is an indication of the low esteem in which he held the man who gave the supper. So there are people today who excuse themselves from the obligations of the kingdom on such poor grounds that they show how lightly they esteem the Lord and his kingdom.

I have married a wife. This changes the excuses from the field of material wealth and interests to that of the social realm. He was more interested in his new wife than he was in the supper to which he was invited. But the fact that his wife would not have left him if he had gone, not to mention the fact that he could have taken her with him, proves how lightly he esteemed the man who invited him, and of what little importance he attached to the support. So when we allow social duties to keep us from serving the Lord, we prove that we love those things more than we love the Lord and his

kingdom, and that we attach more importance to them than we do to the business of the kingdom.

It should be noted at this point that all these things urged as excuses were in the realm of the lawful; not one man said he wished to do something unlawful or mean. We are prone to think we are excused from kingdom business, or obligations, if we are engaged in something lawful. But in this parable Jesus puts the kingdom above lawful activities. "The three excuses warn us not to be hindered by (1) The love of possessions; (2) the affairs of business; (3) our social ties." (McGarvey.)

Reaction of the Master. Master of the house being angry. These poor excuses showed this man how little he was esteemed by those invited, so he was offended. It is a grave offense for man to turn down the Lord's great invitation; it is an affront, an indignity. For man to say he does not so intend it, is but another poor excuse which will not help in the day of judgment.

Bring the poor, maimed, blind, and lame. The master was determined that his house should be filled, and if those first invited would not come, he would invite others. This must be taken from the Jewish point of view here. Those first invited were Jews, and then the publicans, sinners, and later Gentiles. So if the Jews would not come, these other classes would be invited.

And yet there is room. This verse suggests the largeness of the preparations made by the man giving the supper. It is given to suggest that the Lord is able to feast all who will accept his invitation. There is no danger of inviting too many, nor of too many accepting his invitation that he will not be able to provide rich blessings for them in the kingdom. The host in the kingdom has all the universe at his command, and his supply of provisions can never be diminished, though the whole world accept his gracious invitation. And when ten million millenniums of eternity have rolled by, his great storehouse of blessings will yield as bountiful and as rich supply of the choicest blessings as when first its doors were opened to hungering and thirsting humanity.

Constrain them to come in. There is nothing in this statement to suggest that this servant was to use physical force, much less that it teaches us to use physical force in bringing people into the kingdom. It simply meant to urge in spite of timidity on the part of those who thought they would not be welcome in such a house; it meant to persuade them to allow no business however pressing to keep them from coming. So we ought to press the invitation on men today. Some are afraid of *overpersuasion*. But brethren usually are in no danger of that; our danger is lack of persuasion.

None of those bidden shall taste my supper. This refers to those who were first bidden to the supper, and who made trifling excuses as to why they could not come. This may have had reference to the Jews as a nation, but if so, it did not apply to them as individuals, for all the apostles were Jews, as was the whole church for several years after Pentecost. But this does impress us with the seriousness of rejecting the invitation of the Lord. How many, many times people reject him because they love the material things of life, engrossed in social, financial, or political affairs so that they have neither time nor desire to accept him. And when people have become children of God how many times they put him off for things of this world.

There is a point beyond which the mercy and long-suffering of the Lord will not reach, and woe to that one who trifles with the love and goodness of the Lord too long!

Topics for Discussion

1. "Grace despised is grace forfeited, like Esau's birthright. They that will not have Christ when they *may*, shall not have him when they *would*."

2. Those who have the least worldly advantages are often the most willing to listen to the gospel and most ready to respond to the great invitation.

3. The Lord is as pleased at the conversion of a poor blind beggar as he is with that of the judge or the banker.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

When and where did the events of this lesson occur?

What lesson did Jesus teach about doing good?

What did he teach them about feasts at this time?

What did he say about our reward for such course of action?

Golden Text Explained

Discuss the first reason why this invitation is great.

With what were people then burdened?

How does that compare with religious burdens of today?

What is the greatest burden people have to be lifted by Christ?

Discuss the five things about sin from which Jesus gives us rest.

Blessings in the Kingdom

What do you know of the character of conversation Jesus engaged in?

What in the conversation suggested the kingdom to one man?

What did he say was a great blessing?

What Jewish view did Jesus correct by this parable? and how?

The Indifference of Humanity

What aggravated the offense of these who excused themselves when supper was announced?

Discuss the first excuse and its implications.

Did the second man have any better excuse?

How did the third man's excuse differ from the other two?

Does lawful business or pleasure excuse us from kingdom duties?

By what three things should we not be hindered in our service?

Reaction of the Master

What did these excuses teach the man who made the supper?

What did the master do to fill his house for the feast?

What suggests the largeness of God's preparations?

What is suggested by constraining people to come in?

Do you think preachers and parents persuade as earnestly as they should?

What did the master say about those who refused his invitation? What is the application?

Can people sin away their day of grace?

What did you get from the daily Bible readings?

What is there of interest in the topics for discussion?

Lesson VII—August 14, 1949

PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON

The Lesson Text

Luke 15: 11-24

11 And he said, A certain man had two sons:

12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of *thy* substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

13 And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together and

took his journey into a far country; and there he wasted his substance with riotous living.

14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that country; and he began to be in want.

15 And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him.

17 But when he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish here with hunger!

18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight:

19 I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

20 And he arose, and came to his father. But while he was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son.

22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

23 And bring the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat, and make merry:

24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."* (Luke 15: 10b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 55: 7-11.

Daily Bible Readings

August 8. M. The First Prodigal Son (Gen. 4: 1-15)
 August 9. T. Jacob Sinned in His Youth (Gen. 27: 1-27)
 August 10. W. The Sinful Sons of Eli (1 Sam. 2: 12-26)
 August 11. T. Absalom the Sinful Son of David (2 Sam. 15: 1-18)
 August 12. F. Father's Advice to a Son (Prov. 2: 1-22)
 August 13. S. A Father's Warning to His Son (Prov. 6: 20-35)
 August 14. S. A Father's Final Exhortation (Eccles. 12: 1-14)

TIME.—A.D. 29.

PLACE.—In Perea, on his way to Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus, publicans, Pharisees, scribes.

Introduction

The parables of Luke 15 were called forth by a criticism of Jesus by the scribes and Pharisees. Their criticism was, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." In the first two parables Jesus teaches them the interest heaven has in that which is lost. Though the shepherd had ninety-nine sheep in the fold, he went in search for the one which was lost. Though there are innumerable angels in heaven, and there are many righteous men in the fold of God, he does not lose sight of the one lost soul in sin. These parables also teach us the joy which is in heaven over one sinner that returns.

In the third parable, or story from actual life, Jesus not only taught them the love of God for that which is lost, but he showed the scribes and Pharisees that they were as much in need of the love and mercy of God as were the publicans and sinners. In this story the prodigal son is used to represent the publicans and sinners, and the elder brother is used to represent the scribes and Pharisees. The prodigal was guilty of the sins of the flesh, the sordid, vulgar sins; while the elder brother was guilty of the sins of disposition, such

as anger, jealousy, self-righteousness, unwillingness to forgive. There are sins of the flesh, and sins of the mind (Eph. 2: 3); and they cause defilement of the flesh and of the spirit. (2 Cor. 7: 1.) Jesus intended for them to get the idea that the elder brother was as sinful and displeasing to his father as was the prodigal son. And from this we learn that the sins of the mind, an ugly disposition, will cause one to be as much in need of the mercy and forgiveness of God as the sins of the flesh. Many self-righteous, jealous, covetous, or unforgiving people criticize and even ostracize those who are guilty of indulging the lusts of the flesh, not realizing that the sins of which they are guilty are just as bad in the sight of God as the sins they criticize. This is no justification of those who satisfy the lusts of the flesh, but it is a warning to those who cultivate ugly dispositions and think they are guiltless.

Golden Text Explained

Joy in heaven. Our text says there is *joy in the presence of the angels*; not merely that the angels rejoice at the return of a sinner, but that all heaven rejoices at the return. In verse 7 we read, "There shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." This joy on the part of God is that of the Father knowing that the period of danger and wandering for one of his children is over; he has returned to the safety of the fold and the heart of the Father is relieved of further anxiety. God is pictured as being grieved with erring children. (Heb. 3: 17.) When one returns he is no longer grieved. We must exercise care in using such terms as these with reference to God. But joy is the opposite of grief, and if God grieves over the disobedience of his people, we will expect the opposite at their return from their wandering.

There is joy on the part of Jesus. He who wept over the disobedience and rebellion of the people of Jerusalem can be expected to rejoice when one or more will turn from sin to a life of righteousness. And since Jesus gave his life to save men from death we can expect him to rejoice when people avail themselves of his saving power.

Angels Interested. The part which angels play in our salvation is interesting, and we could wish that more had been revealed about it. They sang for joy when the Savior was born. (Luke 2: 13, 14.) Jesus said for us not to offend his little ones, for "in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father." (Matt. 18: 10.) When the maid reported that Peter was at the door, those inside said, "It is his angel." (Acts 12: 15.) And Paul tells us that angels are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. (Heb. 1: 14.) From this we learn that the ministering is done before they inherit salvation. From all this we conclude that angels have an interest in the salvation of men, and that they are used by the Lord in connection with the salvation of men, and when one is saved, or a lost child returns to the Father, they rejoice. Human curiosity leads us to wish we could know just what they do and how they do it. But we may be assured that they do nothing contrary to the revealed will of God (Gal. 1: 7, 8), and that they do not save anybody independent of their obedience to the will of God.

Repenting sinner. There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repents. To repent means to turn from sin, and it is inevitably

followed by reformation of life. A sorrow for sin which does not produce both repentance and reformation is of no value. It is the sorrow of Judas. And a repentance (?) which does not produce reformation is not true repentance. To say, I repent, and continue in one's usual course of life is not doing the will of God. (Mate. 21: 28-30.) The Pharisees thought God was well pleased with them, but Jesus taught them that there was more rejoicing in heaven over one publican or sinner who truly repented than there was over many righteous persons; so how much more rejoicing over that one sinner than over a hundred of these self-righteous Pharisees. As long as a man can find it in his heart to repent of his sins, that long God finds pleasure in him; but when there is neither shame nor regret for sin and no turning from it, heaven is grieved on account of that one.

Exposition of the Text

Leaving the Father. A certain man. This does not start out like a parable. It seems to be a story from real life. However, parables are such as could happen in real life or they would teach things which are not true.

Father, give me the portion of thy substance. It was customary upon the request of a son who had reached his majority for the father to divide the inheritance. In this case it was base selfishness which prompted the younger son to demand a division of the property, but he did not demand anything illegal or unusual.

He divided unto them his living. Since the father had but two sons, and since it was customary to give the elder son a double portion, this prodigal received only one third of the father's substance. And it seems that the prodigal took his portion in cash, while the elder brother held the farm.

Not many days after. Adam Clarke cites a law of that time which provided for the division of property to relieve an ill-treated son. The father could not refuse to divide his substance, but he could bring suit after the division charging the son with intentions to waste his money. If the father was found irreproachable by the court, and if it was found that the son had no just cause for the separation, the son was fined "two hundred puns of cowries." He suggests that the son left immediately after the division to escape the fine. It is interesting if true, though only a guess.

Took his journey into a far country. His reason for going into this far country was to get away from the restraining influence and authority of his father. He wished to do things contrary to his father's wishes. Custom gave the father authority over the son even after he was of age. He could not run with the crowd he wished to be with in his home community; he could not indulge the lusts of the flesh as he wished while living in his father's house. So there are people who wish more liberties than their heavenly Father will allow, and they go into the far country of Satan to exercise their liberties.

Wasted his substance with riotous living. The fact that he lived this way as soon as he reached this far country is evidence that this is the way he wished to live at home. As this boy wasted his material substance, so many today waste their physical, mental, and spiritual power with which God has endowed them, in sin. Sin is the greatest waster known to man. God endows us with these powers

and expects us to use them for his glory. When we use them for Satan, they are worse than wasted, they are prostituted to base purposes.

Life in the Far Country. When he had spent all. Riotous living was a continual drain on his capital; it is a drain upon one's physical, moral, and spiritual reserves. It adds nothing to one's character, but takes away at a fearful rate.

Began to be in want. The want of this boy was caused by his capital being lost and the famine in the country. He had not foreseen that and made no provision against such an emergency. There is always a famine in that far country when one looks for things good for the soul. Only in the presence of the Father can necessities for the soul be found. And no one who lives in that far country of sin is making provision for the future. They are living for the present, satisfied with the physical and temporal as their portion, not knowing or realizing that they should make preparation for the future.

Joined himself to one of the citizens. It is possible that the word joined suggests that the boy pushed himself upon this citizen. In his frantic efforts to make his own way and prove to himself and others that he could get along without his father, he pushed himself upon this citizen. If he had been needed, and if he had been earning his keep, it seems that he would have been given enough food at least.

Sent him into field to feed swine. This was the lowest depth of degradation to which a Jew could think of going. Sin takes people to the lowest and most shameful depths. So great was his want that he would have been glad to satisfy his hunger by eating husks, or fruit of the carob tree, which the swine ate. No man gave unto him. His evil friends were glad to receive from him, but they would not give. Sin takes all from us, but gives nothing useful to us.

When he came to himself. When he gained his equilibrium, came to his senses, he determined what he should do. People in sin have not their right senses. God gave them better minds than to be deceived and enslaved by sin. Want and misery brought this boy to his right mind; so sorrow, suffering, realization of spiritual poverty bring men to their right mind. He realized that servants in his father's house had more than he. So the humblest servant in the family of God is better provided for than the richest man in Satan's service.

I will arise and go to my father. Leaving his father was the cause of all his woe; a return would correct his misery. So those who are in sin will suffer until they make up their minds to return to their Father. They cannot hope to enjoy the blessings of God in that faraway land of sin. But going back to the father would make it necessary to confess his waywardness. And his deep penitence is suggested in his willingness to be satisfied with the place of a servant instead of that of a son. So with shame and penitence in his heart and a confession on his lips he started back to his father.

Back home again. While he was yet afar off. The father was watching. Heaven is interested in us. The father had compassion and showed it by meeting the son and kissing him. God's love is shown in the gift of his Son on the cross, and his willingness to forgive the sinner.

I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight. This was a full unreserved confession of sin. He did not say, Father, *If I have sinned.* When people cannot make up their minds whether they have sinned, they either have done nothing wrong, or they are not humble and penitent enough to confess it.

No more worthy to be called thy son. He had forfeited his right to the relationship by indulging in things contrary to the wishes of his father and beneath the plane on which a son would act. From one point of view none of us are worthy to be sons of God, but from another we can walk worthily of God and the calling we have espoused. (Eph. 4: 1; Col. 1: 10.)

Bring quickly the best robe. This robe was one kept for special occasions; it was not for servants. The ring for his finger was to denote the exercise of authority which only a son could exercise for the father. When Joseph was elevated to a position next to Pharaoh he was given a ring. They were similar to seals. Wax was melted on a paper and the seal on the ring impressed upon the cooling wax and the imprint of the seal left, making a document a legal instrument. It is worthy of notice that all of heaven's business on earth today is transacted by returned prodigals, a great demonstration of God's mercy and love. The fatted calf is only another part of this demonstration of joy at the return of the son, and a way of suggesting to us the fact that God will receive us back into our place as a child in spite of sins we commit while wandering in the far country of sin. The eating and making merry are but part of the drapery of the story which illustrates the joy of the father, and words are poor things to express the joy of heaven over the return of sinners.

My son was dead, and is alive again. One may be both dead and alive at the same time; dead to one but alive to another. While we are dead to sin we are alive to God, but when we are alive to sin we are dead to God. (Rom. 6: 10, 11.) The same boy who was dead is also said to be lost; and when he was found, he was alive. Some get the idea that if one is dead in sin he is incapable of doing anything to be saved. The lost can seek, can determine to go back, and can feel penitent enough to confess his wrongs. Since both words, dead and lost, are used with reference to this boy's state, we conclude that the dead in sin can do all these things.

Topics for Discussion

1. The state of sin and separation from God is characterized by the following (1) State of departure from God. (2) A wasteful state, in which all divine endowments are wasted. (3) A state of vile servitude to Satan. (4) State of perpetual dissatisfaction, of want and suffering. (5) A state in which we can expect no help from others in that state. (6) A state of death to God and all that is good and pure. (7) A state of madness, when one is not himself; he is not thinking as God gave him ability to think. When the prodigal came to himself, he left the far country; when people come to themselves, they leave sin.

2. The prodigal could have stayed in the far country all his life, but this would have been no more than swine's existence. So people today can get along in this world without God, but theirs is a swine's existence spiritually compared to what they could enjoy if only they would return to the Father's house.

3. In the father's reception of the son we see: (1) The eyes of mercy saw him. (2) The heart of mercy had compassion on him.

(3) The feet of mercy ran to meet him. (4) The arms of mercy had reached out and embraced him. (5) The lips of mercy to kiss and give him a royal welcome back home. (M. Henry.)

4. The prodigal son went away from home well fed and well dressed, confident of his ability to care for himself. He returned hungry, filthy, and convinced of the fact that it is better to stay with father. Every sinner saved by grace has learned this lesson.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

Why were the parables of Luke 15 given?

In the story of the prodigal son, whom does he represent?

Whom does the elder brother represent?

What did Jesus teach as to the relative sinfulness of these parties?

Are we inclined to make a difference between the two types of sin today?

Golden Text Explained

How is God affected by our sins, and by our repentance?

Give incidents in the life of Jesus that show how he is affected by our sins.

What is said of the interest of angels in our salvation?

In what service are they employed?

What may we not expect them to do for our salvation?

What do you think of the idea of a guardian angel for each one?

What is the meaning of repentance, and what follows it?

How long will God continue to forgive men of sins?

Leaving the Father

Was the boy legally entitled to his part of the property?

What portion did he get? Why?

What is the probable reason for his immediate departure?

Why did he go into a far country?

Show how sin wastes the powers with which God endows us.

Life in the Far Country

What caused the boy to come to want?

What act of his shows the dependence upon others?

What shows the depths of moral shame to which he went?

What does sin take from us, and what does it give us?

What does coming to one's self mean?

What was necessary to end his miseries?

Back Home Again

What suggests that the father was watching?

Do you think he was sincere in his confession?

How does it differ from the usual manner of confessing sins now?

Why was he not worthy to be called a son?

Are we worthy to be children of God?

How did the father show his joy at the return of his son?

What is meant by being dead and alive, lost and found?

What did you get from the daily Bible readings?

Give special attention to the topics for discussion.

Lesson VIII—August 21, 1949

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

The Lesson Text

Luke 16: 19-31

19 Now there was a certain rich man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day:

20 And a certain beggar named Laz'-a-rus was laid at his gate, full of sores,

21 And desiring to be fed with the *crumbs* that fell from the rich man's table: yea, even the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and that he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom: and the rich man also died, and was buried.

23 And in Ha'-des he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Laz'-a-rus in his bosom.

24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Laz'-a-rus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame.

25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and Laz'-a-rus in like manner evil things: but now here he is comforted, and thou art in anguish.

26 And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they that would pass from hence to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from thence to us.

27 And he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house;

28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

29 But Abraham saith, They have Mo'-ses and the prophets; let them hear them.

30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one go to them from the dead, they will repent.

31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Mo'-ses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if one rise from the dead.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."* (Matt. 5: 3.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 John 3: 13-18.

Daily Bible Readings

August 15. M.....Silver Cannot Satisfy (Eccles. 5: 8-17;

August 16. T.....Riches are not Forever (Prov. 27: 23-27)

August 17. W.....Who Gives to the Poor Shall not Lack (Prov. 28: 19-28)

August 18. T.....Pray to be Neither Poor nor Rich (Prov. 30: 7-9)

August 19. F.....Proper Use of Riches Taught (Luke 16: 1-13)

August 20. S.....People Perish Over Riches (Acts 5: 1-11 >

August 21. S.....Paul's Charge to the Rich (1 Tim. 6: 17-19)

TIME.—A.D. 29.

PLACE.—Perea, east of Jordan.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, and the Pharisees.

Introduction

This lesson has a very close connection with the first paragraph of the chapter. In verses 1 to 13 Jesus taught the proper use of wealth. He told of a man who was a steward that was called to give account of his stewardship. Having wasted his master's money he knew he could not give an acceptable account, and that he would be put out of his master's house and employment. So he went to those who owed his master and made settlement with them for a fraction of what they owed. In this way he obligated them to himself so that when he was in need he would not have to work or beg, but could depend on these men he had favored to take him in. Jesus said the man wisely used his office as steward to make provision for the future. He did not commend his wastefulness of his master's money, nor did he commend his unjust settlements. The only point Jesus commended was the fact that he used his office while he held it to make provision for his future security. From this we learn the lesson that we are to use the "mammon of unrighteousness," or material wealth, while we have it in such way as to secure our future happiness. We are going to be called on to make an accounting of how we have used the master's endowments, which will be the judgment day. Knowing this judgment is ahead of us, we should

make to ourselves "friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles." (Verse 9.) In this verse those benefited by cur stewardship are spoken of as receiving us into heaven, but it is only in the sense that our kindness to them commends us to God, and is one condition on which we will be admitted. (Matt. 25: 34-40.)

Golden Text Explained

Who are poor in spirit. The Greek word translated *poor* always had a bad sense till it was ennobled in the gospels (Thayer), and meant "to be thoroughly frightened, to cower down or hide one's self from fear, hence one who slinks or crouches, often involving the idea of roving about in wretchedness." In classical Greek it was used to mean, *reduced to beggary, asking alms.* In the New Testament it is given a wider meaning, "*destitute of wealth, influence, position, honors; lowly, afflicted.*" In Rev. 3: 17 it means to be *destitute of Christian virtues and eternal riches.* Thayer comments on its use in our text as follows: "Lacking in anything . . . as respects their spirit, i.e., destitute of the wealth of learning and intellectual culture which the schools afford (men of this class most readily gave themselves up to Christ's teaching and proved themselves fitted to lay hold of the heavenly treasure, Matt. 11: 25; John 9: 39; 1 Cor. 1: 26, 27—but others make the idea more inward and ethical: 'conscious of their spiritual need.')

Present and future blessings. Jesus said, Blessed *are* the poor in spirit. They have blessing in this present world. The word *blessed* is to be taken in the sense of *happy*. Those who are poor in spirit are happy in this world. Why are they happy? To them belong the kingdom of heaven with all the honors and privileges and spiritual wealth God can give to citizens of that kingdom. Could any one wish for more? Those who have their minds fixed upon earthly things, and who have no appreciation of spiritual values, will not think the poor in spirit have a very big prize; but those who have been divorced from material standards of values will realize that the poor in spirit have much for which to be happy. Paul said not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called by the gospel into the kingdom. (1 Cor. 1: 26.) The kingdom with the administration of its affairs, the responsibility of carrying on its work in the world, and the honor of being associated with Jesus Christ in the salvation of the lost of the earth, are all good and sufficient reasons why we should be supremely happy. These

blessings we have now, and they are blessings denied to rich, the wise in the ways of the world, the high and mighty in the social and political circles. True they have things which they value more highly, and they would not trade with us; but we have the word of the Lord on our side as proof that we have greater and more lasting riches than they have. And in his word we trust and rejoice in the possession of the things he values most highly.

Our future blessings which come to the poor in spirit are but the continuation and infinite enlargement of our present blessings. We enjoy our present blessings in unfavorable and discouraging surroundings; our future blessings will be enjoyed in perfectly glorious surroundings, made so by the application of the infinite wisdom and power of our heavenly Father.

Exposition of the Text

Their state in this world. There was a certain rich man. The idea that the man's name was Dives comes from the fact that *dives* is a Latin word which means *rich man*. The purple in which he was dressed refers to an outer coat made of the most expensive cloth and dyes known in that day. The dye was obtained from a rare shellfish in the Mediterranean Sea. About one drop could be taken from the shellfish at the base of the head, hence the scarcity and the difficulty of getting it determined its value. The linen was made of flax which came from Egypt. Only kings, the high priest, and the very rich could afford such costly garments. By "faring sumptuously every day" is meant, as in the margin, "living in mirth and splendor." Life was one continual gay party for him and his friends.

A certain beggar named Lazarus. The things said about the rich man were uncomplimentary, so his name was not called; but the things said about Lazarus would not cause his family and friends, if he had any, to be offended if his name was called. This was not the Lazarus of Bethany. (John 11.) Lazarus was laid at the gate of the rich man. He not only was poor, but he was helpless, and had to be *laid*, or placed, where he could beg for food. His body was full of sores; they were likely running sores, for the dogs licked them. Whether this adds misery or comfort is not suggested in the text, and not known by the writer. Animals keep wounds clean and hasten the healing process by licking them; it may be intended to suggest that even the dogs did more for Lazarus than the rich man did.

Desiring to be fed with crumbs. Some commentators say Lazarus desired, but was denied the crumbs. It is not necessary to reach such a conclusion, and it seems out of harmony with the idea that Lazarus was laid at his gate for the purpose of getting enough to exist. The crumbs mean the scraps from the table as we use that term; the refuse which would be thrown to the dogs. The rich man cared not for Lazarus getting what he could before the dogs ate it.

The beggar died. If there was a funeral, no mention is made of it. But angels carried his soul to Abraham's bosom. To recline in the bosom of another means to be on intimate terms with that one. (John 13: 23.) To be on such terms with Abraham, the head of the race, was the highest honor a Jew could imagine. The rich man also died, and there was a great funeral. The speaker no doubt praised

him for his success in life, his contributions to worthy civic enterprises, and maybe his regular attendance at synagogue worship on Sabbath mornings.

State in the next world. In Hades he lifted up his eyes. Hades (Greek) and Sheol (Hebrew) mean the same—the place of departed spirits, whether good or bad. Jesus was in Hades the three days his body was in the grave. (Acts 2: 27-31.) Hades is divided into two parts. That part in which the rich man lifted up his eyes was a place of torment.

Seeth Abraham afar off. From this we learn that the distance between the two parts is great—Abraham was afar off. And we learn that the rich man could both feel the torments and see Abraham. He could also see that Lazarus was enjoying peace and comfort in that faraway place.

Father Abraham, have mercy on me. The rich man was a Jew for he called Abraham father, and Abraham called him son. On earth he had not been dependent on any one; had not had to ask for anything. But now he begs for mercy. He is willing to be content with a very small gift, which suggests the amount of suffering endured.

Send Lazarus to cool my tongue. It was hard for the rich man to realize that he was no longer on earth and able to command the poor to serve him. True, he was not asking for much, and he knew Lazarus to be the kind of man who would help a suffering man, so he did not consider his request an unreasonable one.

Abraham said. Son, remember. The rich man could feel, see, appraise a situation, and now we learn that he could remember situations as they were on this earth during his life. During his life he received his good things; all the good and all the happiness ever to come to him came while he was on earth. Those who have their minds set on earthly treasures and pleasures, and who have no appreciation of heavenly things, may expect to get all their pleasures in this life.

Lazarus in like manner evil things. The rich man received *thy* good things; they were his; he provided them and enjoyed them. But Lazarus is not said to have received *his* evil. He did not bring the evil upon himself; he was not responsible for it. Like Job, his suffering was the chastening hand of God that he might be a partaker of God's holiness. But conditions were reversed in the next world, Lazarus was comforted and the rich man was in anguish, which means, "Extreme pain, either of body or mind; excruciating distress."

There is a great gulf fixed. Between the place of happiness and the place of torment is a great gulf; one place is afar off from the other. The gulf is fixed; it is not to be moved, bridged, made narrow, or gone around. Those in the place of peace cannot (and certainly they would not) go to the place of torment, so they are to be everlastingly happy. Those who are in the place of torment cannot, however much they may desire, get out and go to the place of happiness, so they are doomed to be everlastingly miserable. And there is not one thing, even so much as one tiny drop of water given, to be done to lessen their torment or better their situation. Abraham said *none* could cross over. None means *not one*. How hopeless is the situation of all who, like the rich man, love this world and its

pleasures so much that they forget the poor at their door that they get all their happiness here, and nothing but torment and everlasting anguish in the world to come!

Importance of God's revelation. Send him to my father's house.

The rich man was still selfish enough in Hades to think of his own comfort and pleasure before that of his brothers; but when convinced that his condition was hopeless, he thought of his five brothers. He wanted Abraham to send Lazarus to them to warn them to change their way of living so they would not go to Hades. This suggests that they were living the same kind of life he had lived, hence would be sure to go to the same place. This should be a warning to us to be more thoughtful of the poor at our door, and less selfish with the material wealth which God has given us to use for him.

They have Moses and the prophets. This happened while Moses and the prophets, a term which included all the Old Testament, was the authority in religion. If such were to happen now (and who knows but that it is happening every day?), Abraham would say, They have Christ and the apostles, let them hear them. The idea is that God's will has been revealed, and if men will live in harmony with it, they will be saved; but if they refuse or neglect to live in harmony with it, they will be lost.

If one go to them from the dead. The rich man had an idea common to many people now, that a miraculous appearance of an angel, the Holy Spirit, or a man resurrected, would move people to conform their lives to God's will. But God's people were no more obedient to him when they had the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night than they were when this miraculous guidance was terminated. Jesus lived among people and demonstrated in more ways than they could count that he was divine, yet they did not accept him. If people will not hear Jesus say, He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, in his written word, they would not believe him if he were to come back and tell them face to face. In proof of this Abraham said that if the rich man's brothers would not hear Moses and the prophets as they spoke through the written word, they would not hear one who rose from the dead. Disobedience stems not from a lack of miraculous evidence, but from our love of the flesh and the world.

Topics for Discussion

1. Some deny what is taught about the next world on the ground that this is a parable. But parables must be in harmony with facts or they will teach falsehoods. If Jesus had said, A sower went forth to sow, and some seed fell on the ground and some went up, up, and up and fell on the moon, would people have believed him? Would the parable have taught truth? So if there is no place of happiness and no place of torment, and no consciousness after the death of the body beyond what we call death, this parable teaches a falsehood.

2. Catholics teach that souls may be delivered from purgatory, after a period of suffering, through the prayers of the priest, mass, almsdeeds, and other suffrages. (See "Catholic Belief," by J. Faa Di Bruno, p. 166.) But Abraham said "not one" can go from the place of torment to the place of peace. Either Abraham or the Catholic church must be wrong.

3. Is it possible that brethren with five thousand to ten thousand

dollars annual income, the extent of whose giving is a dollar or two on Sunday, are making the same mistake this rich man made? The rich man thought he was going to be saved because he did not commit great crimes, and because he was a son of Abraham. Is that not like a brother who thinks he is going to heaven because he is a member of the church and does not commit great crimes?

4. This lesson teaches that there is something about man which lives on after the death of the body; that the wicked are punished, and that their punishment begins immediately after the death of the body; and that their punishment will have no end, since none can cross the great gulf to give them relief, even as much as a drop of cold water. How careful we would be to avoid such a place! Now is the time to exercise due care.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What lesson is taught in the parable of the unjust steward?

What about that steward's action was commended?

Did the rich man of our story learn that lesson during life?

What is meant by the "mammon of unrighteousness," and how are we to use it?

Golden Text Explained

Discuss the meaning of the word "poor" in our text.

Are the poor in spirit blessed in this life?

What do they have for which to be happy?

Why would not the worldly man trade his happiness for yours?

Of what does worldly happiness consist, and of what value is it?

Of what will our future blessedness consist?

What proof do we have that the worldly man would be glad to trade with us in the future?

Their State in This World

Do you know the rich man's name?

What do you know of purple and fine linen?

What describes the rich man's manner of life?

Why did Jesus feel free to call the

name of the beggar?

Give a full description of Lazarus.

Do you think Lazarus got any food at all from the rich man's table?

What is suggested by being in Abraham's bosom?

What do you think the preacher said at the rich man's funeral?

State in the Next World

What is the meaning of Hades, and what do you think of it?

Who is the greatest character who ever went to Hades?

Of what activities was the rich man capable in Hades?

What request did he make of Abraham, and what is suggested by that request?

Contrast their situations in life and in Hades.

Why could not the rich man's request be granted?

Importance of God's Revelation

When did the rich man quit being selfish?

What suggests that his five brothers were living like he had lived?

How did Abraham suggest they might be saved?

What answer would be given such a request today?

Will people be moved more quickly by miraculous signs than by God's word?

What did you get from the daily Bible readings?

What is there of interest in the topics for discussion?

Lesson IX—August 28, 1949

THE GRATEFUL SAMARITAN

The Lesson Text

Luke 17: 11-21

11 And it came to pass, as they were on the way to Je-ru'-sa-lem, that he was passing along the borders of Sa-ma'-ri-a and Gal'-i-lee.

12 And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, who stood afar off:

- 13 And they lifted up their voices, saying, Je'-sus, Master, have mercy on us.
 14 And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go and show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, as they went, they were cleansed.
 15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, with a loud voice glorifying God;
 16 And he fell upon his face at his feet, giving him thanks; and he was a Sa-mar'-i-tan
 17 And Je'-sus answering said, Were not the ten cleansed? but where are the nine?
 18 Were there none found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger?
 19 And he said unto him, Arise, and go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.
 20 And being asked by the Phar'-i-sees, when the kingdom of God cometh, he answered them and said. The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:
 Neither shall they say, Lo, here! for lo, the kingdom of God is within you.

Golden Text.—“*Be ye thankful.*” (Col. 3: 15b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Luke 17: 1-4.

Daily Bible Readings

- August 22. M.....Come Before God with Thanksgiving (Psalm 95)
 August 23. T.....Give Thanks for God's Goodness (Psalm 100)
 August 24. W.....Thank Jehovah with the Whole Heart (Psalm 111)
 August 25. T.....Thanks for His Loving-kindness (Psalm 136)
 August 26. F.....David Gives Thanks to God (1 Chron. 29: 10-19)
 August 27. S.....Daniel Thanks God for Wisdom (Dan. 2: 17-24)
 August 28. S.....Paul Thanks God for Safety (Acts 28: 11-16)

TIME.—A.D. 29.

PLACES.—Border of Samaria and Galilee.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, and ten lepers.

Introduction

The events of our last lesson were in Perea, but in our lesson today Jesus was in Samaria, or on the border line between Samaria and Galilee. He is across the Jordan and north of the place of our last lesson. From Luke's account we would not know that he had crossed the Jordan into Judaea, but would suppose that he continued from Perea on his way to Jerusalem. But from John we learn that he had been called to Bethany on account of the death of Lazarus and the distress of his sisters. The raising of Lazarus created so much favorable comment on the part of the common people that the wrath of the leaders was aroused to such an extent that Jesus thought best to withdraw from that part of the country. We read, “So from that day forth they took counsel that they might put him to death. Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews, but departed thence into the country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim; and there he tarried with the disciples.” (John 11: 53, 54.) This city was not more than sixteen miles north-east of Jerusalem, but that distance in an obscure village was sufficient to make him safe for a few weeks.

Golden Text Explained

Obligation to give thanks. Christians have a threefold obligation to give thanks to God. (1) We have the obligation of the creature to the Creator. Surely the creature is obligated to be thank-

ful to his Creator for his existence. Children owe gratitude to parents for bringing them into a world of happiness and the prospects of eternal felicity. If we recognize this debt of gratitude, how much more should we recognize our debt to our Creator. (2) We owe a debt of gratitude to God for his preservation of our unworthy lives from birth to this day. If he had dealt with us according to what we deserve, surely we had been destroyed on account of our sins and unprofitableness long before this day! But he has not only preserved us, he has kept most of us in good health of mind and body, has surrounded us with an unusual prosperity, and has given us families and friends which contribute to our happiness. Those who enjoy these things continually and yet feel no obligation to give thanks to him who preserves them in such pleasant surrounding must surely be ingrates. (3) Christians are obligated to God to be thankful on account of the redemption of our souls from sin. After God had given us life and good health of mind and body, we went into sin and used those fine mental and physical powers with which he endowed us in the service of the devil. But so great is his love that he gave his Son to die for us that we might be saved from our sins. And we are redeemed, not with silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Jesus. (1 Pet. 1: 18, 19.) If it were not for this redemption through the blood of Jesus every person in all creation would be doomed to spend eternity in hell with the devil and his angels. If this consideration does not cause one to feel an obligation to give thanks to God, he is certainly guilty of the basest sort of ingratitude, and there is no hope for him.

Through whom give thanks. On account of the sinfulness of man, his approach to God must be through a mediator. Jesus is both our priest and mediator. (Heb. 4: 14-16; 1 Tim. 2: 5.) Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14: 6.) Again we read, "Giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5: 20.) And, "Whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." (Col. 3: 17.) And last, "Through him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to his name." (Heb. 13: 15.) So when giving thanks to God for his mercy and blessings we are to do so in the name of Christ, and through him as our mediator and high priest.

For what give thanks. It has already been suggested that we should give thanks to God for our being, for the preservation of our being, and for the redemption which we enjoy in Christ Jesus. Paul says we should give thanks for all things. (Eph. 5: 20.) Many brethren fail to give thanks for their daily bread, a serious fault, and for which there can be no valid reason. Jesus always gave thanks before he ate. (John 6: 11.) Paul says all meat was created to be received with thanksgiving, and "nothing is to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer." (1 Tim. 4: 3-5.) To be sanctified means to be set apart for our use. It is sanctified through the word of God in that the word teaches us that we may eat meats; it is sanctified through prayer when we give thanks. If then we do not give thanks for our food, it is not sanctified for our use. Many brethren eat three meals a day and never thank God for their food. Some say they

cannot do so. But anybody who can say, thank you, to a friend for a birthday present can say, Thank you, to God for his food. It is a sin to rear children in homes where thanks are not expressed, and where prayers are not offered for God's protection and guidance. There are too many prayerless homes. This is one reason for so much juvenile delinquency. The only way to cure juvenile delinquency is to make the home thoroughly Christian, which it is not without the giving of thanks for food and praying for daily bread, protection, and guidance. If the teacher can enlist the head of every home in his class to give thanks for every meal, this lesson and your efforts will accomplish untold good. Will you try it?

Exposition of the Text

The grateful Samaritan. (Verses 11-19.) *On the way to Jerusalem.* This was the beginning of the last trip to that city. He had avoided the city at times, and at other times had deliberately withdrawn from it so as not to arouse too much opposition and stir up the Jews enough to cause them to kill him before his hour had come. But it will be different this time. He will walk openly, boldly; teach without reservation; expose and rebuke the Jewish leaders without restraint.

Along the borders of Samaria and Galilee. Adam Clarke quotes Calmet as saying this last journey probably began at Capernaum, and that he took the direct route from Galilee through Samaria. This position takes no consideration of the presence of Jesus at Bethany to raise Lazarus and his withdrawal to the north of Jerusalem. Nor does it recognize the usual custom of Jews of Galilee crossing the Jordan to the east and coming through Perea and crossing the Jordan again near Jericho, and then to Jerusalem. This long route was taken because of the enmity of Samaritans toward Jews as they went to worship. (Luke 9: 53.) Neither does this position take into consideration the fact that we find Jesus coming near Jericho (Luke 18: 35), and in Jericho and passing through (Luke 19: 1), and then as he "was nigh to Jerusalem" just before the triumphal entry. (Luke 19: 11.) If he had come the direct route from Galilee to Jerusalem, he would not have gone through Jericho. He obviously left Ephraim, went north and east to the Jordan, crossed it to join the pilgrims from Galilee, journeyed with them down to the crossing east of Jericho, and then up to Jerusalem for the last time.

There were ten men that were lepers. People who had leprosy were not allowed in the city, and when they met people on the road they had to get far enough off the road that there would be no danger of contamination with the dread disease. (Lev. 13: 45, 46.) It was common for them to go in groups for company, since they were not allowed to associate with people who did not have the disease. And, though the Jews hated Samaritans, their common misery and poverty caused them to forget racial differences, so that we find one Samaritan in this group of ten lepers.

Jesus, *Master, have mercy on us.* There was no need for them to specify their wants, for a leper would not be asking for anything in preference to cleansing from his terrible condition. Sin has been called the leprosy of the soul. It makes people unfit for communion with God, and unworthy of the fellowship of the saints. If people

could only realize their terrible condition as fully as the leper was made to realize his condition, more people would be seeking to be cleansed from their sins; more people would be crying for the Lord to have mercy upon them.

Go *show yourselves unto the priests*. By reading Leviticus thirteenth chapter one can learn how the priest determined whether the person was healed of his leprosy. Certain tests were made, and when the priest was sure the flesh was no longer leprosy, he gave the person right to mingle in society with all freedom. Certain offerings were also made. On another occasion Jesus said to one he had healed, "Go show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing the things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them." (Mark 1: 44.) The offering to be offered is described in Lev. 14.

As *they went, they were cleansed*. Jesus tested their faith in his power to heal. He did not heal them and then tell them to go to the priest; he told them to go, and while they were obeying that command, they were healed. They might logically have raised the question, Why start to the priest until we are healed? That would have been evidence of their unbelief. Faith in his power started them on their way to do what he said, and faith was rewarded by granting their greatest desire. The active faith is blessed. Faith without works of obedience is dead, and a dead faith is never rewarded. (James 2: 24-26.)

One turned back, glorifying God. As soon as they realized they were healed there was rejoicing. No doubt nine of them quickened their pace to get to the priest, and then freedom to mingle with people—their families and friends from whom they were separated. But one took time to give God the glory. It is said that he did so with a "loud voice." It is said that a leper's bronchial tubes are always dry, and the voice is "harsh and squeaky." (McGarvey.) But now, being healed, he has a loud voice.

Fell upon his face, giving thanks. This shows his humility, as well as his gratitude. He recognized the power of the Lord, perhaps knew enough about him to realize that he was the Christ, the Son of God, so prostrated himself before him in worship. He had nothing to offer the Lord but his thanks; and it was just as well that he did not, for Jesus had no need for a material reward, but did have a great desire for his gratitude.

And he was a Samaritan. Obviously the others were Jews. Having better opportunities to be taught of God than the Samaritan, and feeling themselves superior to Samaritans in character and religion, we would expect these Jews to act better than the Samaritan. But experience leads us to expect the least from those who are capable of the best, and expect the best from those who are capable of the least. Of course there are exceptions to this rule, if it may be called a rule, but such is the ingratitude of man that those who have much allow it to become too common and look upon it as their just dues and forget to be thankful for it.

Where are the nine? There is a ring of sadness and disappointment in this question. Ten were healed, where are the nine? Is it possible that only one tenth of humanity are grateful to the Lord for his goodness? And is it possible that one tenth are the outcasts of earth? Ten families gather around their respective tables to eat their daily bread, but only one bows their heads in thankfulness;

where are the nine who should also give thanks? Is it possible that this one family that gives thanks belongs to a denomination where the truth is not taught, and where the worship is not scriptural?

Thy faith hath made thee whole. Was this forgiveness of sins? Or did Jesus say he was cleansed from leprosy by faith? Perhaps Jesus only intended to remind him that his leprosy was cleansed by faith, and if he would exercise his faith aright, he could gain the greatest blessing of all, salvation, through faith in him.

Lessons on the kingdom. (Verses 20, 21.) *When the kingdom of God cometh.* Since the question was asked by a Pharisee, we may be sure he had an earthly kingdom in mind. Also we may be quite sure that he was not a believer in Jesus, and that he asked this question merely to draw the Lord out on the subject to see what he would say. It had been three years since John and Jesus first preached that the kingdom was at hand, and there is an implication that the Pharisee believed Jesus was not able to get together sufficient forces to establish his kingdom.

The kingdom cometh not with observation. The Pharisee saw no army, or any other preparations such as he knew were necessary to establish the kind of kingdom he thought Jesus aimed to establish. For this reason his doubts about the establishment of such a kingdom were well founded. So Jesus replies by saying, The kingdom I am going to establish is one which does not require such visible evidences of its establishment. The statement that it "cometh not with observation" must not be pressed too far. His apostles could be seen; his miracles were obvious; and his teaching could be heard and understood. The events of Pentecost could be seen and heard. (Acts 2: 33.) The statement must be taken in the sense of contrast between the preparation for an earthly kingdom and a heavenly kingdom.

The kingdom of God is within you. This may mean that the kingdom was among them in the person of the king, his teaching, and his followers, but they were not recognized as such on account of the misunderstanding of the Jews as to the nature of the kingdom. Or it may mean that the kingdom (rule) of God is in the hearts of people, and not in the outward affairs of nations. Either idea is scriptural, though Jesus intended but one meaning by his statement. This writer prefers the first meaning as being more in harmony with the context. The Pharisee expected preparation which could be recognized as worthy of a great kingdom capable of destroying the Roman power, and since such were not in evidence, he did not believe Jesus to be the Christ. Jesus replied, My kingdom is not of such nature as to demand such visible preparations, but for your information, Mr. Pharisee, the kingdom is even now within—among—you; if you knew the nature of it, you could behold preparations for its establishment in the not very distant future.

Topics for Discussion

1. Those who do not do the will of God have no right to call Jesus their Lord. (Luke 6: 46.) It is the will of God that we give thanks for our food. (1 Thess 5: 18; 1 Tim. 4: 4.) Therefore, those who do not give thanks for food have no right to call Jesus their Lord. Those who do not do the will of God cannot go to heaven. (Matt. 7: 21.) It is the will of God for us to give thanks for our food (1 Thess. 5: 18; 1 Tim. 4: 4.) Therefore, those who do not give thanks

for food will not be allowed to enter heaven. This is a sharp conclusion, and worthy of consideration. If love did not cover a multitude of sins, we would be forced to accept this conclusion as inevitable; and it is near enough inevitable to be frightening.

2. "The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." (Rom. 14: 17.) In this sense the kingdom of God is within us. And those who have not these qualities are not citizens of the kingdom.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What do we learn from John about the travels of Jesus since our last lesson?

Why did Jesus withdraw from Judea? To what city did he go?

What was the direction and distance of this city from Jerusalem?

Golden Text Explained

Discuss the Christian's threefold obligation to give thanks to God.

Can one be grateful in the heart and never express it?

If he could be grateful and never express it, has he done his duty?

Discuss our duty to give thanks through Christ.

What examples do we have for giving thanks for our food?

Is food sanctified for us unless we give thanks?

What have prayerless homes contributed to the juvenile problem?

Is there a home represented in this class where prayers are never said?

What can be done about it?

The Grateful Samaritan

Trace the journey of Jesus from the time he left Bethany at the raising of Lazarus until he reached Jerusalem for the last time.

Show why the last journey did not begin at Capernaum.

What do you know about leprosy, and the Jewish regulations concerning it?

What did these ten lepers request of Jesus?

In what ways is sin like leprosy?

What privilege did the leper have to obtain from the priests?

How did Jesus test the faith of the ten lepers?

Why did one leper turn back?

How did he show his humility and gratitude?

What lessons do you draw from the Samaritan being the grateful one?

How did Jesus show his disappointment?

May he be as disappointed in ungrateful people today?

What did Jesus say about the man's faith?

Lessons on the Kingdom

Who asked Jesus about his kingdom?

What did Jesus mean by the kingdom not coming with observation?

Was there anything about the establishment of the kingdom that could be seen?

What is meant by saying the kingdom of God is within you?

What did you get from the daily Bible readings?

What is there of interest in the topics for discussion?

Lesson X—September 4, 1949

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

The Lesson Text

Luke 19: 29-40

29 And it came to pass, when he drew nigh unto Beth'-pha-ge and Beth'-a-ny, at the mount that is called Ol'-i'-vet, he sent two of the disciples,

30 Saying, Go your way into the village over against you; in which as ye enter ye shall find a colt tied, whereon no man ever yet sat: loose him, and bring him.

31 And if any one ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say, The Lord hath need of him.

32 And they that were sent went away, and found even as he had said unto them.

33 And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt?

34 And they said, The Lord hath need of him.

35 And they brought him to Je'-sus: and they threw their garments upon the colt, and set Je'-sus thereon.

36 And as he went, they spread their garments in the way.

37 And as he was now drawing nigh, *even* at the descent of the mount of Ol'-ives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works which they had seen;

38 Saying, Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

39 And some of the Phar'-i-sees from the multitude said unto him, Teacher, rebuke thy disciples.

40 And he answered and said, I tell you that, if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out.

Golden Text.—*"Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest."* (Luke 19: 38.)

Devotional Reading.—Zech. 9: 9-17.

Daily Bible Readings

August 29.	M..... Behold, Thy Salvation Cometh (Isa. 62: 6-12)
August 30.	T..... Hosanna to the Son of David (Matt. 21: 1-11)
August 31.	W..... Blessed Is the Kingdom that Cometh (Mark 11: 1-11)
September 1.	T..... Jesus Proclaimed King of Israel (John 12: 12-19)
September 2.	F..... The Same People Reject Jesus (Luke 23: 13-25)
September 3.	S..... Many of These People Convicted (Acts 2: 22-36)
September 4.	S..... Three Thousand of Them Converted (Acts 2: 37-47)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACES.—Bethphage, Bethany, and Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, and the multitude.

Introduction

This entrance into Jerusalem in this manner was a most unusual thing for him to do. On former occasions he had strictly charged people not to tell that he was the Christ. (Matt. 16: 20.) But at this time he deliberately plans to show himself as the Christ, and takes appropriate steps to fulfill prophecies which the people accepted as applying to the expected Messiah. There is but one way to account for his actions—in the language of John, "Now before the feast of the passover, Jesus knowing that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them unto the end." (John 13: 1.) His hour of departure out of this world had come; his work of teaching and selecting his apostles to carry on after he left had been done. He will offer himself to the people as their Messiah, and will continue to teach the right way and expose the wrong until the wrath of the religious leaders breaks into its death-dealing flame.

This entrance into Jerusalem has been called his *triumphal entry*. And it has been said that it was a "triumph of *humility* over *pride* and worldly grandeur; of *poverty* over *affluence*; and of *meekness* and *gentleness* over *rage* and *malice*." (Clarke.) He could have conducted himself in such way as to receive the acclaim of the great and powerful, but he preferred to be accepted and praised by the humble; he could have been clothed in royal purple, and could have ridden in a king's chariot, but he preferred to ride the lowly ass covered with the coats of the poorest in the land; and he could have

manifested his righteous indignation in the destruction of all who refused to receive him for his true worth, but he was gentle and meek among them, even submitting himself to be the object of their unrighteous rage and malice. What a wonderful example for all of us to follow!

Golden Text Explained

Blessed is the King. The word *blessed* here has the sense of praised—praised be the king! This was the cry of the multitudes when they saw in Jesus the fulfillment of their Messianic prophecies. It should be the cry of all creation, for he is worthy of such praise. John said he saw the four and twenty elders in heaven as they fell down before the lamb and sang, "Worthy art thou . . . for thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation." And then myriads of angels said, "Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing." And then he saw every creature in heaven and earth and sea, saying, "Unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever." (Rev. 5: 9-13.) Paul said that every knee shall bow, whether in heaven or on earth, and every tongue shall confess Jesus as Lord to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. 2: 9, 10.) Surely he is worthy of all praise, and those who are unwilling to ascribe praise to him are doomed to be the objects of his consuming wrath.

Cometh in the name of the Lord. Though Jesus was divine, eternal as the Father, and called Jehovah in the Old Testament many times, and called God by New Testament writers (John 1: 1; Rom. 9: 5; 1 John 5: 20), in his work as mediator between God and man, in his mediatorial reign, he is subject to the Father. David recognized him as coming in the name of Jehovah, so under his authority, when he said, "Jehovah saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand." (Psalm 110: 1.) Again, he is called the "Anointed" of Jehovah (Psalm 2: 2); and this Psalm is applied by the apostles to Jesus in the following words, "For of a truth in this city against thy holy Servant Jesus, whom thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, were gathered together, to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel fore-ordained to come to pass." (Acts 4: 27, 28.) He said repeatedly that he came to do the will of the Father, and that even the words he spoke were not his, but the Father's who sent him. (John 12: 50.)

Peace and glory in heaven. When Jesus was born, the angels of heaven sang of peace on earth and good will toward men. (Luke 2: 14.) Now, thirty-three years later, a multitude of people recognize Jesus as their Messiah, and they sing a refrain to the song of the angels, "Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest." Perhaps the statement *peace in heaven* is a prayer that peace and joy and gladness may characterize the hosts of heaven on account of what was transpiring on earth that day. And *glory in the highest* is a prayer that God the Father may be glorified in the events taking place at that time. The Messiah had come; he had done the will of the Father; and now, as it seemed to these shouting multitudes, he is to be crowned as king, and may the God who sent him get glory out of his reign! Such were the sentiments of the people as they

marched from Olivet into Jerusalem. And, though they had a very incorrect idea of his kingdom and of him as king, their sentiment was fine. It should be the sentiment of every person on earth today. And we should conduct our personal affairs, and try to see that the affairs of the kingdom are conducted, in such way that the hosts of heaven will be pleased with us and what we do, and that God may be glorified in all we say and do. To have any other aim, and to strive for anything less, is unbecoming in a citizen of that kingdom which Jesus established.

Exposition of the Text

Conveyance Provided. Bethphage and Bethany. Bethphage means *house, or place, of figs*; and Bethany means *house of dates*. The location of Bethphage is a matter of dispute. Adam Clarke seems to follow Lightfoot in saying it was located on the western slope of the Mount of Olives, so between the summit and Jerusalem. But all other authorities available give no encouragement to that idea, all of them holding to the idea that it was between Bethany and the Mount of Olives.

He sent two of his disciples. While he was still on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, he sent two disciples to hurry on ahead of the multitude with him. It seems he wished to be riding when he came in sight of the city, so made preparations for it.

Ye shall find a *colt tied*. Whether he sent his disciples into Bethany (Barnes), or into Bethphage (McGarvey), to find the animal he was to ride is uncertain, though probably the later is correct. The minute description which Jesus gave as to where they would find this animal, what the owner would say, and the willingness of the owner to let them have it, should have made a deep impression on the minds of these two disciples. It is positive evidence of his divinity, being positive proof of his ability to know things a human being could not possibly have known.

The Lord hath need of him. When the disciples had found the animal, and were untieing it to take it away, the owner asked them why they were doing such a thing? They replied in the words Jesus gave them, "The Lord hath need of him." Whether this man was a disciple and friend of Jesus we have no way of knowing, but we are rather safe in judging from his actions that he was. If he had not recognized Jesus as Lord, he surely would have argued the point with these men. From this we may draw the lesson that whenever the Lord has need of anything we have, even to our dearest earthly possession, we are to recognize his right to it, his claim upon it. When the Lord had need of all the earthly possessions of Barnabas, he willingly and freely gave them all. (Acts 4: 36, 37.) When the Lord had need of the time and efforts of men to preach the gospel, the apostles gave up all and followed him. (Mark 10: 28.) Paul suffered the loss of all things because the Lord had need of him. (Phil. 3: 8.) This is the spirit which should characterize all citizens of his kingdom.

Threw their garments upon the colt. This was a way of showing respect for their king. We have an example of garments being placed in the path of Jehu. (2 Kings 9: 13.) Others placed their garments, the long outer robe, on the ground for the animal to walk upon. All this, adds Matthew, was done in fulfillment of prophecy.

(Zech. 9: 9-17.) Matthew and Mark say the disciples were to find an ass and her colt, that both were brought, and garments were placed on them. Mark says that no man had ever ridden the colt, so it was suitable for sacred purposes. (Num. 19: 2; Deut. 21: 3.)

Praise of the multitudes. At the descent of the mount of Olives. There is said to have been a road down the southern slope of the mount which turned directly toward the city at the foot of the hill, and that when the turn was made the city was in full view. And some scholars think this is the place where the multitude began to sing their praises. Others with as good reasons say he descended the western slope of the mount.

Multitude began to rejoice and praise God. From John we learn that there were two parts of the multitude. One part was with Jesus, coming in from Bethany and beyond. The other part was in Jerusalem, and when they heard that Jesus was coming into the city they went out to meet him. The reason why they went out to meet him was the fact that they had heard how he had raised Lazarus from the dead. (John 12: 12-18.) As to the number of people in this combined multitude, the Pharisees said, "Lo, the world is gone after him." Josephus says that as many as three million people attended the Passover feasts. We can cut that number in half (as is usually best when you read Josephus), and still have a great multitude of people. Undoubtedly the majority of the people in the city were with Jesus or the Pharisees would not have admitted that he had taken "the world" with him. It should also be noticed that the singing and shouting were not a designed affair of Jesus and his disciples, for the people who came to meet Jesus started the singing and glorifying God.

For all the mighty works they had seen. The mighty works include the raising of Lazarus. There were people in the city who had seen that miracle, and had told the others in the city, for John says this is what caused them to go out to meet him. But there were others who had seen him feed the thousands, heal the lame and crippled, give sight to the blind, and do other mighty works and wonders. It was only natural that each one would recall what he had seen Jesus do, and each recital of wonderful works would add fuel to the fires of their enthusiasm. And all this added strength to their faith in him as the Messiah, for these are the very works which the prophets said the Messiah would do when he should come. (Isa. 35: 5-10.)

Blessed is the King. These words suggest that they believed him to be their King, and they were praising God for sending their king to deliver them. But they made the mistake of thinking he was to be an earthly king to establish an earthly kingdom, and when he did not show a willingness to accept such a position and do such work, they turned against him, and in a few days allowed the Jewish leaders to cause them to cry, Crucify him, crucify him; he is not fit to live; give us Barabbas instead! Those who hold that Jesus came with the intention of establishing a kingdom with Jerusalem as his capital and reigning over all the world to establish peace and justice and righteousness by force, have a hard time explaining why Jesus did not allow the multitude to make him king that day.

Effect on the Pharisees. Pharisees from the multitude. Why these Pharisees were a part of the multitude is not easy to ex-

plain. Some suggest that the Jewish leaders planted them there. Others suppose they were Pharisees who lived a great distance from Jerusalem who did not know the strong opposition to Jesus, and did not mean this criticism to be severe; but they were anxious about the peace and safety of the city during the Passover. If the multitude be allowed to praise him as king, the Roman soldiers were likely to put strict military regulations in force in the city and make it difficult and unpleasant to celebrate the Passover. This seems the most logical explanation.

Teacher, rebuke thy disciples. This was the advice of these Pharisees. They felt that the loud demonstration would endanger the city and bring the wrath of Rome upon them, and all for no worthy cause. They regarded the multitude as excited over an obscure peasant from Galilee; and not only excited, but deluded as to his mission in the world, and if the peace and safety of the city were not endangered, the multitude could shout themselves to exhaustion for all these Pharisees cared. But for the sake of all concerned, they wished Jesus would rebuke his disciples and keep them quieter. They realized he was the only one who could get them quiet, for the crowd was too big for any one less than the Roman army.

If these hold their peace, the stones will cry out. This statement was probably not intended to be taken literally, as stones are elsewhere spoken of as talking. (Hab. 2: 11.) Though it is not impossible that Jesus meant that if people should wholly withhold their praise in the day when Jerusalem's king came in fulfillment of Messianic prophecy, nature would give that praise. Such was done on the day of his crucifixion. When the Lord was condemned and hung on a cross, his disciples silenced, and his enemies were rejoicing that Jesus had been put out of the way, nature responded with rending the veil in the temple and shaking the earth, so that a Roman soldier was forced to give praise by saying, "Truly, this was the Son of God." (Matt. 27: 54.) The God who can of stones raise up children to Abraham (Matt. 3: 9), can bring forth praise to his Christ from the stones which ordinarily give silent testimony to his mighty power.

Topics for Discussion

1. Though ordinarily despised and rejected by men, Jesus knew for one time what it meant to be honored by a great multitude. Here he got a taste of what popular acclaim means to a human being. Satan offered him this more than three years before, when he told him to jump from the temple and the angels would keep him from harm. (Luke 4: 9-11.) But Jesus preferred to win this acclaim the right, if hard, way.

2. The triumphal entry was the last big bid of Jesus to get the Jews to recognize in him their Messiah and to accept him as the king in a spiritual kingdom. This was on Sunday, and on Tuesday following he wept over the city, saying that he would gladly have gathered them as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, but they would not. Then he said, behold, your house is left unto you desolate. (Matt. 23: 37-39.)

3. It is easy to criticize, and criticism is often misplaced. Those Pharisees, who asked Jesus to rebuke the multitude for praising him, probably meant well; but their criticism was misplaced. They

criticized when they did not know the import of what was being done. So, since criticism is so easily offered, we often criticize others when if we knew all the facts and purposes, we would not be so quick to criticize.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What was unusual about this triumphal entry?

Discuss the reasons why this has been called his triumphal entry.

Golden Text Explained

What is the meaning of the word blessed?

Why was the king to be praised on this occasion?

What proof do we have of his worthiness?

What shall be the end of those who deem him unworthy?

What is meant by coming in the name of the Lord?

In what sense was Jesus subject to the Father?

Discuss the meaning of "peace and glory in heaven," as used here.

What should be our aim as citizens of the kingdom?

Conveyance Provided

What is the meaning of the words Bethany, and Bethphage, and where located?

What preparation was made for the triumphal entry?

What was there in this connection to show the divinity of Jesus?

How should we respond to the Lord's need of us, and our wealth?

Give examples of this in New Testament characters.

How did the people show their respect for Jesus as king?

Why select a colt which had never been ridden?

Praise of the Multitudes

Where did the singing and shouting begin?

Of what two parts was the multitude composed?

What is suggested as to the number of people singing?

What miracle played a part in this event?

How can you account for such spontaneous enthusiasm?

Contrast the attitude of the people with their attitude a few days later?

What is suggested by the fact that the people were willing to accept Jesus as a temporal king?

Effect on the Pharisees

Who were the Pharisees mentioned here?

What request did they make of Jesus, and why?

What did Jesus answer?

Is this answer to be taken literally?

How did nature respond a few days later?

What did you get from the daily Bible readings?

What is there of interest in the topics for discussion?

Lesson XI—September 11, 1949

JESUS IN GETHSEMANE

The Lesson Text

Luke 22: 39-53

39 And he came out, and went, as his custom was, unto the mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed him.

40 And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

41 And he was parted from them about a stone's cast; and he kneeled down and prayed,

42 Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

43 And there appeared unto him an angel from heaven, strengthening him.

44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground.

45 And when he rose up from his prayer, he came unto the disciples, and found them sleeping for sorrow,

46 And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.

47 While he yet spake, behold, a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them; and he drew near unto Je-sus to kiss him.

48 But Je-sus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?

49 And when they that were about him saw what would follow, they said, Lord, shall we smite with the sword?

50 And a certain one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and struck off his right ear.

51 But Je-sus answered and said. Suffer ye *them* thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.

52 And Je-sus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and elders, that were come against him, Are ye come out, as against a robber, with swords and staves?

53 When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched not forth your hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"And there appeared unto him an angel from heaven, strengthening him."* (Luke 22: 43.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 53: 1-6.

Daily Bible Readings

September 5. M..... Let this Cup Pass Away from Me (Matt. 26: 36-46)
 September 6. T..... Peter, James, and John in Gethsemane (Mark 14: 32-42)
 September 7. W..... Betrayal in Gethsemane (John 18: 1-11)
 September 8. T..... Heard for His Godly Fear (Heb. 5: 1-10)
 September 9. F..... Consider Him that Endured (Heb. 12: 1-13)
 September 10. S..... Shepherd to be Smitten (Zech. 13: 1-9)
 September 11. S..... He Bare the Sins of Many (Isa. 53: 7-12)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Gethsemane.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, and the multitude.

Introduction

Between the lesson last week and this one, Jesus taught things in Jerusalem. The Sadducees tried to expose Jesus on the subject of the resurrection, but miserably failed and were utterly silenced. The scribes and chief priests tried to involve him in disloyalty to Caesar by asking if it was right to pay tribute; and so completely did he outwit them that they marveled at his answer. As he was about to leave Jerusalem he warned his disciples of the destruction of the city, gave them the parables of the ten virgins, and the talents, and pictured the scenes of the last great judgment. Early Thursday night he instituted the Lord's Supper, after eating the Jewish Passover, and then, either in the upper room or on the way to Gethsemane, he taught his disciples the things contained in chapters 14 through 16, of John, and then offered the prayer recorded in chapter 17. By most scholars it is thought that it was midnight, or after, when he reached the Garden of Gethsemane. But unless John's record of the teaching of Jesus following the supper is fuller than usual, this teaching consumed considerable time; and his prayers in the garden and the three stages of his Jewish trial—before Annas, Caiaphas, and the Sanhedrin—were all crowded into the time between the supper and daylight Friday. (John 18: 28.) The courage and self-possession of Jesus in the face of such suffering and sorrow lead us to look upon him with wonder. How could he continue to teach his disciples when he knew the traitor was making a

bargain with the chief priests to betray him into their hands? How could he think, organize his material, and deliver his lessons so calmly when he knew he would die a shameful cruel death within less than twenty-four hours? To know that he was able to do these things should lead us to question the idea that when he prayed for the cup to pass from him, he was praying to be spared the necessity of dying on account of his fear and dread of the suffering. But more of this in the lesson.

Golden Text Explained

His need of Strength. Jesus was both human and divine. In his childhood his divine nature did not assert itself beyond the years of his human nature so as to make him a prodigy. During his life his human nature was so devoted to his Father that he never sinned so as to embarrass his divine nature. There was a perfect blending of the two natures, all of which is beyond our ability to comprehend. When there was occasion and reason for him to say and do things beyond the power of human nature, the divine nature came to the front. And when it was his Father's will for him to act as a human, and respond to his environment as a human being, the divine nature stayed in the background. This explains his need of strength from above at this time. The divine nature could have arisen to the occasion and called legions of angels, but it did not, because it was not the Father's will. The human nature was appointed to suffer, and his only prayer was that the suffering might not be unto death so as to rob him of the privilege of offering his body as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. In Heb. 5: 7 we learn that his prayer was heard, and the coming of the angel to strengthen him was the answer to his prayer.

His need of strength from above was occasioned by the unusual suffering he knew awaited him during the ordeal of approaching death. His divine nature was to be the priest (Heb. 9: 14) and needed no assistance from above; but his human nature was to be the offering, the sacrifice. (Heb. 9: 14, 26; 10: 5-10), so was to bear the shame and suffering of the trial and death. He approached this ordeal as any other human being would approach it, dependent upon his Father for courage and strength to meet it as he should. And the only reason his need of strength was greater than that of any other human being in the face of a cruel shameful death was the fact that the ordeal involved more than has been involved in the death of any other human being. These sufferings "embrace all his mental, moral, physical, and spiritual sufferings which we can discover, together with an infinite volume of a propitiatory and vicarious nature which lies beyond the reach of our understanding." (McGarvey.)

Strength given according to need. When Jesus had fasted forty days and nights and had gone through his temptation, it is said that "angels came and ministered unto him." (Matt. 4: lib.) Since he had been without food so long, we may well suppose they prepared food for his body. But on this occasion, the only other time mentioned is made of angels ministering to him, he had just eaten the Passover and could not have been in need of food for the body. It was comfort, consolation, courage, and assurance that he needed at this time. He had given way to agony and sorrow such as the human frame cannot endure for long periods. When blood comes

through the pores of the skin on account of mental agony, the body cannot be expected to bear such suffering very long. This suffering must either be assuaged, or more than ordinary strength be given to endure it. It was not the Father's will that the suffering be lessened, so more strength was given him to enable him to bear it. This reminds us of Paul praying for the Lord to remove the "thorn in the flesh," and was told, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Cor. 12: 9.) The thorn was not removed, but added grace was given to enable him to bear the suffering. So the suffering of Jesus was not taken away, but he was given strength to bear it. Our prayers are answered, but not always in just the way we expect them to be answered. The ministry of angels was the answer God gave the prayer of Jesus. He was pleased with God's answer, and so should we be.

Exposition of the Text

Prayer in the garden. Went unto the mount of Olives. This mountain is on the east of Jerusalem. The brook Kidron runs between the city wall and the mountain. At the western foot of the mount of Olives is the Garden of Gethsemane. The word Gethsemane means *place of oil-presses*. This place, or garden, was the place where oil was pressed from olives which grew on the mountainside. This was a place of seclusion, and it is said that Jesus went there "as was his custom." It was his custom to pray where he could be alone.

Pray that ye enter not into temptation. This seems to have been said to all the disciples. Then he took Peter, James, and John a little farther to a place of seclusion and said, "Abide ye here, and watch with me." (See records of Matthew and Mark.) Prayer is a help against temptation. Jesus prayed for Peter when he was about to be tempted. And his reason for going to the garden at this time was to pray for himself in view of the trial just ahead of him. "And he kneeled down and prayed."

Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me. What was the cup? Some say Jesus asked God to excuse him from the death which awaited him; that his human nature weakened and his dread and fear of such a cruel death caused him to make this request. Is it possible that Jesus weakened before an ordeal to which many of his followers went singing praises and giving thanks to God for the privilege? His physical ordeal was no more cruel or painful than the deaths of many martyrs. What was added to the mental agony by bearing the sins of the world we can never know, and if he asked to be excused from death it must have been on account of the latter, and not of the former. But this writer believes the cup not to mean death, but the sorrow and agony of that hour. Jesus came into this world to die for sin. And to that end he steadily pressed on with unflinching determination. But the agony of bearing the sins of the world, of being treated as a sinner, was more than his human nature could stand; blood was being pressed through the pores of his skin, and he could not expect to live long; so he prayed that the sorrow be removed—that the cup pass from him. It was not the will of God for the sorrow to pass, but he was given strength to bear it. Heb. 5: 7 indicates that his prayer was answered, and if so, the cup passed from him. But since he actually died, we must

conclude that death was not the cup. Notice the spirit of the prayer, "If thou be willing . . . not my will, but thine, be done." All should thus be resigned to the will of God, and every request we make should be prayed in that spirit.

Being in agony he prayed more earnestly. Circumstances under which we pray will affect our prayers, and will determine the earnestness with which we pray. Paul spoke of "striving" in prayer. (Rom. 15: 30.) Luke mentions his kneeling, Mark says he fell on the ground, and Matthew says he fell on his face and prayed. These are not contrary statements, but reveal a progression of bodily posture as he became more and more earnest in his prayer.

Sweat became as it were great drops of blood. Some try to explain the blood out of this statement, but there can be no doubt that blood was mixed with his sweat. Commentators give authentic cases of bloody sweats, though usually in connection with illness and debility of the physical system. It will be noted that the angel came to strengthen him before his agony reached that height that caused his bloody sweat. This may be considered further evidence that the sorrow was the cup he wished removed, fearing that he would die from this sorrow before he could reach the cross to die as a sacrifice for the sin of the world. The strength given him by the angel enabled him to endure this sorrow, the trials before the Jews and Romans, and several hours on the cross.

His disciples found sleeping for sorrow. Luke mentions only one period of prayer; Matthew and Mark say he prayed three times, saying the same words. And at the end of each season of prayer he came and found the three disciples asleep. This adds to the embarrassment considerably. Luke is the only one who tells why they were sleeping, and he says it was on account of their sorrow. Many have thought that it was a lack of interest on the part of the disciples which caused them to go to sleep. Reactions will set in after long periods of sustained grief, when it is almost impossible to refrain from sleep. These apostles were under unusual excitement and grief on account of what Jesus had told them following the supper.

Why sleep ye? rise and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. Peter, as well as the rest, had been so confident about staying with the Lord in spite of what might happen; and now to be found asleep when he was asked to watch, must have been embarrassing. But Jesus understood, and these words are not to be taken as a rebuke to them, but as an admonition and warning against the dangers which were on every side that night.

Jesus betrayed and arrested. Behold, a multitude. A band of soldiers was kept on guard at festival time, and they were at the disposal of the high priest. A band in the Roman army consisted of 400 to 600 men. Matthew says there was a "great multitude," and from all four records one will see that the multitude consisted of soldiers, officers, and chief priests, and elders of the people. They must have expected Jesus to put up considerable resistance, perhaps of a miraculous nature, or they would not have come in such numbers and with such arms.

Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss? From John we learn that Jesus identified himself to the multitude twice before Judas had time to identify him with the kiss. When Jesus saw the multitude, he asked them whom they were seeking. They replied.

Jesus of Nazareth; and Jesus said, I am he. They went backwards and fell upon the ground, came forward again and Jesus told them the second time that he was Jesus of Nazareth. Then Judas came out of the multitude toward Jesus, and this question was asked of Judas. And following this question, Jesus said, Friend, do that for which thou art come, and Judas kissed him. Since Jesus had twice identified himself before the mob, the kiss was of no use; it would seem that Judas was determined to go through with his part of the bargain to get his reward.

Lord, shall we smite with the sword? There had been talk about swords earlier in the evening. (Luke 22: 35-38.) The disciples had two with them, and Jesus said they were enough. This is a difficult statement, but perhaps he meant they were enough to enable him to teach them a lesson which he foresaw the opportunity to teach. And when Peter used his sword that night, Jesus taught that lesson. It was, "Put up again thy sword into its place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." (Matt. 26: 52.) The Lord's battles are not fought with carnal weapons. (2 Cor. 10: 4, 5.)

Smote the servant of the high priest. John tells us this was Peter who used the sword. (John 18: 10.) Peter had declared that he would stay with the Lord if he had to fight to the death to do it. He meant what he said, and would, no doubt, have done it if he had been allowed to do it in his own way. But bewildered by the action of Jesus submitting to the mob, Peter fled and followed afar off. But Jesus, the compassionate one, not willing that his enemies should suffer at the hands of his disciples, healed the ear of the man whom Peter struck.

Are ye come out as against a robber? This question must have caused these men no little uneasiness. If they had given it proper consideration, they would have gone back without Jesus. Their great number and the manner in which they were armed testify eloquently to the power of Jesus. It shows that they realized that he had great power. If they had considered him just an ordinary man, they would never have gone in such numbers, nor would they have felt it necessary to be armed with swords and staves.

I was daily with you in the temple. In spite of the fact that he was with them daily in the temple, they made no effort to take him. They did not issue a warrant for his arrest, and go about it in an orderly fashion. Moreover, they did not take him during the day, they waited until night, and so late that all the people were off the streets. This was proof that they recognized him as an innocent man, against whom they could bring no charge which they could prove. It is proof of a guilty conscience on their part, and an admission of it by their actions.

This is your hour, and the power of darkness. This is the hour allotted you and the power of evil. The word hour does not refer to the night, but to the time in God's plan for Satan and his servants to prevail over Jesus for a time. Jesus frequently said his hour had not yet come, and for that reason his enemies could not take him. But that hour had arrived, and he would meekly submit to them whose hour, or time of ascendancy, it was.

Topics for Discussion

1. The disciples of Jesus slept while their master prayed. This happens today with many who have not as good reason to sleep

as did the disciples. They slept on account of intense sorrow for their master, but many sleep at the post of duty today on account of a lack of interest in what the Lord is trying to do in the world.

2. If angels are ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation (Heb. 1: 14), may we not expect to be ministered to when we have unusually great sorrows and sufferings to bear? It is a source of comfort and strength to believe we have the ministry of angels in our behalf, though we cannot know of their presence.

3. Carnal weapons are out of place in the Lord's kingdom. But guns and swords are not the only weapons that are carnal. Slander, misrepresentation, backbiting, blackmailing, and browbeating are just as carnal as bombs and poison gas.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What are some of the lessons Jesus taught in the days just prior to the events of this lesson?

What great teaching were given between the Lord's Supper and this lesson?

What time of day did the events of this lesson occur?

What can you say of the courage and self-possession of Jesus?

Golden Text Explained

Discuss the blending of the human and divine natures in Jesus.

To what was his human nature appointed?

What part did the divine nature play in his sacrificial death?

What part was given to the human nature of Christ?

At what times in the life of Jesus did angels minister to him?

What kind of strength did Jesus need on this occasion? Why?

Did the angel come this time in answer to prayer?

Does Paul's experience throw light on this matter?

Prayer in the Garden

Where was the Mount of Olives, and Gethsemane?

What did Jesus exhort his disciples to do at the garden?

For what thing did Jesus pray especially?

What was the cup he prayed might pass from him?

In what spirit did he make this petition?

What did his agony cause him to do?

What physical condition proves the intensity of his agony?

Whom did he take into the garden with him?

Why could they not keep awake to watch with him?

Did he rebuke them for sleeping?

Jesus Betrayed and Arrested

Describe the multitude who went after Jesus.

Did Judas really identify Jesus with a kiss?

How many swords did his disciples have?

What lesson did Jesus teach about the use of such weapons?

What act of kindness did Jesus do at that time?

How did the multitude show their fear of the power of Jesus?

How did they testify of his innocence and their guilt?

What did Jesus mean when he said it was their hour?

What did you get from the daily Bible readings?

What is there of interest in the topics for discussion?

Lesson XII—September 18, 1949

JESUS CONDEMNED AND CRUCIFIED

The Lesson Text

Luke 23: 13-25, 32-34

13 And Pilate called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people,

14 And said unto them, Ye brought unto me this man, as one that perverteth the people: and behold, I, having examined him before you, found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him:

15 No, nor yet Her'-od: for he sent him back unto us; and behold, nothing worthy of death hath been done by him.

16 I will therefore chastise him, and release him.

18 But they cried out all together, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Bar-ab'-bas:—

19 One who for a certain insurrection made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.

20 And Pi'-late spake unto them again, desiring to release Je'-sus;

21 But they shouted, saying, Crucify, crucify him.

22 And he said unto them the third time. Why, what evil hath this man done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him and release him.

23 But they were urgent with loud voices, asking that he might be crucified. And their voices prevailed.

24 And Pi'-late gave sentence that what they asked for should be done.

25 And he released him that for insurrection and murder had been cast into prison, whom they asked for; but Je'-sus he delivered up to their will.

32 And there were also two others, malefactors, led with him to be put to death.

33 And when they came unto the place which is called The skull, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left.

34 And Je'-sus said, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And parting his garments among them, they cast lots.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities."* (Isa. 53: 5a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 53: 7-12

Daily Bible Readings

September	12. M.....	Jesus Before Annas (John 18: 12-23)
September	13. T.....	Jesus Before Caiaphas (Matt. 26: 57-68)
September	14. W.....	Jesus Before the Sanhedrin (Luke 22: 66-71)
September	15. T.....	Jesus Before Pilate (John 18: 28-38)
September	16. F.....	Jesus Before Herod (Luke 23: 6-12)
September	17. S.....	Jesus Again Before Pilate (Matt. 27: 15-30)
September	18.	S. Jesus Dies on the Cross (Matt. 27: 33-56)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus, Pilate. Herod, and the Jews.

Introduction

Our lesson today concerns the greatest tragedy this world has ever known. Man, the creature, despised, rejected, and crucified Jesus, the creator and kind preserver of all. The only man who ever lived in this world without doing anybody any wrong whatsoever, and therefore deserved the best treatment, was subjected to the greatest wrong ever perpetrated upon any one. The one who proved to be the greatest blessing to the world, was made the object of the world's greatest curses. The one who for so long had been expected, and for whose coming so many fervent prayers had been offered, was, on account of blind prejudice and jealousy, hated, abused, condemned and destroyed. And this tragedy is rendered even more tragic by reason of the fact that religious men were responsible for it; it was done in the name of religion. That which is capable of the finest, must, it seems, also be capable of the worst in life. Religion, pure and undefiled, has the power of being the greatest blessing in the world; but false religion is capable of bringing the greatest curses upon mankind.

Not only does our lesson concern the greatest tragedy, but it also concerns the greatest blessing that ever came to this sin-sick world. The death of Jesus was both a tragedy and a blessing to mankind. For his rejection and crucifixion the Jews have suffered untold miseries, but on account of his death on Calvary this sinning, suffering world has received innumerable blessings. Seeming defeat was turned into a great victory; a curse, in the wisdom and goodness of God, was made a blessing to all who will receive it. He "redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that upon the Gentiles might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." (Gal. 3: 13, 14.)

Golden Text Explained

Jesus died for us. The scriptures abound with statements in proof of the fact that Jesus died for us. (Rom. 5: 6, 8; 1 Cor. 15: 3; 2 Cor. 5: 15.) By this it is meant that he died in our place. The penalty for sin is death. (Gen. 2: 17; Ez. 18: 20; Rom. 6: 23.) All have sinned, therefore all are exposed to death as the penalty. (Rom. 6: 23.) If man suffers the penalty for his own sins, he will be eternally destroyed from God with no hope of salvation. And since all have sinned, if all suffer their penalty for sin, there would not be one responsible creature saved to the glory of God. But the holiness and justice of God make it impossible for him to allow sin to go unpunished. (Ex. 34: 6, 7.) If he were to allow sin to go unpunished, he would wreck his moral government over the whole creation. Governors cannot pardon criminals without bringing suspicion on themselves as to their moral character. Next, if God were to pardon the sinner without regard for the sentence required by law, his law would be brought into disrepute. People do not respect a law which can be violated with impunity. Sentence against evil is not only for punishment of evildoers, but it is to restrain people from sin. But if the sentence is never executed, no one will have any respect for the law, and it will lose its power to restrain people from sin. And this suggests, thirdly, that if God were to pardon without the penalty for sin being executed, people would even be encouraged in sin. For these reasons God cannot forgive sins without regard for the penalty. But if he executes the sentence upon the sinner, all will be lost. So Jesus took upon himself human form that he might die in the place of the sinner (Heb. 2: 14, 15), that he might suffer the penalty in our place. When we see Jesus suffering on the cross, we know that sufficient suffering for sin has been endured to establish the justice and holiness of God; that the law has been magnified (Isa. 42: 21), so that no one will take it lightly, but fear to break it; and no one will be encouraged in sin since it is sin that made it necessary for Jesus to die.

Benefits of Death Conditional. Jesus died for all, but not all will be saved. Through his death he made it possible for every person born into this world to be saved, but because this salvation is offered upon condition of our obedience to God's will, not every one for whom Christ died will be saved. God will accept the death of Christ in lieu of the penalty for sins of all who will love and obey Jesus. But those who refuse, or neglect, to obey Jesus will have to suffer their own penalty for sins. They will stand as much

alone in the judgment as if Jesus had never died for sin. But those who live and obey Jesus will not be compelled to stand alone in the judgment—Jesus will be with them, pleading the merit of his shed blood in their behalf. Our sinfulness and unworthiness will be confessed, but his righteousness and suffering on the cross will be offered in our behalf. But what right will we have to claim the benefits of his death for us? There will be but one ground on which we can possibly have any right to claim the merits of his death, and that will be—not that we were rich, powerful socially or politically, or that we were religious—it will be because we loved the Lord Jesus and obeyed his commandments to the best of our ability; and when we stumbled, we confessed our mistakes and tried again. There will be no merit in our obedience; all the merit will be in the death of Jesus. But his merit will be applied in behalf of those who obey. Those who disobey will get no benefit from the death of Jesus. They will be treated just as they would have been treated if Jesus had never died for sins.

Exposition of the Text

The trial of Jesus. (Verses 13-25.) *Pilate called the chief priests, rulers, people.* The chief priests were the heads of the twenty-four courses into which David divided the priests. (1 Cor. 24.) All priests were divided into twenty-four courses, and each course took its turn in serving in the temple. The first set of twenty-four chief priests was determined by casting lots, but it is not known to this writer how these heads of the courses were determined after that. The rulers mentioned here were other members of the Sanhedrin besides these chief priests. Why Pilate called "the people," and how many he called on this occasion is not known.

Found no fault in this man. The Jews had accused Jesus of "perverting the nation." By this they meant he had been exciting them to sedition and revolt against Rome. They also accused him of "forbidding to give tribute to Caesar." This, of course, was not true, but they thought it would have weight with the Roman governor. The third accusation was, "that he himself is Christ a king." (Luke 23: 2.) They had more ground for this accusation than for the others, and their ignorance of the nature of the Messianic kingdom is the only semblance of sincerity in this one. But after proper examination of all these charges, Pilate said emphatically that he could find no fault in the man. This should have been enough, and would have been if they had not been determined to kill him regardless of his innocence.

Nor yet Herod, for he sent him back unto us. Luke refers to the afore-mentioned trial before Herod. When Pilate learned that Jesus was from Galilee, he sent him to Herod, who was over Galilee and was in Jerusalem for the feast. Herod had for a long time wished to meet Jesus and see him work a miracle. But Jesus not only did not gratify his curiosity to see a miracle, but he did not even say one word to Herod. (Luke 23: 6-12.) In spite of Herod's anger at the treatment he received from Jesus, he did not find him guilty of any crime.

I will chastise, and release him. By chastise Pilate meant to scourge. This by whipping with a cruel whip made by fastening leather thongs on a stock of wood. In the ends of the thongs light

pieces of metal or bone were tied, which lacerated the back at every blow. Victims frequently died under this scourging. The only limit to the number of stripes given was the physical endurance of the victim, or the thirst for blood and cruelty of the soldier who laid on the lash. Pilate found no guilt, but he would compromise with the Jews by scourging, thinking this would satisfy their demands.

Away with this man, release Barabbas. Pilate was disappointed that his suggestion was not accepted. Pilate had a custom of releasing one prisoner each year at this feast, so he hoped to save Jesus by selecting the worst prisoner he had, and giving them their choice between the two. (Matt. 27: 15-23.) But again he was disappointed, for they asked that Jesus be crucified and that Barabbas be released unto them. Since Barabbas was an insurrectionist and a murderer, we see how great was their hatred of Jesus, and how determined they were to get rid of him.

Pilate spake unto them again. Pilate's sense of justice, and perhaps his feeling of sympathy for Jesus, led him to make several efforts to release him. And Pilate was bothered no little by the dream his wife had (Matt. 27: 19), in which Jesus was characterized as a righteous man. But his continued efforts betray a weakness and lack of courage which the Jews took advantage of to gain their wishes. His love of popularity and fear of incurring the wrath of the leaders led him to sacrifice an innocent victim upon the altar of hatred.

What evil hath this man done? Three accusations they brought against him, three times Pilate gave consideration to their charges and found no fault in him, and the third time he called for more evidence. The fact that he asked this the third time is proof that he did not consider the evidence already given as incriminating. And a second time in Luke's account we hear Pilate say, "I will therefore chastise him and release him." These continued efforts on the part of Pilate emphasize the fact that the innocence of Jesus was obvious, and that Pilate feared he would have to answer for such a miscarriage of justice.

They were urgent with loud voices. These Jewish leaders knew the value of long and loud shouting; they were experts at stirring up the rabble. People who sincerely seek justice do not resort to such tactics; they belong exclusively to those whose motives are unholy.

And Pilate gave sentence. The Jews did not have the authority to pronounce and execute the death sentence. (John 18: 31.) The death of Stephen was an exception to this, only because the anger of the mob rose to such a frenzy that they exceeded the bounds of their authority just as is sometimes the case in the lynching of a criminal in our country.

Jesus he delivered up to their will. The fact that it was the will of the Jews is emphasized. Later the apostles will accuse the Jews of being the murderers of the Just One. (Acts 3: 14, 15; 7: 52.) It was also the will of God that Jesus should die. But the motives and purposes behind the will of God were different from that behind the will of the Jews. God willed that he should die as a sacrifice for the sins of the world, that man might be saved. The Jews willed that Jesus should die that they might get rid of him, so that he could no longer expose their sinfulness. (John 7:7.)

Jesus on the cross. (Verses 32-34.) *Malefactors put to death with him.* Our word malefactor comes from two words—*male* from a word meaning evil, and *factor* from a verb meaning to do. So the word simply means an evildoer, and from other places we learn that they were robbers. (Matt. 27: 38.)

The place that is called The skull. This place is also called "Calvary," which is a Latin word, and "Golgotha," which is an Aramaic or Hebrew word. Just where it was located cannot be determined exactly. Was outside the city (Heb. 13: 12), and near the city. (John 19: 20.) We usually speak of "Mount Calvary," but there is no indication that the place should be called a mount. By some it is thought that the word skull indicates hill, though it may have got its name from the fact that it was a common place of execution, and their skulls were frequently seen about the place.

One on the right hand and the other on the left. Jesus was crucified between two thieves. It is said that the Romans executed criminals during the feasts to impress the people with the danger of disobedience to the laws of Rome. There was no particular reason from the human point of view to crucify others at the same time Jesus was crucified, unless it was done to subject him to further shame and disgrace, but it was in fulfillment of prophecy that it should be done. (Isa. 53: 9.) This also gave Jesus an opportunity to show his compassion on sinners, and his power to forgive and save while he was on the cross, as he promised the thief to take him to Paradise that day. (Luke 23: 43.)

Father, forgive them. Jesus had taught his disciples to pray for those who hate and do all manner of evil against them, so now he has the opportunity to show them how to put that teaching into practice. He prayed for God to forgive those who crucified him. Whether he intended the Romans, who did the actual work of crucifixion, or both the Romans and the Jews is not clear, but probably both were included. However he did not pray for God to forgive them in their impenitence, for that would not be right. His prayer was that God would set in motion such forces and throw about them such environment as would lead them to a knowledge of what they had done and lead them to turn from their evil. And this was done for many of them on the day of Pentecost and shortly thereafter.

They know not what they do. The Romans who did the work did not know as much as the Jews who demanded his crucifixion. But Peter says the Jews did it in ignorance (Acts 3: 19), and Paul says if they had known what they were doing, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. (1 Cor. 2: 8.) But they shut their eyes against the light of his teaching and work among the people, so they were guilty of their sin and responsible for it. We therefore conclude that ignorance is no excuse for our sins. Paul was the chief of sinners while he was sinning in ignorance. (1 Tim. 1: 13-15.)

Parting the garments among them. The soldiers divided his garments into equal parts, one part for each man on duty, and then cast lots to see who would get first part, second part, and so on. There were four soldiers. (John 19: 23.) It is thought by some that the outer garment, coat which was without a seam, is the only

thing for which they cast lots, but it is not a necessary conclusion from what John says in this place.

Topics for Discussion

1. It will be well to make a list of the sins which led to the crucifixion of Jesus, such as malice, envy, falsehood, prejudice, etc. And when the list is made, let each one of us be sure to avoid any and every sin which had a part in crucifying Jesus.

2. The weakness of Pilate is a common sin, not only in high places, but among common people. It is easier to know the right than it is to do it. It is hard to do right when it will cost us the favor of the public, or bring actual persecution upon us. Pilate had the greatest opportunity any governor ever had, but it was fraught with the greatest responsibility that ever came to a governor.

3. The disposition to forgive those who injure us is something which the average person has to cultivate. It will not let us say or think evil of those who despitely use us, much less will it allow us to retaliate. And it will cause us to seek to bring our enemies to repentance.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

Discuss the trial and crucifixion of Jesus as a tragedy.

Discuss the same as a blessing to mankind.

Golden Text Explained

Can you quote some scriptures which teach that Jesus died for us?

What is the condition of all mankind with respect to sin, and why?

Why would all men be lost without the death of Jesus?

Give and discuss three reasons why God cannot forgive sins without the death of Jesus.

Will all for whom Jesus died be saved?

In whose behalf will the death of Jesus be accepted?

What will be the condition in judgment of those who reject Jesus?

On what condition will we have the right to plead the blood of Jesus in our behalf?

Is there any merit in the obedience we render? Why?

The Trial of Jesus

Who were the chief priests, and the rulers?

Give three accusations brought against Jesus.

What was Pilate's first answer to these charges?

Why was Jesus sent to Herod?

Was Herod pleased at meeting Jesus, and why?

What was Herod's judgment as to the guilt of Jesus?

What did Pilate first say he would do to Jesus?

What do you know of that method of punishment?

How did Pilate hope to evade the necessity of condemning Jesus?

What shows Pilate's lack of courage and decision?

To what base tactics did the Jews resort?

Why was it necessary for Pilate to give sentence?

Whose will was it that Jesus be crucified?

Jesus on the Cross

What is a malefactor, and how many died with Jesus?

What do you know of the place where Jesus was crucified?

Why was Jesus crucified between two thieves?

For what did Jesus pray while on the cross?

What principle of his teaching did this illustrate?

Were the Jews ignorant of what they were doing? To what degree?

How would you prove that ignorance does not excuse us from sin?

What was done with the garments of Jesus?

What did you get from the daily Bible readings?

What is there of interest in the topics for discussion?

Lesson XIII—September 25, 1949

JESUS RISES FROM THE DEAD

The Lesson Text

Luke 24: 13-17, 25-35

13 And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Em-ma'-us, which was threescore furlongs from Je-ru'-sa-lem.

14 And they communed with each other of all these things which had happened.

15 And it came to pass, while they communed and questioned together, that Je'-sus himself drew near, and went with them.

16 But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.

17 And he said unto them, What communications are these that ye have one with another, as ye walk? And they stood still, looking sad.

25 And he said unto them, O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!

26 Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory?

27 And beginning from Mo'-ses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

28 And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they were going; and he made as though he would go further.

29 And they constrained him, saying, Abide with us; for it is toward evening, and the day is now far spent. And he went in to abide with them.

30 And it came to pass, when he had sat down with them to meat, he took the bread and blessed: and breaking it he gave to them.

31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

32 And they said one to another, Was not our heart burning within us, while he spake to us in the way, while he opened to us the scriptures?

33 And they rose up that very hour, and returned to Je-ru'-sa-lem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them,

34 Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Si'-mon.

35 And they rehearsed the things that *happened* in the way, and how he was known of them in the breaking of the bread.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*He is risen from the dead.*” (Matt. 28: 7a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Cor. 15: 50-57.

Daily Bible Readings

September 19. M.....David Foresaw the Resurrection (Psalm 16)

September 20. T.....Jesus Predicts His Resurrection (Matt. 16: 21-28)

September 21. W.....Jesus Gives and Takes up Life Again (John 10: 11-18)

September 22. T.....Angels Announce His Resurrection (Matt. 28: 1-10)

September 23. F.....Peter Preaches the Resurrection (Acts 2: 22-36)

September 24. S.....Raised for Our Justification (Rom. 4: 16-25)

September 25. S.....Christ the Proof of Our Resurrection (1 Cor. 15: 12-28)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACES.—Jerusalem and Emmaus.

PERSONS.—Jesus, Cleopas, and an unnamed disciple.

Introduction

The resurrection of Jesus is the capstone in the proof of his divinity. He claimed to be the Son of God, and the Jews said that was blasphemy. (John 10: 30-36.) If their claim was true, God would not raise him from the dead. If God were to raise a blasphemous liar, or an ignorant deceived person who would make such a claim without any basis, God would be a party to sin, which is impossible. But if God actually raised Jesus from the dead, his

resurrection would be proof that God confirmed the claim of Jesus to be his Son. So Paul says he "was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." (Rom. 1: 4.) The resurrection of Jesus is a fact with as much evidence to sustain it as we have to prove that the Caesars or Napoleon lived. There were eyewitnesses to the empty tomb; his teachings live on and have been the greatest single force the world has ever known; and the church which bears his name cannot be accounted for if he did not rise from the dead to renew the faith of his followers. The Lord's Supper is a monument to the fact that he arose from the dead. One had as well stand before the monument that bears his name and say that Washington never lived and did not serve his country in an acceptable manner, as to stand in the presence of the Lord's Supper and declare that Jesus did not die and rise again. Washington's monument is material, but it is no more real, and speaks no more eloquently than does the monument of Jesus. And the conversion of Saul of Tarsus is accepted as unimpeachable evidence of the resurrection of Jesus. If Saul did not actually see Jesus, how can his change be explained? For every effect there must be a sufficient cause, and nothing less than the resurrection and appearance of Jesus, just as Paul relates them, will satisfactorily explain Saul's conversion.

Golden Text Explained

Angels announce the resurrection. The resurrection occurred early on the first day of the week. After resting on the Sabbath, according to the law, the women who loved and followed Jesus went to the tomb that they might anoint his body. But when they arrived they found the great stone which covered the entrance to the tomb removed, and they saw a "young man sitting on the right side." John says that two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. Matthew says "an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it." The word angel means simply a messenger, so Matthew says this *messenger* descended from heaven. No doubt this explanation was made so there could be no doubt as to the nature of this angel, that he was not a human being. Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, the wife of Zebedee and mother of James and John, were the women who came to the tomb. The angel said, after quieting their fears, Why seek ye the living among the dead? I know, continued the angel, that ye seek Jesus, the Nazarene, who hath been crucified, but he is not here, he has risen even as he said. Then the angel told them to take the word to his disciples, and remind them to meet him in Galilee as he had appointed them.

The purpose of the resurrection. There were several purposes in the resurrection of Jesus. First, it was to prove the truth of all the claims he had made concerning his relationship with the Father. He said he had come from the Father, and that he was doing the will of the Father. If this had been untrue, God would not have raised him from the dead. Next, he came to establish his kingdom and to save those who are lost. The stone had to be rejected before it was put into its place in the foundation of the church. (Matt. 21: 42, 43.) He was rejected in his death, and when raised from the dead he was made the head of the corner. (Eph. 1: 20-22; 2: 19-22.) Next, he

was raised for our justification. (Rom 4: 25.) He died to atone for our sins. But his blood had to be offered, as well as his body sacrificed. So it was necessary that he be raised to enter into the holiest place with his blood to offer for our cleansing. (Heb. 9: 24-28.) And Paul says we are justified by his blood. (Rom. 5: 9.) But if he had never been raised from the dead to offer his blood, we could not be justified by it; so raised for our justification. Next, he was raised as the proof and pledge of our resurrection on the last day. Paul says he was the first-fruits of the dead. (1 Cor. 15: 20-23.) The first ripe grain was offered by the Jews as a pledge that the whole harvest would be holy and dedicated to God. So Jesus was the first to rise to die no more, signifying that God has the power to raise up all; and that he will raise his faithful children to life everlasting.

Blessings derived from resurrection. Through the resurrection of Jesus we are guaranteed our resurrection, whether we be good or evil. (1 Cor. 15: 21, 22.) To the righteous their resurrection will be a blessed event, ushering them into the presence of God and the glories of heaven. But to the wicked, and all who have forgotten God, their resurrection will be a curse, bringing them under the curse of God pronounced upon all the disobedient. Our participation in the blessings of the resurrection, therefore, are conditional. We must become identified with the Lord in his resurrection if we hope to partake of its blessings. When we are buried with Jesus in the likeness of his death, we become identified with him in death and so are said to be dead to sin; so when we are raised with him from baptism, we are united together with him in the likeness of his resurrection, and become identified with him in his resurrection so that we are said to be alive unto God. (Rom. 6: 3-11; Col. 3: 1, 2.)

Exposition of the Text

On the road to Emmaus. To a village named Emmaus. The location of this village is unknown, but thought to be one northwest of Jerusalem. It is said to have been "three score furlongs," from Jerusalem. A furlong is one-eighth of a mile, so the distance was seven and one half miles.

They communed with each other. One of the men is named, Cleopas. Adam Clarke says that Dr. Lightfoot proves that Cleopas and Alphaeus (John 19: 25) are one and the same person. But this Alphaeus, the father of James the less and so the husband of Mary (Mark 15: 40; Matt. 10: 3) is called Clopas, instead of Cleopas. in John 19: 25. Clopas is an Aramaic name, but Cleopas is a Greek name. So we may be rather sure that this Cleopas was not the father of James the less, one of the apostles. They communed with each other about the event of the day; there was but one topic of conversation, the resurrection of the crucified one.

Jesus himself drew near. As these men questioned among themselves the meaning of the events of the last few days, Jesus appeared as an ordinary man walking along the road. No doubt many were unsettled in their minds as much as these men were to whom Jesus did not appear; but his appearance to these earnest but troubled men suggests that he is willing and able to settle all our doubts and relieve us of all our fears as we travel life's highway.

Their eyes were holden that they should not know him. Mark says he "was manifested in another form" when he appeared to these

two men. (Mark 16: 12.) Either of the two statements would be sufficient reason why they should not recognize him. But just exactly what is included in the statements is rather difficult for us to determine. It is sufficient for us to know that Jesus wished for these two men to see the teaching of the scripture and its fulfillment before they recognized him personally. In this way their faith was strengthened.

What communications are these? Jesus did not mean to deceive them by making them think he did not know of the crucifixion and resurrection; this was his means of entering the conversation. It was an effective way of doing so, for they stopped and "stood still, looking sad." It was shocking to them that there could possibly be even one person in all Jerusalem who had not heard of the events in which they were so interested. And it is a sad thing that there are people in the world today who have never heard of these things, and it should be our aim to see that all men everywhere hear of them.

Jesus explains the scriptures. O, foolish men, and slow of heart to believe. The King James Version uses the word "fools" instead of foolish men of our text. We are forbidden to call men fools (Matt. 5: 22), but there one Greek word is used, and an entirely different word used here. In this place a word is used which suggests thoughtlessness and dullness of perception. If the disciples had kept an open and investigative mind, they could have seen in Jesus the fulfillment of the figures and prophecies of the Old Testament. Jesus often referred to himself in the language of the prophets, and as doing things in order that certain Messianic Prophecies should be fulfilled. If it was so difficult for people to see the fulfillment of prophecies in Jesus, how slow we should be today to say that certain events of our day fulfill certain prophecies!

Behooved it not the Christ to suffer? The Jews had a picture of a conquering Messiah; they could not believe that their Messiah would submit to such treatment as Jesus received at the hands of his enemies. They had difficulty in understanding Isaiah 53 because the Messiah is pictured as suffering. The Ethiopian nobleman said he could not understand that chapter without some one to guide him. (Acts 8: 30, 31.) And modern orthodox Jews cannot explain the meaning of that chapter. But these disciples had either heard Jesus himself predict his death (Matt. 16: 21), or had heard other disciples tell what Jesus had predicted, and yet they did not see in him the fulfillment of prophecies.

And to enter into his glory. Jesus had to suffer to enter into his glory. Peter says the Spirit of Christ enabled the prophets to foretell the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow them. (1 Pet. 1: 11.) This glory which Jesus was to have after his sufferings was the glory he had with the Father before the world was. (John 17: 5.) Paul speaks of his exaltation following his humiliation. (Phil. 2: 5-11.) That seems to be an established order in God's economy, for we are to work and then rest; we are to suffer if we would be glorified (Rom. 8: 18); we are to humble ourselves if we wish to be exalted. (1 Pet. 5: 6.)

From Moses and all the prophets. The reference to Moses means the five books written by him. In Gen. 3: 15 we have the first prophecy concerning the Messiah; in Deut. 21: 9 we have the story of the serpent of brass which Jesus said to his disciples was a figure of his being lifted up for their salvation (John 3: 14); in Deut. 18: 15

Moses predicts that God will raise up a prophet whom the people must hear. And then the prophets here refer to all the balance of the Old Testament, including the prophetic Psalms of David, and the prophecies in them are too numerous to mention. But Jesus gave these two men a comprehensive view of this teaching and its fulfillment.

Abide with us. The disciples were so interested in the matters that they begged Jesus to stop with them. What a wonderful thing it would be for all of us if we could get so interested in these matters that we would wish for him to abide with us always.

Jesus recognized and proclaimed. He sat down with them to meat. Jesus accepted the invitation of these two men to abide with them and to eat. And, as was his custom, he gave thanks (blessed) for the food. To give thanks and break the bread was the duty of the host, and not the guest, and this may help to account for what follows.

Their eyes were opened. Whatever the restraint of verse 16 was, it was removed. His taking the place of the father or host at the table, and his familiar blessing may have started them to thinking and associating this person with their master of days gone by. Then as suddenly as he appeared, he vanished out of their sight. Whether there was anything miraculous about his disappearance is difficult to determine; it may well be explained without resorting to the miraculous, though the miraculous is possible.

Did not our hearts burn? The word heart does not refer to the blood pump, but to the emotions. Their emotions were stirred. There was a warmth of affection in his voice, and a response of the soul to his teaching which gave them a feeling of deep satisfaction. The statement that "he opened to us the scriptures" refers to his explanation of them. And it was this explanation of scripture which caused their hearts to burn within them.

They returned to Jerusalem. They lost no time in leaving, and undoubtedly they made the seven miles in much less time than they did on the way out. So far as they knew they were the only people who had seen the Lord after his resurrection, and they wished to share their joy with everybody else. That is characteristic of a Christian's first love. When first we learn of the Lord and the joy of his salvation, we wish everybody on earth could share with us our new-found joy. What a pity that so many leave their first love! get lukewarm, and even so cold as to forget the Lord and his blessings. (Rev. 3: 15; 2 Pet. 1: 9.)

Found the eleven gathered together. Some have supposed that the unnamed man here was Peter, because Jesus appeared to him (1 Cor. 15: 5), and it is nowhere else mentioned. But when these two men got to Jerusalem, they found the eleven. Judas had hanged himself, so that left only eleven of the apostles.

The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. These are not the words of the two who had returned; these are the words of the eleven and those who were with them. These two disciples who went to Emmaus did not know anything about Jesus appearing to any one, but those who made this statement knew that Jesus had appeared to Peter.

They rehearsed the things that had happened in the way. They gave a full account of their walk and talk with Jesus, concluding

with a description of his familiar way of giving thanks for the bread and his breaking it to them, in which act they recognized him. It is a fine recommendation of a man that he is recognized by his godly habits. How infinitely better it is to be recognized by godly habits than it is to be known for wicked and ungodly habits of speech or action.

Topics for Discussion

1. It is becoming in Christians to talk of Jesus as they associate together. It is not meant that they may never engage in other topics of conversation, but for them to be together long and never talk of Jesus and his church is an indication of worldly mindedness, and a lack of interest in things divine.

2. Jesus reproved these disciples for their lack of understanding the scriptures. What would he say of us if he were to visit us and ask us a number of questions about the teaching of the Bible on various topics? Could you pass his examination?

3. No doubt these disciples wished Jesus had not vanished so soon from their sight. But Jesus does not satisfy our curiosity. He was seen by them long enough to qualify them as witnesses of his resurrection. Our view of him in the scriptures is not all we could wish, but it is enough to give us faith in him, and to enable us to preach him to others.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?
Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons.

Introduction

What does the resurrection of Jesus prove with reference to his claims?

What did Paul say the resurrection declared?

What evidence do we have today of the resurrection of Jesus?

How does this compare with the evidence we have concerning other historical characters?

Show how the conversion of Saul of Tarsus proves the resurrection.

Golden Text Explained

Who was first to tell of the resurrection?

How do you know these were heavenly messengers?

Who were the first people to hear this announcement?

Why did Jesus have to be raised to establish his kingdom?

Why did he have to be raised to secure our justification?

What connection is there between his resurrection and ours?

Will the general resurrection be a happy event for all people? Why?

How are we identified with the Lord in his death?

How are we identified with him in his resurrection?

On the Road to Emmaus

What do you know of the city of Emmaus?

What do you know of the two men going to Emmaus?

Why did they not recognize Jesus when he joined them?

Why were they astonished at the words of Jesus?

Jesus Explains the Scriptures

How did Jesus rebuke them, and why?

Why was it hard for Jews to believe the Christ should suffer?

What is meant by entering into his glory?

Cite scriptures to prove that suffering precedes glory in our case.

What did Moses teach about the sufferings of Christ?

Can you name other prophecies which Jesus may have used at this time?

What request did these two men make of Jesus?

Jesus Recognized and Proclaimed

What unusual thing did Jesus do when he sat down to meat?

What usual thing did he do, and what its effect on them?

In what sense were their eyes opened?

What is meant by their hearts burning?

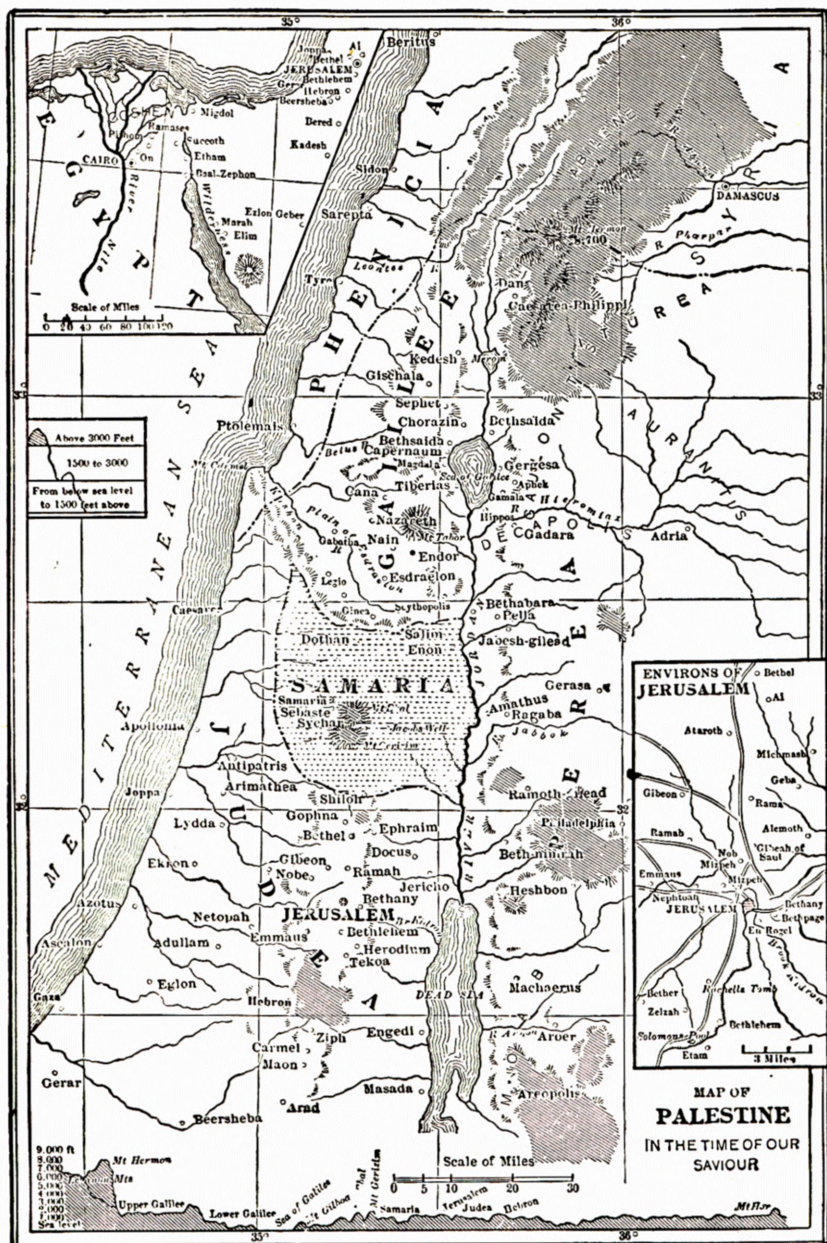
What is characteristic of a Christian's first love?

Whom did they find gathered together when they got to Jerusalem?

What knowledge did the eleven have that they did not have?

What did you get from the daily Bible readings?

What is there of interest in the topics for discussion?



FOURTH QUARTER

STUDIES IN JOHN

AIM.—To encourage the student to seek an understanding of the deeply spiritual message of the Gospel according to John, and to enter into loving fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ.

Lesson I—October 2, 1949

THE FIRST DISCIPLES

The Lesson Text

John 1: 35-49

35 Again on the morrow John was standing, and two of his disciples;
36 And he looked upon Je'-sus as he walked, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God!

37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Je'-sus.
38 And Je'-sus turned, and beheld them following, and saith unto them. What seek ye? And they said unto him, Rab'-bi (which is to say, being interpreted, Teacher), where abidest thou?

39 He saith unto them, Come, and ye shall see. They came therefore and saw where he abode; and they abode with him that day; it was about the tenth hour.

40 One of the two that heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Si'-mon Peter's brother.

41 He findeth first his own brother Si'-mon, and saith unto him. We have found the Mes-si'-ah (which is, being interpreted, Christ).

42 He brought him unto Je'-sus. Je'-sus looked upon him, and said, Thou art Si'-mon the son of John: thou shalt be called Ce'-phas (which is by interpretation, Peter).

43 On the morrow he was minded to go forth into Gal'-i-lee, and he findeth Philip: and Je'-sus saith unto him, Follow me.

44 Now Philip was from Beth-sa'-i-da, of the city of Andrew and Peter.

45 Philip findeth Na-than'-a-el, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Mo'-ses in the law, and the prophets, wrote, Je'-sus of Naz'-a-reth, the son of Joseph.

46 And Na-than'-a-el said unto him. Can any good thing come out of Naz'-a-reth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

47 Je'-sus saw Na-than'-a-el coming to him, and saith of him. Behold, an Is'-ra-el-ite indeed, in whom is no guile!

48 Na-than'-a-el saith unto him. Whence knowest thou me? Je'-sus answered and said unto him. Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.

49 Na-than'-a-el answered him, Rab'-bi, thou art the Son of God; thou art King of Is'-ra-el.

Golden Text.—*"If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples."* (John 8: 31b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Luke 9: 57-62.

Daily Bible Readings

September 26. M.....	Jesus Calls Fishermen (Matt. 4: 18-22)
September 27. T.....	Jesus Calls a Publican (Luke 5: 27-32)
September 28. W.....	Disciples Qualified and Sent Forth (Matt. 10: 1-15)
September 29. T.....	The Fall of One Apostle (Matt. 27: 3-10)
September 30. F.....	Selection of Matthias (Acts 1: 15-26)
October 1. S.....	Saul of Tarsus Called (Acts 9: 1-19)
October 2. S.....	Paul's Account of His Call (Acts 22: 3-21)

TIME.—Spring of A.D. 27.

PLACE.—Bethany, beyond Jordan.

PERSONS.—Jesus, Peter, Andrew, Philip, and Nathanael.

Introduction

With this lesson we go back to the beginning of the personal ministry of Jesus to follow him again through more than three years of work. Of most of the things recorded by John he was an eye-witness. His record was written much later than the other three records, so he could fill in events which were not included in the other records. Besides this John seems to have written his gospel with the church in mind, and we will find in his writing some deeply spiritual lessons. He deals not so much with facts as with spiritual principles which will be food for our souls.

John is supposed to have been born about the same time as Jesus. He was related to Jesus, probably a cousin. His mother's name was Salome, and his father was Zebedee. He was one of three who formed an inner circle of the friends of Jesus, Peter and James the brother of John, being the other two. It was John who had the place of honor and leaned on the bosom of the Lord while eating the Passover supper. (John 13: 23.) And it was John to whom Jesus committed the care of his mother just before he died. (John 19: 26, 27.) John spent much of his time preaching in and around Ephesus. He was exiled in the isle of Patmos (Rev. 1: 9), and so far as is known died there. The tradition has persisted through the centuries that Jesus promised John that he should never die, because he said to him, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" However, John denies that Jesus made any such promise, for he says, "Yet Jesus said not unto him, that he should not die." (John 21, 22, 23.) He is believed to have been at least one hundred years old at the time of his death. This record of the gospel he wrote and which we are to study was not his last production; the book of Revelation is his last. But this gospel record was not written until late, perhaps about A.D. 86. The other three biographies of Christ were written before the destruction of Jerusalem, Mark being written first instead of Matthew.

Golden Text Explained

True Discipleship. 1. The first thing essential to true discipleship is a belief of the teaching of Jesus. This means that we will believe what he said about his existence with the Father before he was born of Mary. (John 8: 58.) And it means that we will believe that he was born of a virgin. (Matt. 1: 13-25.) Men of learning reject these two items because they say they are contrary to reason; nothing like them ever happened before or since, and therefore, there is no basis in reason or fact for them. The miracles Jesus performed, culminating in the great miracle of his own resurrection, must be believed before we can claim to be his disciples. Paul says we must believe the resurrection to be saved. (Rom. 10: 9, 10.)

2. Not only must we believe these things in the sense of granting that they are true, but we must believe them in the sense of putting our trust in him because of the truth of these things. If these things are true, he is divine; he is the Savior and Redeemer of the world. If these are true, he is worthy of our trust. And the one who believes that these things are facts, but does not put his trust in Jesus to save him from sin, cannot be the Lord's disciple. The demons believe, but they do not put their trust in him. And

if we only grant that the statements made concerning him are true, we are no better than the demons, so far as being saved is concerned. This implies an active faith in Jesus, and a faith without action is dead. The action required is obedience to gospel commandments. If we determine how our faith shall act, we assume the place of the lawmaker; but if we stay in our place and obey the commandments of the gospel, we place our trust in the author of the gospel, and have a right to claim to be his disciples.

3. The third thing essential to true discipleship is to continue in his word. If ye *abide* in my word. To abide means to continue. The "on-again-off-again" type of person who has no stability, but is carried away with every wind of teaching of the opinions and notions of men, is not a true disciple of Jesus. The church at Laodicea was composed of people of this type. They were once hot, but when John wrote them they were lukewarm. (Rev. 3: 14-22.) The Lord said he would rather see them cold than in that lukewarm state, and unless they returned to their first love and showed some signs of being more steadfast, he would spew them out of his mouth. And the church at Ephesus, where John had labored so long, was in danger of falling away, for they had left their first love. (Rev. 2: 1-7.) Paul would have us be "stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. 15: 58.) Jesus taught this same lesson in the parable of the sower. (Matt. 13.) The seed that fell among rocks grew well for a while, but because it had no depth of root or moisture, it soon fell away. And that which was sown among thorns grew for a while, but the thorns of pleasure and cares of life finally choked it. Only the good ground received the seed and "held it fast," and brought forth fruit. So we must "hold fast," steadfastly, constantly, abide in his word if we expect to be true disciples of Jesus.

Exposition of the Text

Andrew and Peter Find Christ. (Verses 35-42.) *Behold, the Lamb of God!* This is the second time John the Baptist referred to Jesus as the Lamb of God. (Verse 29.) John realized that he was only preparing disciples for Jesus, so he took advantage of every opportunity to suggest to his disciples that they were to follow Jesus. John was to decrease, but Jesus was to increase. (John 3: 30.) By this expression "Lamb of God," John wished for his disciples to see in Jesus, (1) A gift from God; (2) one with the innocence and purity of a lamb without spot; (3) an offering for their sins.

What seek ye? When two of John's disciples began to follow Jesus, they were asked what they were seeking. To this they replied that they wished to know where he abode. There seems to be no special spiritual significance to be given this language. They evidently wished to be with him, and in these words suggested they would like to go to some place more private than they were in at the time, so that they might have a talk with him. They were interested in him whom John called the Lamb of God. They were Jews and knew what the expression meant—at least they knew it had some sacrificial significance. Furthermore, they know John was preparing the way for the kingdom, and since John pointed out this man to them, they very likely understood there was some connec-

tion between him and the kingdom. So they went home with him and spent the balance of the day.

One of the two was Andrew. The unnamed disciple here is thought to be John himself. It was his usual practice to speak in an impersonal way of himself. (John 13: 26; 19: 26, 35; 21: 7, 20, 24.) Andrew was the brother of Peter, and though we have little mention of him in the gospel records or in Acts, his missionary spirit here leads us to think of him as a soul winner for the Lord.

Findeth his own brother. Andrew wished to share his knowledge of Jesus with others, and his first thought was of his own family. This was a human impulse, and a very understandable one. Peter was his brother, his partner in business, and constant associate; there was every reason why he should love him, and love led him to wish Peter to share this great blessing with him. Do you have some one in mind you wish would obey the gospel? If so, there is very likely some family or social tie which caused your interest.

He brought him to Jesus. Andrew was not satisfied to wish that his brother was there, or that he might find the Messiah. He was a man of action. No sooner had he found the Christ than he went to tell him whom he loved the story. Nor was he satisfied to tell Peter he had found the Christ, but he brought Peter to Jesus. This is our mission in the world, to bring people to Jesus. To do so, we must, (1) Teach people the goodness of God, for that leads men to repent. (Rom. 2: 4.) (2) Teach them the severity of God, for that restrains them from sin and causes them to seek to escape the wrath to come. (Rom. 11: 22; Acts 24: 25.) (3) Teach them to count the cost of discipleship lest they become discouraged and quit. (4) Teach them how to come to Jesus. No one ever came to him by accident; only those who hear and learn of the Father come unto him. (John 6: 44, 45.)

Thou art Simon the son of John. The word Simon means *hearing*. And the word John means *Jehovah hath been gracious*. The word Cephas is a Chaldee word, while Peter is a Greek word, and each one means *a rock*. (Smith's Bible Dictionary.) The fact that Jesus said "thou shalt be," using the future tense, perhaps suggests that Peter was to earn that name by the faithful performance of his duty. As an American general won the name of "Stonewall" by his courageous stand in battle, so Peter was to win his name. And when he was before the rulers in Jerusalem he, together with John, displayed such boldness in his stand for the right that the rulers marveled. And one statement made by Peter and John in that meeting has served to inspire to faithfulness, even unto death, saints and martyrs all through the ages: "Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard." (Acts 4: 19.) And again, "We must obey God rather than men." (Acts 5: 29.) Such a courageous stand as this justifies Jesus in giving him the name of Peter.

Philip and Nathanael called. (Verses 43-49.) *Minded to go forth into Galilee.* Jesus had been in Bethany (Bethabara), where John was baptizing. (John 1: 27.) This was east of the Jordan in the territory of Reuben.

He findeth Philip. The word Philip means *lover of horses*. Philip lived in Bethsaida, meaning *house of fish*. This was a city on the

west coast of the lake of Galilee, and near Capernaum. It is said here to have been the home of Andrew and Peter. We hear very little of Philip in the first three books, but in John we learn more of him. (See John 6: 5; 12: 21; 14: 8.)

Philip findeth Nathanael. Here we have another example of one being interested in another, and bringing him to the Lord. There is a peculiar joy in bringing people to Jesus, and those who have never done so have missed much of the joy of the Christian life, and it is to be feared may miss all the joys of heaven. The word Nathanael means *gift of God*. He is also called Bartholomew, or *son of Talmi*. The name Nathanael is not found in the first three gospel records at all as they use Bartholomew only.

Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. Here Jesus is called the son of Joseph without any qualifying explanation. But when giving the genealogy, Luke says, "Being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph." (Luke 3: 23.) And Mary referred to Joseph as the boy's father when speaking to him. (Luke 2: 48.)

Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? The people of Galilee were more liberal in their religious views than the more orthodox in Judaea, near Jerusalem. It has been suggested too that their manners and customs were more unpolished and crude, so that the people of Judaea felt themselves superior to the Galileans. But this would not account for Nathanael speaking in this fashion of Nazareth, for he was a native of Galilee. So we must conclude that even among Galileans Nazareth had a bad reputation; it was the worst of a bad section of country. The fact that they were ready to kill Jesus after hearing one sermon which did not please them indicates their type of character. (Luke 4: 28, 29.) There may never have been anything else good to come out of Nazareth, but Philip felt perfectly safe to invite Nathanael to come and see this man he had found from Nazareth. So may we feel free to invite the closest inspection by our friends, assured that they will find no fault in him.

Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Was Jesus acquainted with this man? So far as we know, or have reason to believe, this is the first time the two have met. This is just another demonstration of the fact that Jesus did not have to ask what was in man, for he knew how to read the hearts of men. (John 2: 25.) The word *guile* means, "Deceitful cunning; craft, treachery." This was, and still is, a prevalent sin in the east. (Tit. 1: 12.) But Nathanael was able to resist the temptations of inclination and environment to form a character with no trace of guile. And this recommendation of Jesus was reward enough to pay him for all the effort.

Whence knowest thou me? How could you know that I am guileless? Nathanael did not know then, but soon to learn, that Jesus had the power to read the heart. For Jesus said, Before Philip called you, while you were under the fig tree, I saw you. Here is another proof to Nathanael. How did Jesus know he was under a fig tree? Jesus was simply presenting evidence of his divinity, and Nathanael was not slow to realize and accept it.

Thou art the Son of God, the King of Israel. This was Nathanael's response to the evidence Jesus gave of his divinity. Nathanael did not demand that he see the dead raised; he did not have to see the leper cleansed; nor did he have to ask to see the prints of the nails in the hands of Jesus. The man who could read his heart, and who

could see him under a tree some miles away was no mere human being. This was enough for Nathanael, so he was ready to confess Jesus as his Lord. This should be the response of every responsible man and woman today. There are enough miracles of Jesus recorded in the New Testament, and the record is well enough authenticated to justify our belief of all that is written, and to condemn us for our disbelief. Happy is the one who finds it in his heart to believe.

Topics for Discussion

1. Our lesson affords a good opportunity to stress what we usually refer to as "personal work." In many churches all personal contacts to teach and persuade people to obey the gospel are left up to the preacher; and there are some preachers who depend wholly on their work in the pulpit to influence people to become Christians. There should be a group in every congregation studying and training for the work of personal visitation in efforts to lead people to obey the gospel. The book "You Can Do Personal Work," by Brother Otis Gatewood, is good to use as a text in such training class, if this suggestion is followed and a class is started in such work, surely there will be some souls led to Jesus who would otherwise have been lost.

2. If Jesus saw that the heart of Nathanael was guileless, he can see the corruption in our hearts. Would each one of us be willing for Jesus to stand before this class and read our hearts in the hearing of the class? There will come a day when he will read them before the assembled family of Adam. "Prepare to meet thy God."

3. When man had no offering sufficient to atone for his sins, God in love gave him a Lamb without spot with sufficient merit to atone for every sin of every man. What a wonderful love! What a bountiful gift!

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Discuss the aim for the lessons for this quarter.

Introduction

What are some characteristics of the Gospel by John?

What was the relation between John and Jesus?

In what peculiar ways did Jesus honor John?

Where did John spend much of his life's work?

Did he write earlier or later than other gospel writers?

What do you know of his last days and death?

Golden Text Explained

What is the first thing essential to true discipleship?

What particular things must we believe?

What is the second essential to true discipleship?

What is the difference between belief and trust?

What action is required to make faith alive?

What is the third essential of true discipleship?

Cite two churches that did not abide in his teaching?

Discuss two classes of people, as suggested in the parable of the sower, that do not abide in the teaching of Jesus.

Andrew and Peter Find Christ

What lessons are suggested by calling Jesus the Lamb of God?

What two disciples were seeking Jesus?

What does their seeking suggest?

After finding Jesus, what did Andrew do first?

What good lesson is suggested in the fact that he brought Peter to Jesus?

How can we bring people to Jesus now?

Was Peter a rocklike character at this time?

Give instances when he gave evidence of being a rocklike character.

Philip and Nathanael Called
Where did Philip live, and what is
the meaning of his name?
What do you know of the location
of his home town?
Whom did Philip bring to Jesus?
Was Jesus known as the son of
Joseph?
What reputation did all Galilee have
in Judaea?

Is there evidence that Nazareth was
worse than other cities of Galilee?
What did Jesus say to Nathanael?
What divine characteristic was dis-
played here?
What did Nathanael recognize in Je-
sus?
What did you get from the daily
Bible readings?
What is there of interest in the topics
for discussion?

Lesson II—October 9, 1949

JESUS AND NICODEMUS

The Lesson Text

John 3: 1-17

1 Now there was a man of the Phar-i-sees, named Nic-o-de'-mus, a ruler of the Jews:

2 The same came unto him by night, and said to him, Rab'-bi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him.

3 Je'-sus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

4 Nic-o-de'-mus saith unto him. How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

5 Je'-sus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 Marvel not that I said unto thee. Ye must be born anew.

8 The wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

9 Nic-o-de'-mus answered and said unto him. How can these things be?

10 Je'-sus answered and said unto him, Art thou the teacher of Is'-ra-el, and understandest not these things?

11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that which we know, and bear witness of that which we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

12 If I told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things?

13 And no one hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, even the Son of man, who is in heaven.

14 And as Mo'-ses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up;

15 That whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life.

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.

17 For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature." (2 Cor. 5: 17.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rom. 6: 1-17.

Daily Bible Readings

October 3. M.....David Prayed for a Clean Heart (Psalm 51: 1-17)
October 4. T.....John the Baptist Demands a New Life (Luke 3: 7-14)
October 5. W.....Three Thousand People Born Anew (Acts 2: 37-47)
October 6. T.....Corinthians Born Anew (1 Cor. 6: 9-11; 12: 12, 13)
October 7. F.....Sons of God by New Birth (Gal. 3: 23-29)
October 8. S.....Obligations of the New Birth (Col. 3: 1-18)
October 9. S.....Saved Through Washing and Renewing (Titus 3: 1-10)

TIME.—A.D. 27.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus and Nicodemus.

Introduction

The teaching of Jesus was such that not many mighty, not many noble (1 Cor. 1: 26), were attracted by it. And when men among the rulers were attracted, they were afraid to confess their faith in him lest they be put out of the synagogue. (John 12: 42, 43.) The teaching of Jesus is opposed to pride, worldly wisdom, and the deception and chicanery practiced by so many in high positions; it demands a sincerity and humility, a lowliness and meekness, which are all but unknown among the rich and the powerful in the social, political, and financial world. But occasionally then, as now, one can be found among the noble and the mighty who is willing to listen to Jesus, and who has the courage to live by his teaching. Nicodemus gave evidence of being sincere, but either was not convinced at this time, or did not have the courage to throw the weight of his influence on the side of Jesus and right. He did make a halfhearted stand in a council meeting when he asked if it was customary to condemn a man without first hearing the man make his defense. (John 7: 51.) And when the body of Jesus was to be buried, Nicodemus joined Joseph of Arimathea in asking Pilate for the body that they might give it a decent burial; and Nicodemus brought one hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes to preserve the body. (John 19: 38-40.)

Golden Text Explained

The New Creature One is not made a new creature in the sense of any change of the flesh. One is not new in the sense that he has miraculous powers which he did not have before. Nor is one a new creature in the sense that he is rendered incapable of sin; he is still subject to temptations. Neither is he a new creature in the sense that all desire and inclination to sin have been taken from him in a miraculous way; overcoming desire and inclination to sin is a long and difficult process. But one is a new creature, (1) In that he enjoys a new relationship with God, his Son and the Holy Spirit. When one becomes a new creature, he is a son of God, the servant of Jesus Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor. 6: 19.) It is impossible to enjoy this relationship with the Godhead without becoming a new creature. (2) One is a new creature in that he has new objects of affection; whereas he used to love the world and the things of this world, he now loves God and things heavenly. (Col. 3: 1, 2.) (3) The change is set forth in the following figures: (a) From darkness to light. (Eph. 5: 8; 1 Pet. 2: 9, 10.) (b) From bondage to liberty. (Rom. 6: 12-14, 17, 18.) (c) From death to life. (1 John 3: 14.) (d) From the flesh to the spirit. (Gal. 3: 3.)

New Creature in Christ. Notice Paul says *if* any man is in Christ. No one can be a new creature who is not in Christ. This lesson is also taught in the following words, "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3: 26) To be a son of God is to be a new creature, so this is equal to saying we are new creatures in Christ Jesus. The sense of this passage is usually lost by thinking that it teaches us that we become sons of God by faith in Christ. It is

true that we become children of God by faith in Christ, but this verse does not teach that as its *primary* lesson. If we leave out the phrase between commas, we will have the primary thought of the verse, and it is this, "For ye are all sons of God in Christ Jesus." The phrase *through faith* teaches us how we become sons of God in Christ. So those who are not in Christ are not new creatures; they are not children of God.

How to get into Christ. Following the statement that we are sons of God in Christ, Paul tells us that we are "baptized into Christ." It will help us to understand this phrase if we use a simple illustration. "The man was initiated into the lodge." The word "lodge" is a noun, descriptive of the relationship to be entered. The word "into" is a preposition which denotes transition from *without* to *within*; it usually follows verbs of action. The word "initiate" is a verb of action, descriptive of the action to be taken to come from without to within the relationship to be entered. So if a person has never been initiated into the lodge, that one is not entitled to enjoy any of the benefits found therein; and it matters not how deserving he is from a moral point of view. But if one is initiated into the lodge, that one is entitled to the benefits found therein.

Now for the application. "Baptized into Christ." The word "Christ" is a noun, and here it expresses relationship. The word "into" is a preposition, denoting transition from without to within the relationship. The word "baptize" is a verb of action, descriptive of the action one must take to pass from without Christ to within Christ. So that the person who has never been baptized is outside of Christ and not entitled to a single blessing said to be in Christ; but the person who has been baptized is in Christ and entitled to all the blessings in Christ. This supposes, of course, that the person believes with all his heart the gospel of Christ, has repented of his sins, and has confessed with his mouth the faith in his heart. (Rom. 10: 9, 10.) When this person, in obedience to the Lord's command is baptized, he passes from without to within Christ where all spiritual blessings are. (Eph. 1: 3.) And that this is water baptism is seen from the fact that Paul says we are buried in the baptism which brings us into Christ. (Rom. 6: 3, 4.) In Holy Spirit baptism the person is never spoken of as being buried and raised; this occurs only in water baptism.

Exposition of the Text

The new birth. (Verses 1-8.) *Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.* We know but little of this man beyond what is suggested in this lesson. He seems to have been a just ruler, and one inclined to be a disciple of Jesus. The fact that he came by night to Jesus may have been on account of his business affairs, or he might have wished to have more privacy than he could expect in the daytime; it is not impossible that he came at night to avoid being seen by his friends.

A teacher come from God. Nicodemus knew the purpose of miracles, and so admitted that they were performed to prove the fellowship between God and the one working them. Since God will not confirm false doctrines, we may be sure a man who teaches false doctrines does not get power from God to work miracles.

Except one be born anew. The word "anew" means again. Some take it to mean "from above," and that meaning will be found

in the marginal reading. It is correct to translate the Greek word "from above," but it is obvious that Nicodemus got the idea of another, or a second birth, from the fact that he asked if one could enter his mother's womb to be born a second time. The word "except" teaches us the necessity of being born again. And the word "see" is to be taken in the sense of enjoying. The meaning is that unless one is born again, the second time, he cannot enjoy or partake of the blessings of the kingdom of God. By the kingdom of God is meant the church. Certainly one cannot see the eternal kingdom without being born anew, but the kingdom of the Messiah was here mentioned.

How can a man be born when he is old? This shows that Nicodemus had another physical birth in mind. He did not understand the use of the word "born" when applied to the kingdom, because he did not understand the nature of the kingdom to be established.

Except one be born of water and the Spirit. This statement was made to free the mind of Nicodemus of the mistaken idea that this second birth was to be a physical birth. This second birth is to be spiritual, because the kingdom into which it admits people is a spiritual kingdom. There have been all kinds of loose interpretations given this statement in order to make the word "water" mean something beside water. The usual explanation is that the word "water" refers to the physical birth, and the sense is: Except a man be born first of the flesh and second of the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom. Obviously if a person has never been born physically, there would be no person and the statement is resolved into absurdity. Jesus is talking about a man; he is saying to Nicodemus, You must be born of water and the Spirit. Nicodemus had already been born of his mother, and that man who had already been born of the flesh must now be born of water and the Spirit. Being driven from the idea that water does not refer to the physical birth, some say it means the Holy Spirit. But that is as bad as the other, for then Jesus would be made to say that a man must be born of Spirit and the Spirit. The obvious meaning is that when the Spirit leads one by his teaching to be baptized into Christ, that one has been born of water and the Spirit. To make the Spirit the father, water the mother, and the gospel the seed by which one is begotten, is, in the mind of this writer, pressing a figure of speech too far. Birth is the translation of life from one sphere, or relationship, to another; so through the teaching of the Holy Spirit and our obedience to the Lord in baptism we are brought out of the old relationship to the new. This is being born again, a spiritual birth.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh. This refers to the physical birth. And when he says, That which is born of the Spirit is spirit, he refers to the spiritual birth. There is no change of flesh in the birth of water and the Spirit; it is the human spirit, the inner man, that is changed as explained in our Golden Text.

The wind blows where it will. This is a difficult verse. If the word "wind" is the proper translation, the meaning is, Nicodemus, you have not experienced the new birth and you cannot tell simply by hearing where the wind comes from and where it is going; so is every one that is born of the Spirit. This new birth does not work miraculous changes on people. Those who look for the miraculous, take this as an explanation of the operation of the Spirit in the new

birth. If this were right, the verse should read, So is every one born that is born of the Spirit, whereas it reads, So is every one that is born of the Spirit. If the word should be "Spirit" instead of "wind"—the Spirit breatheth where it will—the meaning may be, "that a man is born of the Spirit by hearing the voice of the Spirit, breathing as he will through inspired men." (McGarvey.) But again this would refer to the mode of operation of the Spirit, and the last clause of the verse should read, So is every one born, or in this manner is every one born, that is born of the Spirit. It seems best to say that Jesus wished to keep Nicodemus from expecting a miraculous change to accompany the spiritual birth, so simply said that one who has never been born of the Spirit cannot tell by hearing where the wind comes from and goes, and neither can one who has been born of the Spirit; the spiritual birth does not give one miraculous powers.

More *light needed*. (Verses 9-15.) *How can these things be?* The field of knowledge is so big that one may be well versed in one subject, but very ignorant in another. Sunday school children often know more about the Bible than university professors. Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews, but did not know that a spiritual birth was essential to a son of Abraham in order to enter the kingdom God was about to establish. He was of those who thought his connection with Abraham gave him a right to the enjoyment of everything God had in store for people on earth and in heaven. But if he had understood all the figures of speech used in the law, he would have been able to receive this teaching. (Psalm 51: 10; Jer. 4: 4; Ezek. 18: 31.) And John the Baptist taught plainly enough that being a son of Abraham was not enough to be ready for citizenship in the kingdom about to be established. (Matt. 3: 9.)

If I told you earthly things and ye believed not. The "earthly things" refer to citizenship in the church, the earthly kingdom; while the "heavenly things" of this verse include all that is to be enjoyed in the everlasting kingdom of heaven. If the matters of the kingdom on earth are beyond our comprehension, surely the matters pertaining to the heavenly kingdom will be beyond us. Seeing that Nicodemus was dull of understanding, Jesus did not continue the explanation of the new birth. He said of Nicodemus, Ye receive not our witness. From this we may conclude that when Nicodemus said, How can these things be, he intimated his unbelief, or at least a doubt, which made further teaching along that line unprofitable.

No one hath ascended into heaven. By this Jesus means to tell Nicodemus that he is fully qualified to teach heavenly things, for he had descended out of heaven. And for this reason the Jews were all the more obligated to accept his teaching, and their guilt was aggravated by refusing to believe a teacher who had come from God.

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. In Numbers 21 we have the story of putting a brazen serpent on a pole to which people looked when they were bitten by serpents; and when they looked they were healed. So, said Jesus, the Son of man is to be lifted up that all who look to him in faith may live forever. The resemblances between the type and the real ere, (1) Maladies incurable by man. (2) Both were lifted up in view of men. (3) Those who look are healed. (4) Those who refuse to look die regardless of their wealth, family connections, or worldly wisdom.

For God so loved the world. The coming of Jesus into the world to die for man's sin is the highest expression of love that could be made. God's love was not a mere sentiment; it was active, God so loved that he gave. And his gift was adequate to express an infinite love; he gave his Son, his dearest possession. His love was impartial, for whosoever will may benefit from his gift, the rich and poor, the great and small, and all alike and upon the same conditions. His love is exceedingly bountiful, for those who believe in his Son receive everlasting life, the greatest gift which infinite love can bestow. But it must be said that God's love has one limitation, for it does not benefit the unbeliever; there is no provision in the love of God for the unbeliever.

God sent not his Son to judge the world. The first coming of Jesus was to save, not to condemn. Strict justice may well have been sent the Son into this world to condemn a guilty and unprofitable world of mankind; but mercy intervened and sent him on a mission of love and salvation. His second coming will be for judgment. (2 Thess. 1: 7-10; 2 Tim. 4: 1.) He came as the Savior, Mediator, and Redeemer of mankind, to make an offering for sin, to destroy the devil, and to rescue as many as possible from the dominion of Satan. All who will accept him, love, and obey him need have no fears about his coming in judgment.

Topics for Discussion

1. Jesus put his stamp of approval on Old Testament history by his reference to the serpent of brass. Other such references include the story of Jonah (Matt. 12: 40), and the destruction of Sodom. (Matt. 11: 23.) These happen to be miracles of the Old Testament which the learned of our day deny.

2. John 3: 16 has been used more than any other one verse to prove the doctrine of salvation by faith only. The main reason for using it is that faith is the only thing included, therefore it is the only thing necessary to salvation. If that be true we are forced to conclude that one may be saved without repenting, for that is not mentioned in the verse.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What class of people were attracted by the teaching of Jesus?

Why were not the rich and ruling class attracted by his teaching?

In what ways did Nicodemus show his respect for Jesus?

Golden Text Explained

In what ways does becoming a new creature not change us?

Name and discuss three ways in which we are changed in becoming new creatures.

On what condition may one become a new creature?

In whom are we children of God?

How does one get into Christ?

Can you illustrate this truth and make the application?

Can you prove that it is water baptism that brings one into Christ?

The New Birth

What do you know of Nicodemus as a man?

How could people know a teacher was from God at that time?

What is meant by being born anew? To what birth did Nicodemus think Jesus referred?

How did Jesus show Nicodemus he did not have a physical birth in mind?

What are some common explanations of the meaning of water in this verse?

Explain what is meant by the birth of water and the Spirit.

What part of man is changed in the new birth?

Discuss the meaning of verse 8.

More Light Needed

What suggests that Nicodemus did not understand the new birth?

Did the Old Testament writers use figures of speech similar to this?

On what did Nicodemus depend for his salvation?

What did Jesus say of Nicodemus' inability to understand things of this kind?

What fact increased the obligation of the Jews to receive the teaching of Jesus?

To what story did Jesus refer to teach how he was to bless mankind?

Show the similarities between the brazen serpent and Jesus.

What shows that God's love was not a mere sentiment?

What proves that his love is impartial?

What shows that God's love is bountiful?

What limitation is there on the love of God?

What was the purpose of the first coming of Jesus?

What will be the purpose of his second coming?

What did you get from the daily Bible readings?

What is there of interest in the topics for discussion?

Lesson III—October 16, 1949

JESUS AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

The Lesson Text

John 4: 9-26

9 The Sa-mar'i-tan woman therefore saith unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a Sa-mar'i-tan woman? (For Jews have no dealings with Sa-mar'i-tans.)

10 Je'-sus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: whence then hast thou that living water?

12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his sons, and his cattle?

13 Je'-sus answered and said unto her, Every one that drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life.

15 The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come all the way hither to draw.

16 Je'-sus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

17 The woman answered and said unto him, I have no husband. Je'-sus saith unto her, Thou saidst well, I have no husband:

18 For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: this hast thou said truly.

19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Je-ru'-sa-lem is the place where men ought to worship.

21 Je'-sus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Je-ru'-sa-lem, shall ye worship the Father.

22 Ye worship that which ye know not: we worship that which we know; for salvation is from the Jews.

23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers.

24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Mes-si'-ah cometh (he that is called Christ): when he is come, he will declare unto us all things.

25 Je'-sus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am *he*.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth*” (John 4: 24.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Acts 17: 22-28; Rev. 22: 8, 9.

Daily Bible Readings

October 10. M.....	The Beginning of Samaria (2 Chron. 10: 1-19)
October 11. T.....	Unlawful Worship in Samaria (1 Kings 12: 25-33)
October 12. W.....	Samaria After Their Captivity (2 Kings 17: 19-41)
October 13. T.....	Samaria in the Time of Nehemiah (Neh. 4: 1-23)
October 14. F.....	Samaritans Unfriendly to Jesus (Luke 9: 51-56)
October 15. S.....	Believers Among the Samaritans (John 4: 39-42)
October 16. S.....	Philip Successful in Samaria (Acts 8: 4-24)

TIME.—A.D. 27.

PLACE.—Sychar, in Samaria.

PERSONS.—Jesus and a woman of Samaria.

Introduction

The people of Samaria were a mixed race, a mixture of Assyrians and Jews. Samaria had its beginning as the kingdom of Israel soon after the death of Solomon. The reader will do well to read carefully all the daily Bible readings in their order to get a view of the rise of the kingdom, its departures from the worship of God to that of idols, the fall of the kingdom and the mixing of Assyrians with the few Jews who were left in the land. The enmity between the two groups was not forgotten during the captivity, for when the people of Judah returned from seventy years of captivity they would not allow the Samaritans to have any part with them in rebuilding Jerusalem. Nor were the Samaritans without blame in the matter, for their motives in wishing to help rebuild Jerusalem were not unselfish. This enmity continued through the years to the time of Christ. When the Jews of Galilee wished to go to Jerusalem to worship, they had to cross the Jordan and go down the east side through Perea, and then recross the Jordan at Jericho to get to Jerusalem. It was for this reason that Jesus and his disciples were mistreated as they went through Samaria toward Jerusalem. (Luke 9: 51-56.) But when the Jews wished to return from Jerusalem to Galilee, they were not molested, and for this reason Jesus and his disciples were not molested on their journey mentioned in our lesson. In the Great Commission Jesus said the gospel was to be preached first in Jerusalem and Judaea, and then to Samaria. (Acts 1: 8.) This was a natural order, and since the gospel recognizes no racial prejudices, it was the order followed.

Golden Text Explained

The nature of God. No one is able to define or describe God; it is impossible for the finite mind to conceive of the infinite. Our text says God is a Spirit. Jesus says a "spirit hath not flesh and bones." (Luke 24: 39.) A spirit is immaterial, the opposite of matter. That seems to be about as far as we can go. But the following from "The Fourfold Gospel" will be helpful: "They show that, (1) God is absolutely free from all limitations of space and time, and is therefore not to be localized in temples (Acts 7: 48); (2) that God is not material, as idolaters contend; (3) that he is not an abstract force, as scientists think, but a Being; (4) that he is lifted above all need of temples, sacrifices, etc., which are a benefit to man, but not to God (Acts 17: 25)."

The attributes of God give us our truest conception of God. (1) He is said to be eternal, from everlasting to everlasting. (Psalm 90:

2.) (2) He is immutable, or unchangeable. (Psalm 102: 25-27; James 1: 17.) (3) God is omniscient, or all wise. (Psalm 147: 5; 139: 1-6, 15, 16.) (4) God is omnipotent, or all powerful. (Gen. 17: 1; Jer. 32: 17-19.) (5) God is omnipresent, or everywhere present. (Psalm 139: 7-10; Jer. 23: 23, 24; 1 Kings 8: 27.) (6) God is just (Deut. 32: 4); Holy (1 Pet. 1: 15, 16); faithful in his promises (1 Cor. 10: 13); merciful (Ex. 34: 6, 7; Eph. 2: 4); and God is love. (1 John 4: 8.) So we conclude that God is a Spirit possessed of these attributes, without degree, but in perfection.

The nature of worship. God, being a Spirit, requires worship which is in harmony with his nature; it must be spiritual. So Jesus says that those who worship God *must worship in spirit*. This means that worship must spring from the inner man. Whatever there is about our worship that is outward and material, such as eating the loaf and drinking the fruit of the vine in the Lord's Supper, must be but the expression of the love, devotion, and desires of the soul. To go through the forms of worship, as singing, taking the Lord's Supper, and saying of prayers, without having our hearts in these forms, is mockery. The forms are but the vehicles by which the spirit of man expresses itself to the Father of spirits, and to offer him an empty vessel is an insult.

To worship God in truth means that we shall worship him as he has directed in his word of truth. One worships God in truth "when every purpose and passion of his heart, and when every act of his religious worship, is guided and regulated by the word of God." We have very few items of worship revealed in God's truth. (1) Singing (Eph. 5: 19); (2) praying (Col. 3: 17; 4: 2, 3); (3) taking the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11: 23-27); (4) giving our money for gospel purposes. (1 Cor. 16: 2.) Some consider teaching an act of public worship, and meditation as an act of private worship. But these exhaust the list of items of worship which can be done in obedience to God's commandments; all other acts of worship are beyond, and outside of, the teaching of the Lord. And those who go beyond the teaching of Christ in matters of worship forfeit the fellowship and communion of God. (2 John 9.) The playing of instruments of music in connection with singing is an added item of worship, so is not a part of true worship. One cannot worship in truth, as Jesus says we must, when engaging in the use of instruments of music. The burning of incense is an addition to that which God revealed through Christ and his inspired apostles, so one cannot worship God in truth while burning incense. Some object to such conclusion because God has not forbidden these things by a "Thou shalt not." Others say that since it is not sinful to have such things in one's home, there is no sin to have them in worship. These are efforts to evade the truth. Jesus says we must worship in truth, and until a thing can be found in God's book of revealed truth, it is no part of truth, and to engage in it is to depart from the truth; it is worshiping in *untruth* rather than worshiping in *truth*. The creature should be satisfied to worship his creator in the manner which the creator has revealed.

Exposition of the Text

Water for the Soul. (Verses 9-14.) *How is it that thou askest drink of me?* Jesus had asked this woman of Samaria for a drink, which was a most unusual thing for a Jew to do. Though they would

carry on trade, there was no social intercourse, such as eating and drinking with them. It was thought very degrading for a Jew to ask any favor of a Samaritan. John adds the explanation, For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans, reasons for which are given in the Introduction.

If thou knevest the gift of God. By this Jesus meant that if she had known about the gift of God in the person of his Messiah, whom even the Samaritans expected, and that she was talking to that very person, she would have realized that she was dependent upon him. Here is the creator asking a favor of the creature, when, if the creature had understood the situation, she would have been asking a favor of the creator. The creature can give nothing better than that which will slake physical thirst for a time, but the creator can give that which will satisfy the spiritual needs of man forever. What an act of condescension it was for Jesus thus to ask this woman for a drink!

Whence hast thou that living water? The term "living water" in its natural use meant constantly flowing water, as in a spring. The woman understood him in this way. And she wished to know where he expected to find such water in that arid section of the country. She saw he had nothing with which to draw from that well; it was too deep for him to dip it up to give her, hence this question as to the location of his living water. But, of course, he meant water for the soul, that which would satisfy soul thirst.

Art thou greater than our father Jacob? Jacob traveled all over this territory, and he decided this spot was the best for water. Do you claim to know better than he where to get water? She called Jacob her father, though mixed with Assyrian blood. The claim Jesus made led the woman to think of him as greater than Jacob, and she did not know how true were her words; she was talking to Jacob's Lord. The woman said Jacob gave them that well, which may have been true, though there was not positive evidence. The Samaritans loved to boast of their historical connections, in spite of their departures from the faith of their fathers. So there are people today who speak of the apostles in terms of love and respect, but who give little heed to them when they wish to depart from their teaching to worship according to their own standards of what is right.

Whosoever drinketh . . . shall never thirst. Jesus gave the woman to understand that he was not talking about water from Jacob's well, but he was talking of water for the soul. Water from Jacob's well would give relief to the body for a time, but the water for the soul which he had the power to give would become a well of water springing up unto eternal life.

Personal Applications. (Verses 15-20.) *Sir, give me this water.* It seems that the woman got the idea that the water Jesus would give would bring permanent relief, but she still thought it was for the physical man. But her request should be that of every thirsty soul, Give me this water which will satisfy all the needs of the soul for all time and eternity!

Go, call thy husband. This was a subtle approach to lead her to realize that she was talking to one who could see the sinful condition of her soul. If he could see that, she would believe in him as able to save her soul.

Thou hast had five husbands. When Jesus told the woman to call her husband, she said she had none. Then Jesus showed her that he knew her past by telling her how many husbands she had married, and that she was now living with a man she had not married. What a shock this revelation must have been to her. But one who knows all our past is able to care for us in the future if we commit our ways to him. Jesus had two purposes in mind for approaching her in this manner. (1) He wished to make her realize her need of salvation. (2) He wished to impress her with the fact that he was able to save her from her sins.

Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Her conclusion was only a part of the truth; a prophet, yes, but more than prophet. Her confession that he was a prophet was an admission of the things of which he accused her. As soon as she learned that he was a prophet she started the old religious argument which had been going for centuries between Samaritans and the Jews.

Our fathers worshiped in this mountain. The mountain referred to is Mount Gerizim, the mountain on which certain leaders stood to bless the people of Israel. (Deut. 27: 12.) Just who was intended by "our fathers" is not certain, but she may have included Abraham and other patriarchs who lived and worshiped in that vicinity. That vicinity had more ancient memorials than Jerusalem. The Jews did not come into possession of Jerusalem until in the days of David. (2 Sam. 5: 6-10.) But the Jews could cite the plain statement of the Lord to prove that Jerusalem was the place the Lord chose. (Deut. 12: 5; 1 Kings 9: 3; 2 Chron. 6: 6.)

Enlarged Vision of Worship. (Verses 21-26.) *Neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem.* Jesus wished to teach the women that soon (the hour cometh) the worship of God would be of such nature that it would no longer be necessary to go up to the temple to worship. The place of worship will no longer be of any importance, but (1) The object of worship; (2) the attitude of the worshiper; (3) the items of worship in which people engage.

Ye worship that which ye know not. The Samaritans accepted the first five books of the Old Testament, but rejected the balance of it. So they had a very imperfect knowledge of God, and of the purposes of God to be accomplished by the Messiah. The Jews had all the writings of the prophets, which gave them a decided advantage over the Samaritans. Furthermore, the Jews, including the tribe of Judah, were the people from whom the Messiah was to come, hence it might well be said that salvation is from the Jews. This did not mean that God was in every way pleased with the Jews and their manner of worship. But they had maintained the place and forms of worship, which the Samaritans had not; and they had kept themselves unmixed with the people of the nations round about, and had brought the Messiah into the world. This was no little service to humanity.

True worshipers. There is such a thing as "vain worship." (Matt. 15: 9.) And there is "ignorant worship." (Acts 17: 23.) The Samaritan worship, even more so than that of the Jews, was both ignorant and in vain. All worship is vain when it is perverted by a mixture of human wisdom. When people include acts of worship which are not written in God's word, they bring in human wisdom. Since God has furnished us all things that pertain to life and godli-

ness (2 Pet. 1: 3), and completely furnished us unto every work (2 Tim. 3: 17), we should be satisfied to make all things according to the divine pattern. (Heb. 8: 5.)

Such doth the Father seek to be his worshipers. It should be noticed that God seeks, desires, the worship of men. Certainly it is not because he has not better entertainment, as angels can do a much better job than any number of men. But God is pleased when we worship him, and that should cause us to look upon worship as an exalted privilege and the greatest honor we can covet. Next, it should be noticed that God is not seeking just any or every kind of worship. *Such* doth God seek to be his worshipers. *Such* denotes a certain kind. Well, what kind of worshipers does God desire? Those who worship in spirit and truth—those who engage in such, and only such, items of worship as are commanded, and who express their inner self, their feelings, affections, and desires through those revealed items of worship.

The Messiah will declare unto us all things. The woman felt she had got the worst of the argument; she was convinced she was talking with a prophet, and that she was losing the argument. But she was not convinced, even if she could not win the argument. But she was willing to drop the matter with the assurance that when the Messiah should come he would tell them all things; he would settle all their petty disputes as to the place and forms of worship.

I that speak unto thee am he. This was the first time Jesus had so fully revealed himself to any one. But this woman professed a willingness to listen to him when he should come, so Jesus gave her the opportunity. It is difficult from a purely human point of view to understand why Jesus so fully revealed himself to a humble sinful Samaritan peasant, while he did not make himself known to the great leaders of his day. "Thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes: yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight." (Matt. 11: 25, 26.)

Topics for Discussion

1. When the Samaritan woman learned that Jesus was the Messiah, she went into the city to tell others, and so led many to become believers in him. (Verse 39.) In this she is a good example to us, for she put spiritual things before material interests. The greatest need of the church today is a converted membership, who will value the spiritual above the material things of life.

2. The woman is a bad example, and a warning to us, in that she did not live in such way as to merit the confidence of the people in her message. Some did not believe on Jesus because of what she said. (Verses 41, 42.) From this we conclude that if we wish to lead people to become Christians, we must live in harmony with the gospel we preach.

3. Worship is the culture of the soul to bring it into the likeness of Christ, and to develop an appreciation of things spiritual and heavenly.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What do you know of the origin of Samaritans?

What of the relation between Samaritans and Jews after the captivity?

What do you know of their relation in the time of Christ?
Did gospel preachers make any distinctions between them?

Golden Text Explained

What do you know of the nature of God?
Discuss, as time will permit, the attributes of God.
What kind of worship does God require, and why?
What is meant by worshipping in spirit?
What is meant by worshipping in truth?
What are the revealed items of worship?
How do men go beyond this, and what, is the consequence?

Water for the Soul

Why was the woman surprised at Jesus asking for a drink?
What is the gift of God in this verse?
What is living water, and what did Jesus mean by the term?
What right did the woman have to claim Jacob as her father?
Why did the woman think Jesus claimed to be greater than Jacob?
Of what water did Jesus speak, and what its properties?

Personal Applications

What did the woman understand about this water Jesus promised?

What do you know of this woman's marital status?
Why did Jesus ask her to call her husband?
What did his statement as to her marital status cause her to confess?
What religious argument did she then start?
What claims did Mount Gerizim have as the place of worship?
What right did the Jews have to think Jerusalem the place to worship?

Enlarged Visions of Worship

What three things did Jesus teach the woman were important about worship?
Why did not the Samaritans have correct views of God, and of his worship?
Name and describe three kinds of worship.
For whom is God seeking?
To whom did the woman look to settle all religious questions?
What great revelation did Jesus make to her?
Why would he make such revelation to her, but not to the religious leaders?
What did you learn from the daily Bible readings?
What is there of interest in the topics for discussion?

Lesson IV—October 23, 1949

JESUS THE BREAD OF LIFE

The Lesson Text

John 6: 25-40

25 And when they found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rab'-bi, when earnest thou hither?

26 Je'-sus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves, and were filled.

27 Work not for the food which perisheth, but for the food which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him the Father, *even* God, hath sealed

28 They said therefore unto him, What must we do, that we may work the works of God?

29 Je'-sus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

30 They said therefore unto him, What then doest thou for a sign, that we may see, and believe thee? what workest thou?

31 Our fathers ate the man'-na in the wilderness; as it is written, He gave them bread out of heaven to eat.

32 Je'-sus therefore said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, It was not Mo'-sis that gave you the bread out of heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread out of heaven.

33 For the bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

34 They said therefore unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

35 Je'-sus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

36 But I said unto you, that ye have seen me, and yet believe not.
 37 All that which the Father giveth me shall come unto me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.
 38 For I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.
 39 And this is the will of him that sent me, that of all that which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.
 40 For this is the will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day."* (John 6: 44.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 55: 1-5.

Daily Bible Readings

October 17. M..... Bread from Heaven in the Wilderness (Ex. 16: 4-20)
 October 18. T..... They did Eat and Were Filled (Psalm 78: 15-29)
 October 19. W..... Meat in Doing the Will of God (John 4: 31-38)
 October 20. T..... The Living Bread from Heaven (John 6: 41-51)
 October 21. F..... Christ's Flesh is Meat Indeed (John 6: 52-59)
 October 22. S..... Israel's Experiences our Examples (1 Cor. 10: 1-22)
 October 23. S..... Hidden Manna for Overcomers (Rev. 2: 12-17)

TIME.—A.D. 28.

PLACE.—Capernaum.

PERSONS.—Jesus and the synagogue assembly.

Introduction

In our lesson last week we learned that Jesus could give the water of life, water which can slake the soul's thirst. Today we are to learn that he is the bread of life, he is food for the soul. Bread is to be taken in its general sense of food. Food and water are absolutely essential to the life of the body. One can get along without clothing and shelter, as some primitive people did, and some South Sea Islanders do to this day. One can very well get along without many of our modern conveniences, such as furniture, entertainment, and means of conveyance. These things are not absolutely essential to the life of man, but food and drink are essential. What food and drink are to the body, Jesus is to the soul. The sad thing about it is that too many people do not realize it. When they go too long without food and drink, the body sends out a complaint in the form of appetite, and makes people take time for food and drink. But the soul of man is not so constructed as to have an appetite that is as imperative in its demands as the body is. The soul appetite, hunger for spiritual food and drink, must be cultivated. The body cannot starve without our knowing about it, for its hunger is perceived by the physical sense; but the soul can die of starvation without our knowledge, because its hunger is not perceived by the physical senses. So many people are half-starved and too weak spiritually to be worth anything to the Lord as laborers in his vineyard. And, sad but true, many are dead spiritually and do not know it. They have become so interested in providing for the physical man that they have forgotten entirely the inner man. Two rich men are examples of this. (Luke 12: 16-21; 16: 19-31.)

Golden Text Explained

Coming to Jesus. We should notice, first, that all men are invited to come to Jesus. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11: 28.) Since all men are invited, we conclude that all can come to him; there is nothing included in coming to him that is too hard for any, regardless of how weak, poor, or ignorant they are. Next, though all men are invited, not one single one will be forced to come to him. Jesus would have accepted and saved Jerusalem, but they would not. (Luke 13: 34.) And the Jews would not come unto him that they might have life. (John 5: 40.) Man is described as dead in sin, but those who are dead in sin are invited to come, hence capable of acting in their behalf. We are told that "the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." (John 5: 25.) Hearing the Son of God stands between death and life. If the dead cannot hear, they can never become alive. The Ephesians were at one time dead in sin. (Eph. 2: 1.) But they had been made alive at the time Paul wrote them. By turning to Acts 19: 1-7, we learn that Paul preached the gospel to them, in which they heard the Son of God; they believed the gospel, and obeyed its commandments. In this way the dead were made alive.

God *draws men*. No one can come to Jesus for life unless God draws him. Does this imply irresistible force? That God draws men none will deny, but that God draws with such force that man is unable to resist contradicts many plain statements. "Whosoever will" is stamped on the Lord's invitation. (John 3: 16; Rev. 22: 17.) How then does God draw? The next verse explains, "And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me." (John 6: 45.) We hear from the Father through his revelation of himself in the Bible. When we learn of the goodness of God, we are inclined to repent. (Rom. 2: 4.) When we learn of his severity, we are inclined to flee to Jesus to escape the wrath of God against ungodliness. (Rom. 11: 22.) The gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1: 16). so God exercises his power on us by use of his word. By holding out candy or fruit one may draw a child and lead it anywhere he pleases. So God holds out inducements, things which satisfy the soul here and hereafter, to draw us to Jesus and follow him all through life.

Blessings for those who come. Resurrection to eternal life is used here as the sum of all the inducements held out to get men to come to Jesus and follow him through life. Sure there are many blessings this side of the resurrection, but all of them are but foretastes of the eternal life, and are given to prepare us for enjoyment of the eternal blessings. So Jesus says, If you will come unto me, I will raise you up from among the dead and take you into eternal life, where you will be heir to all that the infinite wisdom of God can conceive, and all that the infinite power of God can execute to make you happy for all eternity. This should be sufficient inducement to draw all men to Jesus, and cause them to follow him all the days of their life, regardless of the hardships, the disappointments, and the discouragements in the way.

And when we consider that all this is offered to us in spite of our unworthiness, we should be impressed with the infinite love of God and his Son for us. Too, these things were held out to most of

us for a long time before we decided to accept the offer. God would be justified in withdrawing his offer when man rejects it once; but his long-suffering in continuing to offer us such rich unmerited blessings impress us with his mercy and goodness.

Exposition of the Text

Work for true blessings. (Verses 25-29.) *They found him on the other side of the sea.* Jesus had just fed thousands on the east side of the sea; his disciples had crossed the sea, leaving Jesus behind. But when they found him he was on the west side of the sea in a synagogue, and they wished to know how he got there. It was evident that they were interested more in such trivial things than they were in the weightier matters of right living.

Ye seek me . . . because ye ate the loaves. Jesus knew the motives of these people. They were not interested in signs, or miracles, as evidence of his divinity and power to save; they were interested in him and his power only for the sake of food. He could have had all men following him if he had used his great power only for their material benefit. So churches today can have great crowds if they will appeal to, and satisfy, the fleshly ambitions of people; but if they call upon people to practice self-denial and sacrifice, the crowds will soon disappear.

Work not for food which perisheth. This is not to be taken as teaching us to quit work to earn a living, for Paul teaches the opposite. (1 Tim. 5: 8; 2 Thess. 3: 10.) But it means that we are not to make this the primary thing in life, and become so engrossed in this that we have no time for spiritual affairs. Put the kingdom first and the material will follow. Food for the body gives only temporary relief, and it and the body too will soon pass away. But food for the soul gives lasting strength, and it and the soul will last forever.

Him the Father, even God, hath sealed. Here Jesus claims God as his Father, and says God has sealed him. By this he means that God has put his stamp of approval on him and his work and teaching by giving him the power to work miracles.

What must we do? They realized that food for the body was soon spent, and hunger would return. Now that they are promised food which lasts forever, they wish to know how they may obtain it and the blessings connected therewith. Perhaps some of them caught a glimpse of these true values and were actually interested in knowing what to do to please God, or how to work the works of God.

This is the work of God that ye believe. The expression "work of God" is not something which God does; it is that which God requires of us. They asked, What shall we do that we may work the works of God? They were to do something to work the work of God. So the "work of God" is that which God requires us to do. And this work is to believe on his Son. Without faith it is impossible to please God. (Heb. 11: 6.) Sometimes this term "believe" is used simply of accepting evidence, the sole act of believing; while at other times it is used to include all the obedience man is required to render.

Source of True Blessings. (Verses 30-34.) *What doest thou for a sign?* Signs were miracles, so they asked him to perform a miracle that they might believe. It is strange that they should ask such when

they had just been fed with a few loaves and small fishes, and twelve baskets of scraps had been taken up. People who would not accept that as evidence, would not accept anything.

Our fathers ate manna in the wilderness. This seems to express a disparaging contrast between what Jesus had done and the work of Moses. They implied, You have fed us one time, Moses fed many times as many people and over a period of forty years; that which you have done is not to be compared with what Moses did, so why should we forsake Moses for you?

It was not Moses that gave you the bread. Jesus catches the implication, and tells them it was not Moses that gave them the manna for forty years; it was God, who sent him, and put his seal of approval on him by empowering him to work miracles. Man has always been inclined to look upon the human instrument rather than God behind that instrument. For this reason Peter asked the cripple not to think he had healed him. (Acts 3: 12, 13.) Not only had they mistaken Moses for the source, but they did not realize that the manna was only for the body. The true bread which is from heaven, which Jesus can give but which Moses could not, would endure unto life everlasting.

For the bread of God is that which cometh down. The manna was at best but a type of the true bread. The true bread is that which cometh from heaven. Whether they understood him to refer to himself in this expression is doubtful, and even if they had so understood it, they would not have known what application to make of it, being so devoid of spiritual understanding. It is this bread from heaven, Jesus himself, that gives life unto the world. "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." (John 1: 4.) "For as the Father hath life in himself, even so gave he to the Son also to have life in himself: and he gave him authority to execute judgment, because he is a son of man." (John 5: 26, 27.)

Lord, evermore give us this bread. They understood that the life of which he spoke was eternal, though they understood not the nature of the bread of which he spoke. So thinking he was speaking of a bread which would give them eternal life on earth as the manna sustained life, they asked that he give them this bread. It seemed to them a good way to get food without work for a long time. But when they learned that eating this bread meant personal sacrifices of worldly things, they were not so anxious to have that bread. People have always wished for the blessings of heaven without having to give up the world.

Jesus the True Bread. (Verses 35-40.) I am the bread of life. As bread nourishes the body, so Jesus fills every need of the human soul. But bread must be taken into the body if good is to be derived; so Jesus must be accepted, believed in, loved, and obeyed, if the soul is to profit thereby. The one who comes to Jesus shall never go hungry, and the one who believes on him will never thirst. To come to him here is the same thing as to believe on him.

Ye have seen me, and yet believe not. They were asking for the true bread, but were not willing to accept it, because they did not recognize it when they saw it. They had their own ideas of what the Messiah would be and what he would do. Jesus did not measure up to their ideas, so they refused to accept him as such in spite of his mighty works. They were willing to admit he did great works,

but no greater than Moses; and since they expected the Messiah to do great things in the way of destroying their enemies they did not believe.

All which the Father hath given me. When these Jews settled in unbelief, Jesus let them know that their condition was such that God would not give them unto him. Those who will not come to him are of that class which the Father refuses to give to him. The Father's giving is contingent upon people's willingness to come. But the fact that these have refused to come to him is no proof that others will not come; and those who do come to him, he will in no wise cast out. He will care for all, give life to all, who will come to him.

Not to do mine own will. Jesus came to do the will of the Father, and by that his actions were determined. In his works God had demonstrated his presence and power, and if these were not sufficient to bring people to Jesus, they were not a part of God's gift to him and were lost. But if through the works God led him to do they were brought to him, they were a gift from God to him, and he would keep them unto life everlasting.

This is the will of him that sent me. It is God's will that of all those given to Jesus none should be lost. But the sad thing is that God's will is not always done. God's will with reference to inanimate creation is always done, because there is no power to resist. But God's will with reference to humanity is not always done, because man has the power to resist, and he is given the privilege of choosing whether he will submit or not. If man will be submissive to Jesus, he will be kept in spite of all the devil and his angels can do (1 Pet. 1: 4, 5); but if one becomes lukewarm, the Lord will spew him out. (Rev. 3: 16.)

Every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth. Here it is said that all those who saw the Son it would be the believers only who would have eternal life. It was not enough for a man to say he had seen the Son. The fact that a man had seen the Son put him under all the more obligation to believe on him. The blessing promised those who believe is eternal life. Many times in John's writing it is stated that eternal life is given to the believer, and from these statements many think that John taught that belief was the sole condition upon which eternal life is promised. But if that be so, we would have to conclude that John taught that one can be saved without repentance. If when John says the believer hath eternal life, it is to be understood that the believer must repent, because as taught elsewhere, we conclude that a person must also confess Jesus and be baptized because the necessity of these things is taught elsewhere.

Topics for Discussion

1. The promise of Jesus to those who accepted him as the bread of life was that he would raise them up on the last day. If the righteous are raised the last day, how say some that there will be a thousand years after that? Can there be three hundred sixty-five thousand days after the last day?

2. If the bread of life is more important than daily bread, why be more concerned about our daily bread? Why are Christians more deeply moved by hungry children than they are by people who have not the bread of life?

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What are the two essentials of physical life?

What does this teach us about the bread of life?

Why are not all men conscious of their need of the bread of life?

Is it possible to be dead spiritually and not know it?

Give some biblical examples of this.

Golden Text Explained

How extensive is the Lord's invitation?

Why is it possible for all men to come to Jesus?

Give illustrations of the fact that God will not force us to come to him.

What is said of those dead in sin?

Show how the "dead" Ephesians were made alive.

Prove that God does not draw men against their will.

How does God exercise his drawing power?

What is there in the gospel to draw men?

What are the blessings promised those drawn to Jesus?

What emphasizes the love and mercy of God toward us?

Work for True Blessings

In what trivial affairs were these Jews interested?

Why were they following Jesus?

Explain what Jesus taught about working for food, material and

spiritual.

What did Jesus mean when he said God had sealed him?

What is the work of God mentioned here?

In what sense is it a work of God?

Source of True Blessings

What is the meaning of the word "sign" as used here?

What did the people think of Jesus as compared with Moses?

What mistake did they make in thinking Moses gave them the manna?

Why is Jesus called the bread from heaven?

Why did the people ask him to give them the bread of life?

Are people today more willing to take the bread of life than those people?

Jesus and the True Bread

How can our souls profit from the bread of life?

With what did Jesus charge those who had seen him?

What determined the course of Jesus in this life?

Whom does God give to his Son?

What does Jesus do for those whom God gives him?

Why is God's will not always accomplished?

On what condition is eternal life promised?

Show why eternal life is not conditioned on faith only.

What did you learn from the daily Bible readings?

What is there of interest in the topics for discussion?

Lesson V—October 30, 1949

JESUS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

The Lesson Text

John 8: 12, 31, 32; 9: 1-11

12 Again therefore Je-sus spake unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life.

31 Je-sus therefore said to those Jews that had believed him, If ye abide in my word *then* are ye truly my disciples:

32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

1 And as he passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth.

2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Rab'-bi, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?

3 Je-sus answered, Neither did this man sin, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

4 We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

5 When I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

6 When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and anointed his eyes with the clay,

7 And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Si-lo'am (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went away therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

8 The neighbors therefore, and they that saw him aforetime, that he was a beggar, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?

9 Others said. It is he: others said, No, but he is like him. He said, I am he.

10 They said therefore unto him, How then were thine eyes opened?

11 He answered. The man that is called Je'-sus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to Si-lo'am, and wash: so I went away and washed, and I received sight.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"In him was life; and the life was the light of men."* (John 1: 4.)

DEVOTIONAL HEADING.—Matt. 5: 13-16.

Daily Bible Readings

October 24. M.....	A Light to the Gentiles (Isa. 49: 1-7)
October 25. T.....	Nations Come to His Light (Isa. 60: 1-9)
October 26. W.....	God is Light (1 John 1: 1-10)
October 27. T.....	Christ Shall Shine Upon Thee (Eph. 5: 3-14)
October 28. F.....	Ye are Lights in the World (Phil. 2: 15-16)
October 29. S.....	Believe on the Light (John 12: 20-36)
October 30. S.....	Light of the Gospel (2 Cor. 4: 1-6)

TIME.—A.D. 29.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus, the Jews, and a man born blind.

Introduction

Jesus was among the people as a light to guide them into the kingdom about to be established. He urged them to "believe on the light" while they had it, for it would soon be taken out of the world, and they would be left in dense darkness. If they would not believe on him and be led by him into the acceptance of the kingdom, they could hardly be expected to do better after the light was taken away from them.

But when he went away, he sent his word into the world to be a light upon our path and a light unto our feet. (Psalm 119: 105.) And Solomon said, "For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light." (Prov. 6: 23.) When we study his word and live in harmony with its teaching, we walk in the light and have fellowship with him and with one another. When we fail to live in harmony with his teaching, we walk in darkness, and lose the fellowship and communion of God and his people.

We have no light in ourselves, yet we are spoken of as being the light of the world. (Matt. 5: 14.) As the moon has no light in itself, but receives its light from the sun and then reflects it upon the earth, so we receive our light from Christ and reflect it to the world about us. If the reflector is made of poor material, the light which it is able to reflect will be very poor. And if there is dirt or grease on the reflector, very little light can be reflected by it. So we will reflect very little of the light of Christ if we are poor material, or if we allow sin to hinder us. Through clean living and righteous activities we will keep a polished surface which will reflect the light of Christ. Jesus also likened us to lamps on a table, or to the lights of a city on a hill. If the lamp is put under a bushel, instead of on

a table, it will render no service. So if we allow our light to be covered by sin, we will be of no service to the world. If there are several lamps in a room, but all of them are under coverings, you will likely stumble over these lights if you try to walk through the room. So the world stumbles over people who should be serving as guides, because their lights are under the bushel.

Golden Text Explained

Christ the source of life. It is said that God created the heavens and the earth. (Gen. 1:1.) But from that statement we do not know what part the Father did and what part of creation was left to the Son, or second person of the Godhead. John tells us "without him was not anything made that hath been made," and Paul says that the Father created the worlds through the Son. (Col. 1: 16; Heb. 1:

2.) But when the inanimate creation had been effected, there was the animate creation to be called into existence. All vegetable creation had to be given life, the power to reproduce after its kind. In the seed was the life, which, when planted, would produce thirty, sixty, or a hundredfold. Christ is the source of this life. Then the animal creation was called into existence, and not only their animal life was given them by our Lord, but there was given them the power to produce life. Christ is the source of that animal life, and the preserver as well. But the text has a higher meaning in that he is the source of spiritual life. The dead in sin shall hear the voice of the Son of God; "and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself, even so gave he to the Son also to have life in himself." (John 5: 25, 26.) Repeatedly Jesus claimed to be "the life" (John 14: 6), the "resurrection, and the life" (John 11: 25); and he claimed to have the power to give eternal life to all who believed in him. (John 6: 57, 58.) Being the source of all life, he claims to give life to our mortal bodies (Rom. 8: 11), and to raise them from the dead. (1 Cor. 21, 22.) The "first Adam" became a living soul, but through his sin brought death to all his posterity; but the "last Adam," which is Christ, became a life-giving Spirit, through whom we have the victory over death and the grave. (1 Cor. 15: 45, 57.)

Christ the Light of Men. Being the source and giver of spiritual life, we look to him for instruction as to how to gain that life. That which makes manifest is light, for all things when they are re-proved are made manifest by the light. (Eph. 5: 13.) So Christ is our light when he instructs us as to how to gain eternal life. He is our light to guide us in this life. He is the way, the truth, and the life. (John 14: 6.) And that way is lighted by his instruction; that life is realized only when we receive his instruction. Light not only guides, but it is essential to growth in most plant and animal life. If plants are kept in the dark too long, they become colorless, weak, and never blossom or bear fruit. So without Christ who is our light, we can never enjoy a rich full growth, nor bear any fruit. (John 15: 1-6.) But as essential as light is to our life and happiness, not all men are capable of enjoying it. Blind people never see the light. And it is possible for one to close his eyes to exclude all light. So there are people in the world who close their eyes against the light of Christ. Those who are negligent about reading the Bible have closed their eyes. Those who know what the Bible says, but

refuse to believe it and live in harmony with its teaching have closed their eyes so that they get no more benefit from the light of Christ than a blind man gets from the light of the sun. One may be born blind to the light of the sun, but none are blind to the light of Christ except those who deliberately close their eyes. (2 Cor. 4: 3-6; Acts 28: 26, 27.)

Exposition of the Text

Light and Truth. (Verses 12, 31, 32.) *I am the light of the world.* The Jewish Rabbis understood the term "light" to refer to the divine being. Clarke quotes one as follows, "The Israelites said to God, O Lord of the universe, thou commandest us to light lamps unto thee, yet thou art THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD: and with thee light dwelleth." Since they used this expression of the divine being, the statement of Jesus could mean no less than that he was claiming to be the Lord of the universe, the God of the Israelites. The Jews understood him to be making a great claim, for they immediately charge him with bearing witness of himself, with bearing false witness. (Verse 13.) This shows that he was making a claim which they thought was too great.

He that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness. The blessings of the light are to be enjoyed only by those who are willing to follow him. And following the Lord means leaving sin and sinful things, the world and worldly things, behind. Some offered to follow Jesus, but they wished to give attention first to matters of various kinds, and Jesus taught them that they must make him first or be unworthy of being his followers. (Luke 9: 57-62.) So to enjoy the blessings of the light of the world it is necessary that we get worldly things out of the way lest they obstruct the light.

If ye abide in my word. The student should read the verses between this and verse 12, for in this it is said that Jesus said to those who believed what he had just taught them, if ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples. First there was belief of what he had said as to his character and mission. Then following this belief, one must abide, or continue in this belief of his word. And abiding in his teaching involved living in harmony with its principles. Mere belief is not enough; that faith must be manifested in living in harmony with the teaching of him in whom one believes. One who has faith in his physician, takes the medicine prescribed; so one who believes in Christ follows his teaching.

Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. There are degrees of knowledge. (1) What we call a "smattering idea," a hazy conception of a matter. (2) A conception which satisfies one, but not clear enough to enable that one to tell others. (3) A conception clear and definite enough to give it to others. (4) A vital, moving understanding that causes one to live in harmony with that which is known. This last degree is that knowledge which makes men free. Regardless of how much information one may have, or how well one may explain it to others, if he is not moved to live according to the truth known, that one does not have a saving knowledge of the truth; it will never make him free from sin. To be made free from sin means to be delivered from the bondage, or slavery, of the devil and become the willing servants of Jesus; it means to be washed from the pollution of sin and to be made pure and clean in the sight of the Lord; it means to be delivered from

the fear of the consequences of sin, which is eternal death in the lake of fire and brimstone; and, finally, it means to be delivered from the presence of sin and to be given a home with God where no sin can enter to defile and degrade, or rob us of our inheritance.

Jesus Gives Sight to the Blind. (Verses 9: 1-11.) *Rabbi, who sinned, this man, or his parents?* Jesus told his disciples to allow no man to call them Rabbi, "for one is your teacher, and all ye are brethren." (Matt. 23: 8.) The disciples raised the question as to why this man was born blind, because they had the idea that all suffering or misfortune was the result, or consequence, of sin. There is considerable difference of opinion as to why they implied that the man was born blind on account of his own sin. Of course if he was born blind on account of his own sin, he had to sin before he was born. And this would bring into consideration the old doctrine of "transmigration of souls," which was rather common in that day. The doctrine was that the soul of man has had prior existences in other forms, animals, birds, etc. It is impossible to know if the disciples believed this doctrine, therefore unprofitable to venture a guess.

Neither did this man sin, nor his parents. Jesus affirms that the man had not sinned so as to cause his blindness, nor had his parents. This does not mean that neither he nor his parents had sinned at all; it means that his blindness was not caused by their sins. This reminds us of Job and his friends. They accused him of sin on the ground that such suffering would not come upon any one who was not guilty of some great sin. Job denied that he had sinned. He did not mean that he had attained to sinless perfection, but he did mean that he had not sinned so as to bring such suffering as a manifestation of the wrath of God. His experience establishes the fact that suffering may be allowed by the Lord for other purposes. (Heb. 12: 4-11; James 5: 10, 11.)

That the works of God should be made manifest. It is not to be understood that this particular individual was picked out and brought into the world in blindness just to furnish Jesus an opportunity to show his power. But God's providence in general furnishes us with proofs of the terrible consequences of sin in the world, and of God's mercy and kindness to those who are involved in and affected by the consequences of sin. Demons were allowed a freedom to dwell in human bodies during the time of Christ, a freedom which they were never allowed in any other period of time. No doubt this was to allow Jesus to show his power over the devil.

Must work the works of him that sent me. Jesus had just said that the works of God should be manifest, and now he says he must do the works of God while it is day. The word "day" refers to his lifetime. The "night cometh" refers to his death. Though it was the Sabbath (verse 14), and Jesus knew it would bring added criticism and opposition, he would work that God might be glorified. We should be warned that our day of work is very short, and that no works of helpfulness to others, or preparation to meet God, can be done when the night of death comes upon us. The short time he was in the world he was the light of the world, and he would shine as far and effectively upon as many people as possible.

Anointed his eyes with clay. Reasons for anointing his eyes with spittle were, (1) As an aid to the man's faith. Since he could not see Jesus, and the expression of his face as he told him what to

do, such an aid was helpful, and perhaps necessary. (2) The Jews had an idea that spittle had some medicinal properties, and Jesus would make use of that as an encouragement to the blind man. (3) This happened on the Sabbath, and it was against the tradition of the Jews to use medicine, or make clay from spittle on the Sabbath, so Jesus took this occasion to teach them that their traditions were not of God. If his tradition was of God, and Jesus disregarded it, God would not honor his act by healing the man; but if the man was healed, it would prove that their tradition was human.

Go, wash in the pool of Siloam. This washing was a test of the man's faith. Jesus would aid his faith by anointing his eyes, and then he would test his faith by telling him to do something which the man knew had no power to give him his sight. The pool of Siloam was under the eastern wall of the city. It was called Siloam (sent) perhaps because the water was sent through a conduit one thousand seven hundred fifty feet long from the Virgin's Fountain.

Is not this he that sat and begged? The man's faith stood the test; he washed and came back into the city seeing for the first time in his life. From this we learn that he begged for his living. Begging was common, and regardless of whether his parents were able to keep him or not, he begged and was helped on account of his blindness. Notice the different opinions about who the man was. Some said he looked like the man born blind, but they were so sure that none could heal one born blind that they refused to believe this was the man. Our opinions and prejudices may make it impossible for us to receive evidence.

This man that is called Jesus. When the man was asked for an explanation of the fact that he could see, whereas he was born blind, he gave a simple and truthful statement. And though his parents were too weak to stand in the face of persecution and state all the truth, this man had the courage to tell all he knew about it. And in spite of the fact that the Jews tried to discredit his statement by cross-examination, he still stood courageously and commendably by his first and full statement of the matter.

A statement to connect this incident with the main theme of our lesson may be worth while. Jesus is the light of the world; he is the source of all light and life. And as he was able to give sight to this man who had never seen the light of day, so he can give light to a sin-darkened world. He brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. (2 Tim. 1: 10.) But this light will benefit only those who, like the man in this story, are willing to go at the commandments of Jesus. If the man had refused to go wash in Siloam, he would never have been given his sight. If he had gone to the Virgin's Fountain, or some other pool besides Siloam, he would never have been healed regardless of how long he washed. He was blessed because he obeyed the Lord. We are blessed in our obedience.

Topics for Discussion

1. Error has no power to make men free, but it does enslave people. (2 Pet. 2: 18-20.) Creeds and dogmas of men enslave, while the gospel brings liberty. (Gal. 5: 1.) A great work was done when the colored people were set free nearly a hundred years ago, but teaching people the truth of God which delivers them from the devil is a much greater work.

2. Edison and others have done a great thing to give us light for streets, homes, and parks. But their service does not compare with that rendered by those who hold forth the word of life, shining as lights in the world to lead people to Christ.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

Why did Jesus ask people to believe on the light they had?

What is a light to guide our feet now?

When do men walk in darkness?

How are we the light of the world?

What may cause the world to stumble over the lights of the world?

Golden Text Explained

What part did Christ have in the creation of all things?

How did he give life to vegetable and animal creation?

What higher life does he give, and to whom?

What demonstration of his power to give life is yet to come?

What proof do we have of his power to raise the dead?

How does Christ give light to the world?

Illustrate the necessity of light to spiritual growth and fruitfulness.

Why do not all men have the light of life?

Light and Truth

What impression did Jesus give the Jews when he said he was the light of the world?

By whom are the blessings of light enjoyed?

What is necessary that men may follow Jesus?

What is implied in abiding in the word of Jesus?

How many degrees of knowledge are there?

What is the knowledge that makes men free?

What does it mean to be made free from sin?

Jesus Gives Sight to the Blind

What question did the disciples ask Jesus about the blind man?

What ancient false doctrine is suggested by this question?

How did Jesus answer their question?

Can you show that suffering is not always a proof of sin in the sufferer?

What did this man's blindness give Jesus the opportunity to do?

What is meant by "day" and "night" in this text, and what warning have we here?

Why did Jesus anoint the man's eyes with clay?

How did Jesus test the faith of the man?

What do you know of the pool of Siloam?

What different opinions did people have of this man?

What may opinions and prejudices do for us?

How did this man show his courage and his appreciation of Jesus?

Discuss the connection between this incident and the thought of our lesson.

What did you get from the daily Bible readings?

What is there of interest in the topics for discussion?

Lesson VI—November 6, 1949

JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

The Lesson Text

John 10: 1-16

1 Verily, verily, I say unto you. He that entereth not by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

4 When he hath put forth all his own, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

6 This parable spake Je'-sus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

7 Je'-sus therefore said unto them again. Verily, verily, I say unto you,

I am the door of the sheep.

8 All that came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.

9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and go out, and shall find pasture.

10 The thief cometh not, but that he may steal, and kill, and destroy: I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly.

11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep.

12 He that is a hireling, and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, beholdeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth, and the wolf snatcheth them, and scattereth them.

13 He *fleeth* because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

14 I am the good shepherd: and I know mine own, and mine own know me,

15 Even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd.

Golden Text.—*"Jehovah is my shepherd; I shall not want."*
(Psalm 23: 1.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 23.

Daily Bible Readings

October 31. M..... Jehovah the Shepherd of Israel (Psalm 80: 1-19)

November 1. T..... Feed Flock Like a Shepherd (Isa. 40: 9-17)

November 2. W..... Jehovah Gathers the Scattered (Jer. 31: 7-14)

November 3. T..... Jehovah Feeds His Sheep (Ezek. 34: 11-24)

November 4. F..... There Shall be One Shepherd (Ezek. 37: 74-78)

November 5. S..... S. Wolves Among the Flock (Acts 20: 28-35)

November 6. S..... Shepherd and Bishop of Souls (1 Pet. 2: 18-25)

TIME.—A.D. 29.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus and a synagogue assembly.

Introduction

The teaching of this lesson follows immediately the events studied in the last lesson. Jesus had given sight to a man who was born blind. He had been criticized for doing so on the Sabbath. And not only had they criticized Jesus, but they had cast out of the synagogue the man whom Jesus healed. (John 9: 34, 35.) There is some question about whether they excommunicated him, or just drove him out of that gathering, expelled him from the worship that day. Some contend excommunication could not be effected without a formal meeting of the Sanhedrin. But neither could the Jews pronounce and execute the sentence of death upon a person as they did in the case of Stephen. Religious prejudice will stop at nothing. When the man stood before the people and boldly confessed his faith in Jesus as a man from God, for God heareth not sinners, the Jews could not answer his argument. And when people cannot answer argument, they resort to force and misrepresentation. Whether the events of our lesson took place in the synagogue, or outside and after the meeting adjourned, is not clear. But since it is said that Jesus found the man, it is likely that the events took place outside the synagogue. However he was talking to the same people who had been in the synagogue and had seen him heal the

blind man. In our lesson today he contrasts the work of Jewish shepherds with that of the true shepherd and bishop of souls. These Jewish leaders, like the shepherds of Israel in the days of Jeremiah (Jer. 23: 1-4; 50: 6-8), had been but hirelings which devoured the sheep for their own profit, and who fled when danger came.

Golden Text Explained

Jehovah is My Shepherd. The fact that Jehovah is our shepherd is ground for rejoicing. David said, "Yea, happy is the people whose God is Jehovah." (Psalm 144: 15.) Again, "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in Jehovah his God." (Psalm 146: 5.) He then sets forth the reasons why they are happy who have Jehovah as their God, their shepherd. First, he says Jehovah made heaven and earth, and all that is in them. If Jehovah made all things, he has power to keep us; if he filled the earth with good things, he can fill our every need, and we are told that he will withhold from us no good thing. Next, he keepeth truth and executeth justice for the oppressed. Those who belong to God are not usually in power in the nation, state, or community; they usually are dependent on others to make the laws by which they are governed, and the laws are not always made to favor God's people. But they are blessed in having God who will execute justice for them. Next, Jehovah gives food to the hungry and upholdeth the fatherless and the widow. Character is determined by one's attitude toward the poor and unfortunate. Our appreciation of the goodness of God is increased when we read many times in his word that he is the friend of the poor and the widow and the orphan. Again, he raises up them that are bowed down. Those who are weak and erring, who have gone astray, are counted happy because they have a God who will restore them, raise them up and give them another opportunity. And, last, "the way of the wicked he turneth upside down." A person's character may be determined by his attitude toward wicked people. If he defends them, associates with them, he is judged to be little better than they, if not actually one of them. But if a person condemns the errors of the wicked and keeps himself from their company except sufficient to teach them the right way, he is judged as a good man. So God is against the wicked, and brings them to judgment.

I shall Not Want. David rejoiced that he had Jehovah for his shepherd, his God, because he was sure he would never come to want. He said, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." (Psalm 37: 25.) This was David's way of saying he had lived a long time, but in all his time he had never seen Jehovah forsake one of his children. A man may forsake Jehovah and make it impossible for God to bless him, but Jehovah will never forsake and forget to bless his faithful children. After saying he will not want any good thing, David enumerates certain things Jehovah does for his sheep. First he supplies temporal necessities; he makes his sheep to lie down in green pastures, and leads them beside still waters. Not every shepherd in Palestine could afford green pastures and clear water; it was the *good shepherd* who could afford these things. So Jehovah is our good shepherd, who will provide for us. (Matt. 6: 25-34; 7: 7-11.) Second, he gives us spiritual guidance; he guideth

me in the paths of righteousness. Were it not for God we would not know how to live right. It is not in man to direct his steps aright (Jer. 10: 23.) The world by its wisdom cannot know God or how to worship and serve him. (1 Cor. 1: 21.) So God gave us his Son to teach us and show us by example how to live so as to go to heaven. Third, Jehovah forgives us when, through neglect or weakness, we go astray; he restoreth my soul. This is perhaps the most gracious and merciful provision of the gospel. If God were to tell us he will forgive us our sins and make us his child, but that if we sin after becoming a child it will be our own fault and there will be no forgiveness, it would be useless for any of us to become his children. Our salvation depends on his willingness to restore. And, fourth, David knew he would not want for comfort and courage, even in the valley of the shadow of death, for there the rod and staff of the good shepherd would care for him. David was sure he would not want any good thing in this life, either material or spiritual.

Exposition of the Text

The Coming of the Shepherd. (Verses 1-6.) *He that entereth not by the door.* There are three distinct divisions of our lesson text. This first division pictures the coming of the shepherd and the relation between the sheep and the shepherd. In the second division Jesus teaches another lesson by calling himself the door of the sheepfold. If these two parables are not kept separate there will be confusion trying to make him the door and the shepherd at the same time and in the same parable. The door of this first parable is not Jesus, as it is in the second, but it is prophecy. There are many prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the coming of the Christ, and there were many men who came claiming to be the Christ. But all who came not according to prophecies were false christs, having not the qualifications of the great shepherd of the sheep. Jesus called these men thieves and robbers. They would steal the honor that belonged to another, and they would steal the affection of the people which belonged to Jesus.

To him the porter openeth. It was common for several shepherds to bed their sheep at night in the same sheepfold. These were made by building a rock wall, or hedge of thorn bushes, with only one door, or gate. Having been with the sheep all day, the shepherds would leave their sheep in the care of one man through the night. In the morning the shepherds would come through the door into the fold and call their sheep, which would respond only to the call of their particular shepherds. The porter, or night watch, would open only to those who had sheep in the fold; no other shepherds were allowed to enter. If they got in at all, they had to climb in, which was an indication they were there to steal. It is not best to press every item of a parable into service and make it mean something in the application, but it seems safe to say here that the porter was John the Baptist. The door was prophecy, and John opened the prophecies concerning Jesus and made a way for him to enter upon his duties as a shepherd; made it possible for the sheep to hear his voice.

He calleth his own sheep and leadeth them out. When John had introduced Jesus, both by baptism and the witness he bore of him (John 1: 19-28), Jesus began his personal ministry of preaching,

teaching, and serving the people to draw them to himself as his disciples.

He goeth before them. Here Jesus begins a contrast of the good shepherd and those who have not the interest of their sheep at heart. The good shepherd goes before, sets the example, leads the way; he does not drive. The sheep follow the good shepherd, but they will not follow a stranger. They know the voice of their own shepherd, but the voice of the stranger is not known to them and they will not heed it. It is said that shepherds named their sheep as we do work animals, and that the sheep responded to their name just as the faithful dog or work animal responds to its name when called by the master. This suggests the personal interest our shepherd has in us; he does not deal with us as a group, but as individuals. But as no parable is rich enough in imagery to teach all the truth, so this one breaks down in the fact that some of our Lord's sheep can be deceived by pretenders, and can be led into the wilderness of false doctrines and unscriptural practices to their destruction. Even the people to whom Jesus gave this parable were so deceived by the Jewish leaders that John says "they understood not" what he spoke to them.

Jesus Is the Door. (Verses 7-10.) *I am the door of the sheep.* Since the people did not understand his first parable, Jesus changed the imagery in an effort to clarify the matter. He represents himself as the door through which the sheep enter the fold to find protection. In the first parable prophecy was the door through which the shepherd entered to call his sheep; in this one Jesus is the door through which the sheep go in and out of the fold. Both Adam Clarke and Albert Barnes, most commonly used commentators, make the mistake of thinking Jesus means to say he is the door through which shepherds, gospel preachers, go to lead the sheep. But verse 9 shows that those who go in and out through this door are not preachers only.

All that came before me are thieves and robbers. A thief is one who takes by stealth, when the owner knows nothing about it; a robber is one who takes one's property by force. So those who came before Jesus, whether by stealth or force, were not true shepherds. Mention is made of some who were pretenders, and who got some following. (Acts 5: 36, 37.) But it is likely that Jesus meant to include the chief priests and rulers of the people, such as had thrown the blind man out of the synagogue, and draw a contrast between them and himself as the good shepherd. He had healed the man; they had abused him. They were willing to fleece the man of his tithes and anything else they could get; Jesus wanted to serve him.

If any man enter in, he shall be saved. All who go into the fold through Christ will be saved, they will become Christians, God's children. Jesus is the way, and no man can go to the Father except through him. (John 14: 6.) To be saved, if we keep within the imagery of this parable, is protection from the enemy. All sheep that went into the fold at night were safe from destructive animals outside the fold, or from men who would steal. So those who go to God through Christ are safe from the devil and his destructive forces.

Shall go in and out, and shall find pasture. Sheep go in for protection at night, and out during the day for food. This does not suggest that people are to go in and out of God's fold; it is simply to teach us that through Christ we find protection and food.

The thief comes to steal, I am come to give life. The contrast suggested above is developed fully in this verse. The religious leaders of that time were making themselves fat from their offices. Ezekiel accused the leaders of his day of the same sins. (Ezek. 34: 1-6.) But Jesus was interested in the life of the sheep, and he is willing to give them the abundant life.

Shepherds and Hirelings. (Verses 11-16.) Good *shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.* Here Jesus leaves the parable in which he pictured himself as the door into the sheepfold, and returns to the picture of a shepherd. He is the good shepherd who is willing to lay down his life for his sheep. This is in apposition to fleeing from danger as the hireling does. The good shepherd will stay with the sheep and battle the lion or wolf that tries to take the sheep, but the hireling will flee to save himself though his sheep are destroyed.

He fleeth because he is a hireling. A hireling is one who is paid to tend sheep. The relationship between the hireling and the sheep differs from that between the owner and his sheep. Jesus represents himself as the owner of his sheep. These religious leaders were not the owners of the people and were not interested in their welfare; they were interested only in what they could get from the people which would enrich themselves. This verse has been used to discourage a "paid ministry," but Paul says the "laborer is worthy of his hire." (1 Tim. 5: 18.) And, "They that proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel." (1 Cor. 9: 14.) So Jesus did not intend that this should be taken to teach that it is wrong to pay a man a living wage so that he may devote all his time to gospel labors. This is a contrast between himself as the good shepherd and the Jewish leaders who lived off the people.

I know mine own, and mine own know me. This is the language of affection. Jesus knows his people's longings, their needs, their dangers, and is ready with help. His people know him as a friend, helper, redeemer and restorer, as one who will protect and care for them regardless of the cost. There is not this close affectionate relationship between the hireling and the people under his care. Then he illustrates this affectionate relationship between him and his people by the relationship between himself and his Father. "As the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father." Certainly we do not know him as perfectly as he knows the Father, nor can we trust him to the same degree he trusted the Father. But their relationship is the pattern for the relationship between himself and his people, and the only reason for the difference lies in our weakness and lack of understanding.

Other sheep I have. The other sheep are the Gentiles. He spoke of them as being his already, for there were many among the Gentiles who would accept him as soon as they had opportunity. God spoke of having people in a city where the gospel had not yet been preached. (Acts 18: 10.)

Shall become one flock, one shepherd. Of Jew and Gentile he made one new man. (Eph. 2: 14-18.) The fact that the Lord has but one church is taught by the use of several figures. The king has

one kingdom; the husband has but one wife (2 Cor. 11: 2); the head is over but one body (Col. 1: 18); the father has but one family (Heb. 3: 6); and here the fold has but one shepherd over the sheep. To divide his church, or to add man-made churches, is a sin which will cause all connected therewith to be lost unless they repent.

Topics for Discussion

1. "A traveler in Palestine was talking with a shepherd about the fold. 'But where is the door?' he asked. 'Door?' said the shepherd; 'Z *am the door!* I lie across the entrance at night. No sheep can pass out, no wolf come in, except over my body.'" (Peloubet.) So Jesus as the door of the sheepfold is our protection as long as we stay in the fold.

2. When we wish to stress the authority of Christ, we call him King; when we wish to praise him for our deliverance from the bondage of sin, we call him our Redeemer and Deliverer; but when we wish to speak of his "sweet, familiar, condescending care," we call him the Good Shepherd.

3. Gentiles should be everlastingly grateful that Jesus did not share the narrow vision which the average Jew of his day held.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?
Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What is the connection between this lesson and our last?

Why is prejudice a dangerous disposition?

How were the Jewish leaders like the shepherds in Jeremiah's day.

Golden Text Explained

What does David say of the man whose God is Jehovah?

Discuss the reasons David gives why this man is happy.

What evidence does David give that God does not forsake his people?

Name and discuss four things David says Jehovah does for his sheep.

What do you think is the greatest provision of the gospel?

The Coming of the Shepherd

What is the door of the sheepfold in the first parable?

Who are the thieves and robbers in this parable?

Who was the porter who opened the door to Christ?

Explain the customs behind these parables.

When did Jesus begin calling his sheep to lead them out?

Did the shepherd lead or drive his sheep, and what thought is suggested by this?

What suggests the individual interest Jesus has in his sheep?

Can people today be deceived by would-be shepherds?

Jesus is the Door

What place does Jesus occupy in the second parable?

Who is spoken of as entering by the door in this second parable?

What is the difference between a thief and a robber?

Who were some pretending christians mentioned in scripture?

To whom did Jesus refer as thieves and robbers?

What is the meaning of salvation in this parable?

What is meant by going in and out of the fold?

Contrast the work of the Good Shepherd and the thief.

Shepherds and Hirelings

What does the Good Shepherd do for his sheep?

Contrast the Good Shepherd with the hireling.

Does the word hireling here refer to a "paid ministry"?

How does Jesus speak of the affectionate relationship between himself and his sheep?

How does he illustrate this relationship?

Who were his other sheep, and when were they called?

In how many ways are we taught that the Lord has but one church?

What did you get from the daily Bible readings?

What is there of interest in the topics for discussion?

Lesson VII—November 13, 1949

JESUS RAISES LAZARUS FROM THE DEAD

The Lesson Text

John 11: 1-5; 38-44

1 Now a certain man was sick, Laz'-a-rus of Beth'-a-ny, of the village of Mary and her sister Martha.

2 And it was that Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Laz'-a-rus was sick.

3 The sisters therefore sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

4 But when Je'-sus heard it, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby.

5 Now Je'-sus loved Martha, and her sister, and Laz'-a-rus.

38 Je'-sus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone lay against it.

39 Je'-sus saith. Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time the body decayeth; for he hath been dead four days.

40 Je'-sus saith unto her. Said I not unto thee, that, if thou believedst, thou shouldst see the glory of God?

41 So they took away the stone. And Je'-sus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou heardest me.

42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the multitude that standeth around I said it, that they may believe that thou didst send me.

43 And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Laz'-a-rus, come forth.

44 He that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Je'-sus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live."* (John 11: 25.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 35: 3-10.

Daily Bible Readings

November 7. M..... Daniel Foresees the Resurrection (Dan. 12: 1-13)

November 8. T..... Jesus the Source of Life (John 1: 1-18)

November 9. W..... The Son Giveth Life to Whom He Will (John 5: 19-29)

November 10. T..... Jesus Will Raise Us Up. (John 6: 40-51)

November 11. F..... All Made Alive in Christ (1 Cor. 15: 12-28)

November 12. S..... Raised at the Coming of Jesus (1 Thess. 4: 13-18)

November 13. S..... Things Temporal to be Destroyed (2 Pet. 3: 1-13)

TIME.—A.D. 29.

PLACE.—Bethany.

PERSONS.—Jesus, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.

Introduction

The miracles of Jesus were not for his personal advantage or advancement. No doubt a weaker character would have given away to the temptation to attempt to work a miracle just to show his enemies that he had the power to do so. We human beings get quite a satisfaction from showing people that we can actually do big things, and we would be sorely tempted to use miraculous power, if we possessed it, to satisfy our desire to make such a show before others. But the purpose back of all the miracles of Jesus was to glorify God, and prove to the people that he was the Son of God.

sent into the world to save them. He appealed to the people to believe him to be the Son of God because of the work he did before them. (John 10: 37, 38.) Not only should the miraculous nature of the works appeal to us, but we should be impressed with his divinity in that he was so unselfish in the performance of these miracles.

Considerable interest has been shown by commentators in the fact that John is the only writer who mentioned this outstanding miracle. The best reason for the silence of the other writers seems to be,

(1) That Lazarus was still alive when Matthew, Mark, and Luke wrote, and that they wrote for people who had opportunity to know of the miracle and it was not so important to include it. (2) That Lazarus, being still alive at the time they wrote, might have been persecuted by the Jews. It is said that the Jews considered putting Lazarus to death to keep him from being an ever-present witness of the power of Jesus. (John 12: 10.) But when John wrote his letter, Lazarus was already dead and the mention of it would do no harm, nor expose him to any danger. And it seems that John made it a point to include in his book incidents and sermons not reported by the other three writers; and even then he said that only a small part of the doings and sayings of Jesus could be reported. (John 21: 25.)

Golden Text Explained

The source of life. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection, and the life." This could mean nothing more than that he is the source of life, and the power that shall bring all the sleeping dead from their tombs. John said of the ever-existent Word, "In him was life." (John 1: 4.) And Paul says that all things were created by him, things visible and invisible, thrones, dominions, powers and principalities, whether in heaven or on earth, all things were created by him and unto him. (Col. 1: 16.) And Jesus said, "For as the Father hath life in himself, even so gave he to the Son also to have life in himself." (John 5: 26.) The Son shared equally with the Father the power to give life. "For as the Father raiseth the dead and giveth them life, even so the Son also giveth life to whom he will." (John 5: 21.) And Paul declared that all shall be made alive in Christ. (1 Cor. 15: 22.) And again, "For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself." (Phil. 3: 20, 21.) The fashioning anew the body of our humiliation is a reference to the resurrection of the body in the incorruptible and immortal state. (1 Cor. 15: 50-54.)

Jesus wished Martha to look upon him as the source of this power to give life to the dead; and he wanted her to realize that the exercise of this power he possessed need not be deferred to some distant future. He wanted her to know that where he is, there is life. This was comforting to Martha, and it should be so to us. If we accept Christ, he brings a new life into our hearts by his presence, and on him we can depend for the resurrection of our bodies at the last day when they shall be made like unto his glorious body, fit for dwelling in the mansions prepared by him for all the faithful.

The condition of eternal life. "He that believeth on me, shall live . . . shall never die." The condition of eternal life is faith in Jesus as the Son of God, the source of life. Of course the faith under consideration here is an active, obedient, faith. A dead faith will accomplish nothing. Our faith is made alive by works of obedience to God's commandments. (James 2: 17-24.) Jesus says none shall enter the kingdom of heaven except those who do the will of the Father. (Matt. 7: 21.) Paul says Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to all who obey him. (Heb. 5: 9.) And John says those who do the Lord's commandments will have right to enter in through the gates into the everlasting city. (Rev. 22: 14.) Since faith is mentioned in our text as the condition of eternal life, and obedience is also mentioned a number of times as a condition of eternal life, we are forced to the conclusion that it is a faith that works by love that is the faith Jesus had in mind. The idea that a disobedient faith is the condition of eternal life is wholly foreign to the teaching of the Bible. Those who preach the doctrine of justification by faith only, or alone, must affirm that a disobedient faith is the sole condition of eternal life. And this is exactly what James denies in so many words. (James 2: 24.) Being the source of life, Jesus has the right to determine the condition upon which he will give that life. And since he is to be the Judge of all men (2 Tim. 4: 1), it behooves all men to believe in him and manifest that faith by obedience to all his commandments.

Exposition of the Text

Sending for Jesus. (Verses 1-5.) *Lazarus of Bethany.* John is the only writer who uses the name of Lazarus. The name is an abbreviated form of the old Hebrew Eleazar. Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha, lived in Bethany, a little town on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, and was about two miles east of Jerusalem. Since it is spoken of as the city of Mary and Martha, it is evident that these women were well known, and likely were prominent figures in the little town. And the fact that it is not spoken of as the village of Lazarus has caused some to think the sisters were better known than Lazarus.

That Mary who anointed the Lord. There were several Marys who were associated with Jesus, so John distinguishes her by saying it was she who anointed the Lord. There is some uncertainty as to what time is referred to here, but most likely he refers to the anointing mentioned in the twelfth chapter. And from the point of view of the time when John wrote he could well use the past tense when referring to it. This was also the Mary who sat at the feet of Jesus to hear his teaching while Martha, her sister, was bothered about serving food. And Jesus commended her as having chosen the better part. (Luke 10: 38-42.)

The sisters sent unto him. When people are in sorrow or trouble, they like for their best friends to be near them. These sisters had no better friend than Jesus, so they sent word to him of their trouble. Nor were they disappointed in him as a helper of those in trouble. So all who turn to him, in his appointed way, may find rest and comfort. It is sad that many do not recognize him as a source of help in time of trouble; and even more sad that many who recognize him as the source of help, do not approach him in God's appointed way.

And it is still even more sad that many put off calling on him for help until it is too late, and they must meet him as their judge and not as their Savior.

He whom thou lovest is sick. The sisters did not think it necessary to request him to come; all they thought was necessary was to get word to him of the illness of Lazarus. They felt that the love of Jesus for Lazarus was enough to prompt him to do the best thing possible. This trust must have pleased Jesus no little. We often hear the idea advanced that preachers should not form close, intimate, friendships in churches where they labor lest some members feel slighted and become discouraged. But it was well known that Jesus loved John (John 13: 23), and that he loved Lazarus and his sisters more than he loved others and stayed in their home in preference to staying in other homes.

This sickness is not unto death. Yet Lazarus died. The meaning is that this sickness was brought upon Lazarus for a special purpose. It is appointed unto men once to die, but this was not the time for Lazarus to die to wait the resurrection of the last day; this was a special event planned that God might be glorified in his Son. Infidels have used this to say that John pictures Jesus as putting on a show to get himself a big name. But nothing could be further from the mind of Jesus. It is essential that we believe in Jesus as divine, and without evidence no one could have such faith. This incident was planned that Jesus might demonstrate his divine power that we might have evidence upon which to base our faith in him as the divine Son of God with power to raise the dead.

Lazarus raised from the dead. (Verses 38-44.) *Jesus groaning in himself.* Just what is meant by the word "groaning" is difficult to determine. Thayer defines it *to be moved with indignation*. Bagster's Lexicon says it may mean to *be greatly fretted or agitated*. He had recently broken down with sorrow and wept openly (verse 35), and this was preceded by groaning in his spirit. (Verse 33.) He was deeply agitated and sorrow was finding expression in inarticulate groans; it was a sorrow too deep for expression in words.

Now it was a cave. The place where Lazarus was buried was a cave against the opening of which a stone was placed. Flat disk-like stones were placed against the entrance to tombs, and they could easily be rolled away so as to permit entrance to the tomb.

By this time the body decayeth. The body had been dead four days, and decay had begun. It is probable that the body had been in the grave two whole days, and parts of two days, which according to Jewish count would have been four days. But it was sufficient time for all to know without a doubt that the body was dead, and that putrefaction had begun. The word "decay" is not a translation, but rather an interpretation. The Greek is translated better in King James Version where we have the word "stinketh." The Greek word means to *give out an odor, emit a smell*, whether good or bad. Martha hesitated to take away the stone because she expected an offensive odor, and did not wish Jesus to hold such a picture in his mind as his last remembrance of Lazarus. Jesus stayed where he was when he received the news of the illness of Lazarus long enough to allow just putrefaction to set up so that none could doubt his power to raise the dead. If he had raised Lazarus a few hours after death, many would say it was a case of suspended animation.

Thou shouldest see the glory of God. This refers to what Jesus had said before to the sisters, but it seems that they did not believe he would actually raise Lazarus at that time. They believed he had the power to do it, and that he would at the last day; but it is obvious they did not expect him to do it that time. To see the glory of God means to see a thing which will glorify God. Paul speaks of our being raised from baptism "through the glory of the Father." (Rom. 6: 4.) It is in that act that God exercises his power to make us a new creature. It is a glorious thing that glorifies God, so spoken of as the glory of God.

Jesus lifted up his eyes. This was a posture which indicated prayer to God. And his prayer to God was offered that people might know that the act was performed by the power of God, and not by the power of demons. God would not exercise such power through one in league with the devil; nor would the devil exercise such power, if he could, through one who, in the very act, ascribed the glory to God.

Because of the multitude that standeth around. Jesus had thanked the Father for hearing him, but his thanks were expressed at that particular time for the benefit of the multitude. His prayer was not mere formality; he did not do it solely to be heard of men. But the prayer was offered in the hearing of men for their benefit, that they might believe in him as the Son of God, and that God had sent him into the world to save men.

He cried with a loud voice. The loud voice was not on account of the distance God was from him, nor was it necessary for the spirit of Lazarus to hear. But those who had familiar spirits are said to "chirp and mutter" and to whisper when they did their wonders. (Isa. 8: 19; 29: 4.) So Jesus spoke with a loud firm voice so all could hear what was said. He wanted all to believe Lazarus was raised by the power of God so they would accept him as God's Son.

He came forth bound hand and foot. Lazarus was not embalmed. Whether the sisters were not able to afford it is not known. Long strips of cloth were wound around the body from head to foot. There has been some argument about how this cloth was wound around Lazarus and whether he could walk. McGarvey contends that it was part of the miracle for Lazarus to *come forth*, not to walk, out of the tomb. But Adam Clarke discounts this idea altogether.

Loose him, and let him go. The cloth was wound about the body so that Lazarus had to be loosed; his hands were not free, but bound to his side by the cloth. And it is very probable that his feet were bound as closely as his hands, and that Lazarus came forth out of the tomb, not walking, but by the same power which made him alive.

In closing this lesson we can do no better than to study a statement on this matter by Albert Barnes, as follows: "It may be remarked in regard to it, that there could not be a more striking proof of the divine mission and power of Jesus. There could be, here, no possibility of deception. (1) The friends of Lazarus *believed* him to be dead. In this they could not have been deceived. There could have been among them no design to deceive. (2) He was four days dead. It could not be a case, therefore, of suspended animation. (3) Jesus was at a distance at the time of his death. There was, there-

fore, no agreement to attempt to impose on others. (4) No higher power can be conceived than that of raising the dead. (5) It was not possible to impose on his sisters, and to convince them that he was restored to life, if it was not really so. (6) There were many present who were convinced also. God had so ordered it in his providence that to this miracle there should be many witnesses. There was no concealment, no juggling, no secrecy. It was done publicly, in the open day, and witnessed by many who followed them to the grave. (Verse 31.) (7) Others, who saw it, and did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah, went and told it to the Pharisees. But they did not deny that Jesus had raised up Lazarus. They could not deny it. The very ground of their alarm—the very reason why they went—was, that he had actually done it. Nor did the Pharisees dare to call the fact in question. If they could have done it, they would. But it was not possible for, (8) Lazarus was yet alive (Chapter 12: 10), and the fact of his resurrection could not be denied. Every circumstance in this account is plain, simple, consistent, bearing all the marks of truth. But if Jesus performed this miracle, his religion is true. God would not give such power to an impostor; and unless it can be proved that this account is false we must admit that the Christian religion is from God." (Barnes' Notes.)

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What might human beings be tempted to do with such power as Jesus had?

Is this not what Satan tempted Jesus to do on the temple? (Matt. 4: 5, 6.)

For what purpose did Jesus always use his power?

Why do you think only John mentioned this miracle?

Golden Text Explained

Of what is Jesus the source?

Can you quote other inspired statements which teach this lesson?

What does Paul say Jesus will do for our bodies?

What did Jesus wish to teach Martha in the words of our text?

Why should this truth be comforting to us?

On what condition did Jesus promise eternal life?

Describe and illustrate that faith.

What is a disobedient faith, and what is its value?

Why should we be sure to manifest our faith in Jesus?

Sending for Jesus

What do you know about the name Lazarus?

How does John speak of the village of Bethany?

How does John identify Mary, and what other Marys do you know?

For what did Jesus on another occasion commend Mary?

What message did the sisters send Jesus?

Why do you think they did not urge him to come?

May we be as free today to turn to him for help.

Did Jesus love some more than others?

What was peculiar about this illness and death of Lazarus?

What is the value of this incident to us today?

Lazarus Raised from the Dead

What is meant by Jesus groaning in himself?

Describe the tomb of Lazarus.

How long had he been dead, and what was the condition of his body?

Did Jesus intentionally allow this, and why?

What is meant by seeing the glory of God?

Why did Jesus lift up his eyes in prayer?

What consideration did Jesus give to the multitude about him?

Why did he cry with a loud voice when speaking to Lazarus?

How was the body prepared for the burial?

How do you think Lazarus came out of the tomb?

Discuss the eight points from Barnes' Notes from the point of view that this miracle is proof of the divinity of Jesus. Can you use these points in such way as to convince an infidel of the divinity of Jesus?

Lesson VIII—November 20, 1949

JESUS AND THE NEW COMMANDMENT

The Lesson Text

John 12: 20-30; 13: 34, 35

20 Now there were certain Greeks among those that went up to worship at the feast:

21 These therefore came to Philip, who was of Beth-sa-i-da of Gal'i-lee, and asked him, saying, Sir, we would see Je'-sus.

22 Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: Andrew cometh, and Philip, and they tell Je'-sus.

23 And Je'-sus answereth them, saying. The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit.

25 He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

26 If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will the Father honor.

27 Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour.

28 Father, glorify thy name. There came therefore a voice out of heaven, saying. I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

29 The multitude therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it had thundered: others said, An angel hath spoken to him.

30 Je'-sus answered and said. This voice hath not come for my sake, but for your sakes.

34 A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

Golden Text.—*"A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."* (John 13: 34.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Cor. 13: 1-13.

Daily Bible Readings

November 14. M..... Jehovah's Love Everlasting (Jer. 31: 1-6)
 November 15. T..... Jehovah Draws With Bands of Love (Hos. 11: 1-4)
 November 16. W..... The Greatest Love of All (John 15: 7-20)
 November 17. T..... Let Love of Brethren Continue (Rom. 12: 9-21)
 November 18. F..... Let Love Abound More and More (Phil. 1: 3-11)
 November 19. S..... Love the Bond of Perfection (Col. 3: 12-17)
 November 20. S..... Love is of God (1 John 4: 7-21)

TIME.—A.D. 30, Tuesday of the last week for John 12; Thursday for John 13.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus and some Greeks in John 12; Jesus and his disciples in John 13.

Introduction

God is nowhere said to be justice, though he is said to do justice to all. He is nowhere said to be mercy, though he is said to be merciful. But God is said to be love. (1 John 4: 8.) Many of the attributes of God are but practical manifestations of the love of God. God exercises mercy because of the fact he is love. In the Old Testament emphasis is given to the outward manifestations of the character of God. His acts of goodness and mercy are praised, but not so much said about the abstract qualities. His

loving-kindness is the subject of an entire Psalm (136), being mentioned in every verse, but the abstract quality of love is not so prominent. Jehovah does picture himself as a father and as a husband of his people in order to teach them his tender love and care for them. In Hosea he even says he will take them back after they have played the harlot with other gods. But the full revelation of God as the "God of love" is reserved for the New Testament. In the gift of his Son to suffer and die for the sins of the world we have the greatest demonstration of love this world has ever known and, no doubt, the greatest expression of his love that can be made to us while we live in this world. This becomes the standard of love under the new covenant, and we are admonished to love one another as the Lord has loved us. As in everything else, this is perfection, and man will never be able in this life to attain unto perfection. So there will always be room for growth, for improvement; we will always feel the need of cultivating the ability to love God, things heavenly, the brethren, our neighbor, and even our enemies. We do not by nature love these things, so it is our duty to cultivate a love for such things; and only as we cultivate the ability to love these objects do we grow into the likeness of Christ, and so become fit to enjoy heaven.

Golden Text Explained

The new commandment. We have seen from the foregoing that the Old Testament had something to say about the love of God for man, and now we shall see that there was teaching in the Old Testament about man's love for his fellow man. "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart: thou shalt surely rebuke thy neighbor, and not bear sin because of him. Thou shalt not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am Jehovah." (Lev. 19: 17, 18.) This teaching is predominately negative, though it does say for them to love their neighbors as they love themselves. So the idea of one loving his brother, or his neighbor, was not entirely new when Jesus gave this commandment which he called new. It is true that the Jews had a narrow conception of who was their neighbor, and the application of this which Jesus gave (Luke 10: 25-37) would seem like a new commandment to them. But this was a new commandment in that he required them to love one another as (to the degree) he loved them. The law required them to love their neighbors as they loved themselves. Jesus loved his disciples, and the whole world, more than he loved himself; he loved the world enough to give himself in death. So he gave a new commandment in that he required his disciples to love one another *more* than they love themselves. The Old Covenant knew nothing of such a love as this. The world knew nothing about such love until Jesus gave his life for the sins of the world. "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: for peradventure for the good man some one would even dare to die. But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5: 7, 8.)

New commandment applied. What will be the result of following this example of Jesus to love one another more than we love ourselves? (1) All men will know we are his disciples; they will perceive that we have been with Jesus because we are following

his example. (2) We would subject ourselves one to another in the fear of Christ. (Eph. 5: 21.) Then we would be servants one to another (Gal. 5: 13); we would count each other better than ourselves, and look out for the good of each other (Phil. 2: 3, 4; 1 Cor. 10: 33); we would be at peace among ourselves, and none would render evil for evil, but follow that which is good toward all men. (1 Thess. 5: 13-15.) (3) We would love our enemies and pray for them that spitefully use us and say all manner of evil against us falsely. (Matt. 5: 11.) (4) There would be no hypocrisy if we applied the new commandment; there would be "unfeigned love of the brethren," loving one another from the heart fervently. (1 Pet. 1: 22.) (5) If we loved one another as Jesus loved us, our love would not be "in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth." (1 John 3: 18.) This does not mean that we are never to express our love for one another in word, but it means that our love is to go beyond mere words for expression; it is to find expression in deeds. And the deeds are to be in keeping with the expression. The man who says he loves his children, but gives them less care and attention than he gives his stock or his golfing and fishing, loves his children in word only, and not in deed and truth. One who says he loves God, but gives a quarter when he should give five dollars, loves in word only; his demonstration of love is not in keeping with his words. God says he loves the world, and his demonstration in the gift of his Son is entirely harmonious with his word; he loves us in deed and truth. The new commandment applied would bring peace to the church, and take the church to the lost.

Exposition of the Text

Jesus Talks to Greeks. (John 12: 20-30.) *Now there were certain Greeks.* There is a question as to whether these were Grecian Jews (Jews born in Greek territory, Acts 6: 1), proselytes to the Jewish religion, or uncircumcised Greeks. It is rather certain that they were not Grecian Jews since they felt such a hesitancy in approaching Jesus. It is possible that they were circumcised Greeks and would not feel free to approach Jesus who might not recognize them as having a right to talk freely with him. But the fact that they went to a disciple with a Greek name, and asked him to arrange an interview with Jesus rather suggests that they were uncircumcised Greeks, Gentiles, who wished to talk with Jesus. The fact that it is said they went "to worship at the feast," rather indicates that they were proselytes, but "Lightfoot has shown that the surrounding Pagans were accustomed not only to send presents, sacrifices, and offerings to the temple, but that they also frequently attended the great feasts of the Jews. Hence the outer court of the temple was called *the court of the Gentiles.*" (Barnes' Notes.)

Sir, we would see Jesus. This is the request the Greeks made to Philip. This shows the interest the Gentile world had in better religious conditions for the world. This should be the request of all men everywhere. It is the business of the church to show Jesus to the world, both in preaching the gospel and in living as Jesus would live. (2 Cor. 4: 10, 11.)

Philip cometh and telleth Andrew. If these Greeks had been proselytes, would Philip have hesitated to bring them to Jesus?

Would he have sought the advice and companionship of Andrew? We will not settle the question but this may throw light on it. Philip was not selfish with the honor of bringing these people to Jesus, for he would share that joy and honor with his fellow disciple.

The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. The coming of these Gentiles to see Jesus reminded him that this privilege could not be extended to them until he had died that they might have salvation (Gal. 3: 13, 14); so the hour of death with all its agony came to his mind, and beyond it the glories that should follow. (1 Pet. 1: 11.)

Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die. Jesus gives an illustration and its application in verses 24 to 26. He is to be glorified, but that glory will not come until he has suffered. That seems to be an unalterable rule from which even the Son of God was not made an exception. He was humiliated, then exalted (Phil. 2: 5-11); and man must suffer and then be glorified. (Rom. 8: 18.) Jesus taught that out of his death life would come. If the grain of wheat is not put in the ground, it will abide alone; it will never be anything more than a grain of wheat. But if it fall into the ground and die, it will bring forth much fruit. So if he should refuse to die, he would abide alone, he would fail to accomplish his purposes; but if he should die, many would be made to enjoy life. This is proof that Jesus looked upon his death as being more than simply the death of a martyr for his cause; he looked upon his death as being necessary to the life of the world; he was to die that the world might live.

He that loveth his life loseth it. In this statement Jesus extended the principle to include others. If a man loves his life so much that he refuses to plant, or sow, it in the interest of others, he will lose his life eternally. On another occasion he said, "He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." (Matt. 10: 39.)

He that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal. The word "hateth" here is used in the same sense as when Jesus said a man must hate his own father and mother in order to be his disciple. (Luke 14: 26.) It means to love less. So if a man loves his life more than he loves the Lord and his service, he will lose eternal life; but if he hates his life, or loves it less than he loves the Lord and his cause, so spends his life in the Lord's service, he will keep it unto eternal life. Not many church members are going to be lost because they steal, murder, and commit adultery; but no doubt many will be lost because they love this life too much to lose it in the service of God.

If any man serve me, let him follow me. Those who would serve Jesus must follow him in the example of losing his life in service to others, and the reward is that the servant shall be where Jesus goes, and that the Father will honor him. To be where Jesus is, and be honored by the Father is enough to repay the servant for all the sacrifices he can make.

Father, save me from this hour. It is likely that the question mark should be placed after the word "hour," instead of the word "say." It would read, And what shall I say, Father save me from this hour? He then answers in harmony with what he knew to be his Father's will, But for this cause came I unto this hour. No, he

will not ask to be saved from that hour of death, for he came into the world for just that, and he had just taught his disciples that they must be willing to lose their life that they might save it eternally.

There came therefore a voice out of heaven. God spoke to his Son at his baptism (Matt. 3: 17), at his transfiguration (Matt. 17: 5), and at this time; once at the beginning of his ministry, once near the middle of it, and once near the end of his life.

I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. God had glorified his name in the life and ministry of Jesus. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." (John 15: 8.) If we can glorify God by the way we live, much more did Jesus glorify him in the way he lived. And God would glorify his name in the death and resurrection of Jesus. He knew that Jesus would not weaken and refuse to die for the sins of the world, so he knew his name would be glorified in his resurrection from the dead to save many souls.

An angel hath spoken to him. The multitude were divided as to what happened. Some thought they heard thunder, but others thought an angel had spoken. Whether God spoke in human language we have no way of knowing. He may have spoken in a language which was not familiar to those listening, as Jesus did to Saul of Tarsus. (Acts 26: 14.) However he spoke, some recognized only a sound as of thunder, while others recognized it as words spoken, but none but Jesus got the thought expressed.

This voice hath not come for my sake. It was not to give him strength and courage for the coming ordeal, but to show those listening to him that he was from heaven, and in communication with heaven. This was intended to give them faith in him as the Son of God.

The new Commandment. (John 13: 34, 35.) *A new commandment I give unto you.* Jesus often gave teaching that went beyond that given in the law of Moses. The law prohibited adultery, but Jesus went to the root of the sin and forbade lust in the heart from which the act springs. The law commanded the Jews to love their neighbor as they loved themselves. But here Jesus goes beyond that and tells them they are to love one another as he loved them. He loved them enough to die for them, so if they love one another as he loved them, they will die for each other. So the newness of this commandment lay not in the fact that they were to love their enemies; nor was it that they were to consider the Gentiles as their neighbors and to be loved as they loved themselves. The degree to which they love one another was the new thing about this love.

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples. God gave the Jews a sign and seal of the covenant he made with them, and by that sign all men were to recognize them as a separate people; that sign was circumcision. (Gen. 17.) This was an outward sign, one that men could affect without being at heart what the sign proclaimed. But Jesus gave his disciples a sign by which all men were to know, or recognize, them as the disciples of Christ. This sign is an inward sign, and not easily affected by the hypocrite. One may profess to love the people of God more than he loves himself, but by their fruits men can know them. If they have this love of the new commandment, it will show in the way they live and treat their

fellow man. Love is like the measles in one respect—it will break out; one cannot keep people from knowing about a love so great as this which Jesus commands. "And this is love, that we should walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, even as ye heard from the beginning, that ye should walk in it." (2 John 6.) The love of this new commandment is one in which we should walk; by it we must live. And when we live in keeping with it, all men will know that we are disciples of Jesus. But if we are selfish with one another; if we bite and devour one another, all men will know we are not his disciples.

Topics for Discussion

1. Does the person who enjoys social activities so much that he will not give time to do church work love his life enough to lose it eternally? How much of one's time can be given to selfish enjoyment of social activities without violating this principle taught by Jesus when he said, He that loveth his life, loseth it?

2. When the Father said that he had been glorified in the Son, we learn that God is glorified when his children live in harmony with his will. What a wonderful thing it is that we poor, frail, worms of the dust can glorify God the creator and preserver of all things in the universe! The knowledge that God is glorified in what we do should give us the strength and courage to endure the sufferings which such labors bring upon us.

3. Obeying new commandments leads into living a new life. And if we really love one another as Jesus loved us, it will be a new life, a different life from what most of us have lived.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What does Old Testament teaching emphasize about God's character?

What is emphasized in the New Testament?

What figures of speech are used in the Old Testament to teach his love?

What actions are used in the New Testament to teach us this lesson?

What is the standard of love for us to reach?

Golden Text Explained

What did the Old Testament teach about man's love for man?

In what way was this a new commandment?

When did the world first learn of such a love as this?

What will men learn about us if we have this love?

Discuss our subjection to one another if we have this love?

How would this new love cause us to treat our enemies?

What effect would it have on hypocrisy?

How would this new love affect our deeds as compared with our words?

Jesus Talks to Greeks

Who do you think these Greeks were?

What request did they make?

How can the church grant such requests today?

What is suggested by Philip taking the matter to Andrew?

What hour did Jesus say had come, and what was his attitude toward it?

Develop the lesson Jesus taught about the grain of wheat.

In the light of this teaching, what did Jesus think about his death?

How do people love their life enough to lose it?

How do we hate life enough to keep it?

In what way must we follow Jesus to be his servants?

What do you think Jesus meant when he said, Father save me from this hour?

How many times did God speak from heaven to Jesus?

What did God say to him at this time?

What did the people think about the voice?

Why did God speak to him at this time?

The New Commandment

How does this teaching on the new commandment go beyond the law?

Contrast the signs of the Old Covenant with this sign of discipleship.

What is the one characteristic of love

which makes it possible for us to know they have this new love?

How do we often show we are not the disciples of Jesus?

What did you get from the daily Bible readings?

What is there of interest in the topics for discussion?

Lesson IX—November 27, 1949

JESUS WASHES THE DISCIPLES' FEET

The Lesson Text

John 13: 1-15

1 Now before the feast of the passover, Je'-sus knowing that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

2 And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Ju'-das Is-car-i-ot, Si'-mon's son, to betray him,

3 Je'-sus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came forth from God, and goeth unto God,

4 Riseth from supper, and layeth aside his garments; and he took a towel, and girded himself.

5 Then he poureth water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

6 So he cometh to Si'-mon Peter. He saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

7 Je'-sus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt understand hereafter.

8 Peter saith unto him. Thou shalt never wash my feet. Je'-sus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

9 Si'-mon Peter saith unto him. Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

10 Je'-sus saith to him. He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

11 For he knew him that should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

12 So when he had washed their feet, and taken his garments, and sat down again, he said unto them. Know ye what I have done to you?

13 Ye call me. Teacher, and, Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

14 If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

15 For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant."* (Matt. 23: 11.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Tim. 5: 8-16.

Daily Bible Readings

November 21. M.....The Son of Man Came to Minister (Matt. 20: 20-28)

November 22. T.....A Sure Way to be Exalted (Matt. 23: 1-12)

November 23. W.....The Feet of Jesus Washed (Luke 7: 36-50)

November 24. T.....Jesus Teaches Disciples Humility (Luke 22: 24-30)

November 25. F.....An Example of Service to Others (Acts 9: 36-43)

November 26. S.....Women as Servants of Others (1 Tim. 5: 3-16)

November 27. S.....Gird Yourselves With Humility (1 Pet. 5: 1-11)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

Place.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his disciples.

Introduction

Our lesson today illustrates the unparalleled humility of our Lord. He washed the feet of the apostles to teach them this lesson of humility, because they had been thinking of how they could obtain first places in the kingdom to be established; two of them had actually used their mother to approach Jesus with the proposition that he should promise her that he would grant a request before they told him what it was. (Matt. 20: 20, 21; Mark 10: 35.) Other apostles heard of it and contended with them about who was greatest in the kingdom. With this spirit of selfish interest in their hearts, this act of humility on the part of Jesus was a severe rebuke to them, as well as a lesson to teach them how to act.

Some have made the mistake of thinking Jesus intended to institute an act of worship in which disciples wash one another's feet in connection with the Lord's Supper. But this was simply a custom in the east where people wore sandals. It was the duty of the host to wash the feet of his guests (Luke 7: 44) to remove the dust before they reclined on the couches at the table. They did not sit at the table as we do, but reclined. Jesus acted the part of the host in this, as well as presiding at the table. And the fact that there is no mention of a church observing this as an act of worship is proof that Jesus did not mean for them to accept it as such. Again, Jesus told the apostles to teach the churches to observe all things he had commanded them (Matt. 28: 19, 20), and there is no indication, either in command or example, that churches were taught to engage in this as an act of church worship. Since Jesus washed the feet of the disciples at the time of the Passover and institution of the Lord's Supper, and since we have examples of the churches observing the supper (Acts 20: 7), as well as teaching that they should do it (1 Cor. 11: 20-27), but we have no mention of washing feet in connection with the supper, we conclude that the apostles did not understand Jesus to institute feet washing, nor was it a practice among the churches that were taught by the apostles.

Golden Text Explained

True Greatness. Our Golden Text is found in a context which suggests certain things against which Jesus warned his disciples lest they should mistake them for true greatness. He said, Be not called Rabbi. This word is defined by Thayer to mean "Properly, *my great one, my honorable sir*. A title with which the Jews were wont to address their teachers." Again, he said, Call no man father. "But the word father also denotes authority, eminence, superiority, a right to command, and a claim to particular respect." (Barnes.) And, last, neither be ye called master which means a *guide, leader*. True greatness does not consist of titles and positions which one may hold. When James and John made a bid for the places of highest honor in the kingdom they supposed would be established, Jesus told them that in Gentile nations their rulers lorded it over their people, they exercised authority; men who were in position to exercise authority over others were counted great. "Not so shall it be among you: but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister: and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant." (Matt. 20: 26, 27.) The word "minister" is from our

word deacon, while the word "servant" means a slave. Holding places of honor and exercising authority is the world's conception of greatness; but meekness and humility of spirit, and filling positions of service is our Lord's conception of greatness. When the church was established, some had to be selected and appointed to be overseers, but it is not a position of honor, nor does it give men the right to be lords over the heritage. (1 Pet. 5: 3.) Paul says, "If a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." (1 Tim. 3: 1.) It is simply an opportunity to work, to serve one's fellow man and his God.

True Greatness Exemplified. Jesus not only taught what is true greatness, but he showed people how to be truly great. He said, "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Matt. 20: 28.) He served by feeding the hungry, healing the sick, the lame, and the blind; and he rendered the greatest service of all when he gave his life a ransom for many, when he died for the sins of the world. And the incident around which our lesson is built, washing the feet of the disciples, was an outstanding exemplification of true greatness. He humbled himself enough to do the most humble and lowly service it was possible for one human being to do for another.

The apostle Paul exemplified true greatness when he worked with his own hands to make his own way, and help support his helpers, when he says he might have claimed authority as an apostle of Christ, and when he had a right to live of the gospel. (1 Cor. 9: 3ff.) All the apostles and early preachers of the gospel were truly great in that they served people who hated and persecuted them. If they had loved life, they would have refused to preach when they saw opposition arising; and when once they had been persecuted by the people of a city, they would not have preached there again. But they preached as long as they lived in just such conditions, serving people who persecuted them.

Elders of churches today, and many preachers, serve when they know their service is not appreciated. They carry the load of responsibility which others will not carry; they serve that others may have the opportunity to worship. They know there is no earthly reward for their service, and they desire none; they are looking for a heavenly reward.

Exposition of the Text

Jesus Great but Humble. (Verses 1-5.) *Jesus knowing that his hour was come.* Here we have the word "hour" again used to refer to the ordeal through which Jesus was about to pass. John refers to it as "departing out of the world." But Jesus was facing it calmly; he was not allowing his sorrow to keep him from loving his disciples and providing for their welfare. His greatness is seen here.

Having loved his own that were in the world. These disciples were given him of his Father (John 10: 29), so he counts them as his very own. It may be said that all belong to him by right of creation and preservation but certain ones belong to him by right of redemption on his part, and consecration on their part. For these last he has a peculiar love and desire to bless them here and hereafter. Nor did he allow his approaching sorrows on the cross, or his early reunion with his Father in glory, to rob these disciples of that love, for it is said he loved them to the end.

The devil having already put into the heart of Judas. Mankind has a very dangerous enemy in the devil. He has power to put things into our hearts. He put it into the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira to lie about the price they got for their property. (Acts 5: 3.) Whether he has the power to put evil thoughts into our minds without the use of material things about us is hard to determine but there is never lacking the tools for him to use to turn our thoughts in his direction. He put the idea of betraying Jesus into the mind of Judas. Of course the Lord does not allow him to exercise dominion over us against our wills, but provides a way of escape from his temptations. (1 Cor. 10: 13.)

The Father had, given all things into his hands. McGarvey suggests that John gives us a threefold view of the glory of Jesus. "(1) That all authority was committed to him (Matt. 28: 18). (2) That by nature he was divine (John 1: 1, 14), and, (3) That he was about to return to the divine exaltation which for our sakes he had laid aside. (Phil. 2: 5-11.)" It would be different to crowd more of his glory and greatness into one short sentence than we have here.

Riseth from Supper, layeth aside his garments. After referring briefly to his glory, John proceeds to picture the humility of Jesus. He arose from the table, laid aside his long outer garment, tied a towel around his body in the manner of a slave, got a basin of water and washed the feet of his disciples. There are at least five distinct steps, gradations, in his humility, each step taking him lower into the depths of humility. (1) He laid aside his garment; (2) girded himself with a towel like a slave; (3) poured water in a basin; (4) washed their feet; and, (5) he wiped them with the towel he was wearing. Can one conceive of a pope, cardinal, or archbishop doing such to common people today?

Peter Slow to Understand. (Verses 6-11.) *Lord, dost thou wash my feet?* Whether Jesus started with Peter cannot be known, nor is it important. None of the disciples knew what was the meaning of this strange act, but Peter was quicker to express himself than the rest. It did not seem right to Peter that his master should stoop to wash his feet, so he objected. Peter felt that if he did not resist, it would mean that he felt himself superior to Jesus.

Thou shalt understand hereafter. Jesus told him he did not know then what was being done, or the meaning of the act; but in the future the meaning of the act would be clear. There were many things which the apostles were not able to understand at that time, because of their material views of the kingdom, but when the Holy Spirit came upon them he guided them into the understanding of all these difficult matters. (John 16: 12, 13.)

Thou shalt never wash my feet. Here again is the impulsiveness of Peter. He will not allow his master to take a position so far beneath himself. He was trying to show his respect for the master, but at the same time was showing little regard for the wisdom of Jesus; he should have known that anything Jesus wished to do was right.

If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. These words are capable of two meanings, and some commentators give one, and some the other. With reference to the act of washing his feet, Jesus meant, If I wash not your feet because you refuse to allow it, you will by that act manifest your lack of understanding and submission,

and one who refuses to submit to me even though he cannot understand the meaning of the act, can have no part with me in my work. If we should refuse to go along with Jesus until we completely understood all he does and why he does it, we would never be saved. The other, and remote, meaning of the statement is, If I wash, purify, thee not from sins, you can have no part with me. This makes the act of Jesus symbolic of the cleansing of the soul.

Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Peter was not rebellious at heart; he was trying to be respectful, but did not know how. But now that he knows submission is necessary to have a part with Jesus, he is willing that the Lord shall wash more than his feet. In this way Peter shows his anxiety to have a part in the kingdom with Jesus.

He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet. The word "bathed" is the translation of *louoo*, which means to wash the whole body; but the word "wash" in this verse is the translation of *niptoo*, which means to wash only a part of the body. (Thayer, p. 383.) So Jesus told Peter he had bathed recently, and only his feet needed washing because of the journey on foot from Bethany into Jerusalem. Some see a spiritual meaning in this as, "For one who has been washed thoroughly by baptism needs not to be re-baptized. After that general cleansing the particular sins are removed by confession (1 John 1: 7-9)." (McGarvey.)

Ye are clean, but not all. Here Jesus does give his words a deeper meaning, and John suggests that meaning as, For he knew him who should betray him, therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. In this reference is made to Judas who had already made a bargain with the chief priests to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver.

Example of Humility to be Followed. (Verses 12-15.) *Know ye what I have done unto you?* When he had washed the feet of all his disciples, he resumed his place at the head of the table and called their attention to what he had done so that he might enforce the lesson upon their minds. This question might well be put to many today who do not understand the meaning of this act. They think Jesus intended to teach the apostles to wash each other's feet occasionally as an act of worship, when the purpose of this act on his part was to teach them the lesson of humility, and to serve each other, not only in washing feet when needed, but in every other humble service one can render another in times of need.

Ye call me, Teacher, and, Lord. These were terms of respect he could accept because of his divinity, but which he told them not to use when addressing other men. And he commended them for calling him by these titles, "For so I am," said he. This proves that he looked upon himself as divine, or he was asking them to give him titles he refused them the right to use when addressing other men.

If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet. Here is his application of his lesson which he taught by washing their feet. If the Lord and the teacher had washed the feet of his disciples, those same disciples ought not to feel too proud to serve one another. The master had set an example of humility; the teacher had showed them how to perform a lowly service; the disciples are to go and do likewise. "For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you." It is well to notice the wording of this last state-

ment. Jesus did not tell the disciples they should observe this washing of feet as an act of worship. He did not tell them to do *what* he had done to them; but he told them they should do as he had done to them. They were to do such things as would show their humility. They were not to be too proud to wash the feet of the lowliest regardless of how prominent a place in the kingdom was given them. If the king of the kingdom was not too proud to wash their feet, no service was beneath the dignity of a servant in that kingdom to perform for his fellow citizen in the kingdom. To restrict the meaning of this example of Jesus to a mere formality to be performed occasionally is to rob it of the meaning Jesus intended for the apostles, and us today, to get from it.

Topics for Discussion

1. Jesus speaks of his disciples being in the world, and he does not pray for the Father to take them out of the world. (John 17: 15.) Why are his own left in the world? (1) For his sake, that they may honor him in saving souls, and that they may carry on his work here. (2) For the sake of the world, that they may preach Jesus to the lost, be the salt of the earth the light of the world. And, (3) For their own sakes, that they may grow into his likeness, lay up treasures in heaven, and honor him who died for them.

2. When there is prolonged sickness in a home it is often necessary for the church to take over and take care of the house, nurse the sick, etc. When asked to go into such homes to wash dishes, scrub the floors, and other such services people refuse, saying they are not making themselves slaves of anybody, they need this lesson on washing feet. Others say they prefer to hire some one to do such menial services for them. They need the chastening effect of such experiences to humble them, and the people in the homes they serve need their association instead of that of a hired man or woman. This is a most important lesson, and one most needed today. We need to learn to enjoy performing humble menial services.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What characteristic of our Lord is featured in our lesson?

What evidence do we have that the apostles needed this lesson?

What mistake have some made in the matter of washing feet?

Can you show why it is not a church ordinance as the Lord's Supper?

Golden Text Explained

What is the world's idea of true greatness?

What three titles are we forbidden to use in addressing men, and are there others?

What is the Lord's idea of true greatness?

Are church offices to be sought for honor or position?

How did Jesus exemplify his teaching on true greatness?

Show how Paul set an example of true greatness.

How may elders and preachers today follow these examples of greatness?

Jesus Great But Humble

What hour was Jesus facing at the time of our lesson?

Why could Jesus call these disciples his own?

In what peculiar way are Christians the Lord's own?

What did the devil do for Judas, and what is the lesson for us?

What was the threefold glory of Jesus at this time?

Show how Jesus humbled himself in washing the feet of his disciples.

Is this humility common among prominent religious leaders?

Peter Slow to Understand

What disciple was first to object to having his feet washed?
 What did Jesus say about understanding the meaning of his act?
 What was Peter trying to show, and what did he show, by his objection?
 What did Jesus say would be the result of his refusal to have his feet washed?
 How did Peter respond to the demand of Jesus?
 Why were feet only washed, and what is the spiritual meaning of this?
 What did Jesus mean by saying they were not all clean?

Example of Humility to be Followed.

How did Jesus call their attention to what he had done?
 By what titles did they address Jesus?
 Why is it right to call him by these, but wrong to use them in addressing others?
 How did Jesus apply the lesson on washing of feet?
 What is the effect of this lesson on the proud?
 Show why the meaning of the lesson is wider than the one act of washing feet.
 What did you get from the daily Bible readings?
 What is there of interest in the topics for discussion?

Lesson X—December 4, 1949

JESUS COMFORTS HIS DISCIPLES

The Lesson Text

John 14: 1-18

- 1 Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me.
- 2 In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.
- 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.
- 4 And whither I go, ye know the way.
- 5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way?
- 6 Je'-sus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me.
- 7 If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also: from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.
- 8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.
- 9 Je'-sus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Show us the Father?
- 10 Believeest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I say unto you I speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his works.
- 11 Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.
- 12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father.
- 13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.
- 14 If ye shall ask anything in my name, that will I do.
- 15 If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments.
- 16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever,
- 17 Even the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you.
- 18 I will not leave you desolate: I come unto you.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose."* (Rom. 8: 28.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—2 Cor. 4: 16-18.

Daily Bible Readings

November 28. M..... Jesus Makes Intercession for Us (Rom. 8: 26-39)
 November 29. T..... Death Swallowed Up in Victory (1 Cor. 15: 50-58)
 November 30. W..... We Have a Building from God (2 Cor. 5: 1-10)
 December 1. T..... We Will Ever be with the Lord (1 Thess. 4: 13-18)
 December 2. F..... New Heavens and a New Earth (2 Pet. 3: 8-14)
 December 3. S..... The Holy City, New Jerusalem (Rev. 21: 9-27)
 December 4. S..... Back to the Tree of Life (Rev. 22: 1-15)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his disciples.

Introduction

To appreciate the thoughts presented in our lesson text it will be necessary for us to understand the position of the disciples of Jesus at this time. Some time before this Jesus had told them plainly that the chief priests and elders of the people would kill him. (Matt. 16: 21.) And in his talk with the Greeks who came to see him just a few days before, he had told them he was to be lifted up from the earth. (John 12: 32.) They understood this to mean that he was to die, for they said, "We have heard out of the law that the Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up?" (John 12: 34.) So by the term "lifted up," the people understood that he was not to abide, or live, forever. The disciples had forsaken all to follow Jesus because they believed him to be the Messiah, and because they, like all other Jews, expected the Messiah to abide forever. Now they learn that he is to die. Their love for one so good, and tender, and kind would make them sorrow for his passing. Added to this, their hopes of a kingdom, and places of honor in that kingdom, were dashed to the ground, with little understanding of what was beyond his death for them. The prospect of losing all they had dreamed of, and of going back to their friends and families in defeat and failure to acknowledge their mistakes and disappointment was enough to make them sad. Jesus realized their condition and talked with them a long time after the supper. It is possible that the discourse in this chapter was delivered before they left the upper room, and that chapters 15, 16, and 17 were spoken after leaving the upper room; though others think they stayed in the upper room until he had delivered all of these chapters, and beginning with John 18: 1 they left the upper room and went to the Garden of Gethsemane. We are indebted to John alone for the material in these discourses, much of it of surpassing beauty and unusually informative.

Golden Text Explained

Comfort from providence. 1. Notice the certainty of this—*we know*. Such was Paul's confidence in God and in his concern for those who love him, that he could say "we know" that all things work together for our good.

2. Notice how much is included—*all things*. Certainly we know that God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, angels, and all good people will cooperate with us for our salvation. But can we expect the designs and schemes of the devil to work for our good? Can we think that sorrows, hardships, persecutions, sickness, and even death work for

our good? Paul says in all these things we are more than conquerors. (Rom. 8: 37.) The words "more than conquerors," means that we use these obstacles as steppingstones to victory.

3. Notice the time implied—*Now*, the present, for the verbs are present tense. We do not have to wait until we get to heaven to realize that all things are working for our good. It is a present knowledge for our present comfort and encouragement.

Comfort contingent on love. Paul does not say that all things work together for good to all men; nor does he affirm that such is true of all church members. But he does affirm that this is true of all who love God. To love God implies obedience to God. (2 John 6.) God's blessings have always been promised to all who love him enough to turn from the world to walk with him. Nor does Paul affirm that we can see how and wherein good can come from all things that come our way. Job did not understand the meaning of his suffering, but it was for good to him and glory to God who brought him out of his suffering to better circumstances than he enjoyed before. "All chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous but grievous; yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness." (Heb. 12: 11.) And in this same connection Paul says the Lord chastens us that we may be partakers of his holiness. In his providence God uses our sorrows to mellow our hearts to sympathize with others in sorrow; he uses persecutions to divorce us from the world and place our affections on heaven. Love for God will appropriate these things to our good. But those who do not love God may be hardened and become rebellious on account of such experiences.

Called according to God's purpose. 1. Notice that the called are the people who love God—all things work for good to those who love, even to them that are called. We are called through the gospel. (2 Thess. 2: 14.) We accept that call by obeying the gospel, and those who obey are the called.

2. Notice that we are called according to God's purpose. And God's purpose is not determined by man, or by his merits; God's purpose is after the "counsel of his will." (Eph. 1: 11.) His purpose was made of his own will and on account of his grace and mercy, and not because of anything we have done. (2 Tim. 1: 9; Tit. 3: 4-7.) And the purpose of God in the matter of salvation through Christ, in whom we have our comforts and joys of this life and the blessings of life eternal in the world to come, is an eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ before the world was, before time eternal. (Eph. 3: 11; 2 Tim. 1: 9; 1 Pet. 1: 18-20.)

Since God purposed before time eternal to save those who love him, surely we can say with Paul that God will use all that is good to encourage us in living right, and agree that God has the power to overrule that which seems evil to us to make it work for our good.

Exposition of the Text

Preparation and Return. (Verses 1-6.) *Let not your heart be troubled.* Jesus did not try to minimize the sorrows and dangers of the hour, of which he had spoken. One would betray him, another would deny him, and all would be scattered because their Lord would

be taken from them. But he comforts them in the fact that God is with them as he is ever with those who put their trust in him. As they believed in God, so he exhorts them to believe in him as the Son of God, and let this confidence bear them up amid the perplexities and sufferings of the hours ahead.

In my Father's house are many mansions. This is usually taken to mean heaven, and that there is room for all who will trust in the Lord. Barnes suggests that it may mean that the disciples were not to sorrow at his going, for all the universe is the dwelling place of God, and Jesus was simply going to another room, or apartment, of God's dwelling place to prepare for them. We do not feel that we are alone in a house, even though we are in a different room from others, so they were to feel that Jesus had gone to another portion of God's great house to make ready for them. He also appeals to the knowledge they had gained of him in their association, saying, If these things were not true I would have told you; my love for you and interest in you are sufficient proof that I would deal plainly and fairly with you.

I will come again. As hard as it was to see him go, there would be comfort in the assurance that his going was necessary that he might prepare a place for them and in the further fact that he would come again to take them to that prepared place. The second coming of Jesus had a prominent place in the thinking and preaching of the apostles. Some people made mistakes about it then just as others do today, and Paul had to write letters to correct these errors and restore peace on the subject. (1 Thess. 4: 13-17; 2 Thess. 2: 1-12.) The apostles did not teach that his second coming was imminent, for Paul said it would not be until there was a falling away, and Peter taught that he was going to die. (2 Pet. 1: 15.) And if they had so taught, these nineteen centuries that have passed would have proved them false.

That where I am, there ye may be also. Jesus is coming for his own who wait for him, and they will meet him in the air, and ever be with the Lord. (1 Thess. 4: 17.) This one promise is enough to give courage to the fearful, and comfort to the sorrowing. We can endure anything if at the end of the trial we can be forever with Jesus.

How know we the way? Thomas asked about the way. Jesus told them where he was going when he said he was going to his Father; and he had showed them the way to go to the Father in his manner of life. If they would live as he lived, do the will of the Father, they could go to the Father when their life on earth ended.

I am the way, and the truth, and the life. Jesus is the way in that his way of life brings one to the Father; he is also the mediator between God and man, and no one can go to the Father except by him. He is the truth in that he both taught and exemplified truth in his life; he is the fountain source of truth even as God is the source of truth. And he is life in that he is the source of life. "In him was life." (John 1: 4.) From him we learn the truth, so that we can walk in the way and live the life that leads to the Father.

Unity with the Father. (Verses 7-14.) *If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father.* If these disciples could have laid aside their material conceptions of the Messiah and his kingdom, they would have understood Jesus and his teaching. And if they had un-

derstood his teachings, they would have known the plans and purposes of God with reference to Jesus and the kingdom he was to establish. And knowing these things, they would have been prepared for that hour as Jesus was prepared for it. If we could learn God's purposes in death, we would not sorrow for the passing of loved ones as those who have no hope (1 Thess. 4: 13), nor would we fear death for ourselves.

Lord, show us the Father. As Thomas asked to be shown a literal, physical way leading to God, so Philip asked for a visible manifestation of the Father. Like Peter on one occasion, he knew not what he was saying, for if he had been granted his request he could not have lived over it. (Ex. 34: 20; 1 Tim. 6: 16.)

He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. Jesus did not mean to say that he is the Father, for he prayed to the Father, and the Father talked to him. But he did not mean to say that he was such a perfect representation of the Father by his teaching and life, that all who understood him would understand and appreciate the Father. In this Jesus affirms complete unity with the Father, so that to appreciate one is to understand and love the other. We are to follow Jesus in such way that the world can see and appreciate him in us.

I am in the Father, and the Father in me. This is an explanation of the idea that he who had seen Jesus had seen the Father. Jesus was in the Father in that he was guided and directed by him. Prophets are said to speak "in the Spirit" when they say what the Spirit directs them to say. (Matt. 22: 43; 1 Cor. 12: 3.) And the Father was in Jesus in that the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily. (Col. 2: 9.) He was God manifested in the flesh, divinity clothed in humanity. (John 1: 14; 1 Tim. 3: 16.) It is impossible for us to understand these things fully, but they are taught and we can believe them.

The words that I say. Jesus offers two things as evidence of his unity with the Father. (1) The words he spoke were not his, they were given him of the Father. (John 12: 48.) (2) The works he did were not his, but the Father abiding in him worked through him. And if they were inclined to doubt his words, they could hardly disbelieve his works.

Greater works than these shall he do. The works of Jesus had been feeding the hungry and healing the sick, to confirm the truth of his message. But when he sends the Spirit, after returning to his Father, those who believe in him will do greater things. Instead of ministering to the physical man, they will minister to the spiritual; the sin-sick will be healed through their ministry, and the spiritually dead will be raised to life with Christ. They could ask of the Father whatsoever they needed, and it would be given them. But they would have to keep his commandments as he had kept the Father's commandments. His unity with the Father enabled the Father to work through him; so their unity with him would enable him to work through them.

The comforter promised. (Verses 15-18.) **He shall give you another comforter.** The word "another" suggests that Jesus had been their comforter, helper, advocate; but since he was leaving them, they would need another to guide them into all truth. This one would be with them forever, not just a few years as Jesus had done.

Even the Spirit of truth. This is the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead. He is called the Spirit of truth because, (1) He revealed all truth and guided the apostles in preaching and writing the truth. (2) Because the instrument by which he accomplishes his work is truth; the sword of the Spirit is the word of God, the truth. (Eph. 6: 17.)

Whom the world cannot receive. The meaning of the word "receive" is uncertain. Some explain it as receiving in the sense of allowing the Spirit to dwell in them. And it is true that the world, those opposed to God and have no faith in Jesus, cannot have the Spirit to dwell in them. Others say the word "receive" is to be taken in the sense of "taking by force." Jesus said I am leaving, but I will send you another comforter whom the world cannot take away from you as they will take me. The word "receive" is the translation of the Greek word *lambanoo*, and it may be correctly translated by "receive" or "take." It is translated "took" in Mark 12: 3, 8, and several other places. Either explanation is in harmony with scripture teaching.

He **abideth with you, and shall be in you.** He "abideth," present tense, with you—in Jesus who had the Spirit without measure. But he "shall be in you," future tense. When I ask the Father to send him to you, he shall dwell in you. Jesus was limited by the flesh to one place at a time, but the Holy Spirit, not being flesh, would not be so limited, and so could be with all disciples everywhere.

I will not leave you desolate: I come unto you. The word "desolate" means orphans. In saying I come unto you, Jesus did not refer to his second coming, for if so the church is still orphaned. But this promise of coming was fulfilled in the coming of the Holy Spirit. Both God and Christ are said to dwell in us in the person of the Holy Spirit. (Eph. 2: 22.) The Holy Spirit is heaven's representative on earth today. Paul says our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit which is in us which we have from God. (1 Cor. 6: 19.)

Topics for Discussion

1. Belief in God and in Jesus as his Son is the basis of all comfort and consolation in this life. If there is no God, we are of all men most miserable. If Jesus is not his Son and did not rise from the dead, there is no salvation from sin and no hope of a life beyond. What prospect have the infidel and the atheist?

2. Jesus revealed the Father perfectly in teaching and life. If the world should throw away its Bible, and depend solely upon the church for a revelation of God and Jesus, what picture would people get from me. and from you?

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

Under what difficulties were the disciples at the time of our lesson?

What did Jesus do to give them relief from their troubles?

Where were Jesus and his disciples at the time of this lesson?

Golden Text Explained

How confident may we be of God's providence?

Discuss the "all things" that work together for our good.

When do all things work for our good?

For whom do all things work together for good?

May something work for our good when we cannot see how it can?

What does Paul say about chastening, and its purpose?
 Do troubles and sorrow work for the good of all? Why?
 Who are the "called" of our text?
 What do you know of God's purpose mentioned in this text?

Preparation and Return

What did Jesus suggest for troubled hearts?
 What is the meaning of "many mansions"?
 What promise did Jesus make, and what do you know of its fulfillment?
 What one promise is enough to give us courage for all hardships?
 What question did Thomas ask?
 What was the answer of Jesus, and its meaning?

Unity with the Father

Why would a knowledge of Jesus give one a knowledge of the Father?
 What question did Philip ask?
 Give the answer of Jesus, and its meaning.

How did Jesus explain his unity with the Father?
 What evidence did Jesus give of his unity with the Father?
 How can people today do greater works than Jesus did?

The Comforter Promised

How many comforters are mentioned in our lesson, and who are they?
 Why is the Holy Spirit called the Spirit of truth?
 What did Jesus mean when he said the world cannot receive the Spirit?
 What relation between the disciples and the Spirit at that time, and what relation were they to have after the death of Jesus?
 What is the meaning of the word "desolate"?
 How did Jesus come to the apostles?
 How do God and Christ dwell in us now?
 What did you get from the daily Bible readings?
 What is there of interest in the topics for discussion?

Lesson XI—December 11, 1949

CHRISTIAN FRUITFULNESS

The Lesson Text

John 15: 1-16

- 1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.
- 2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit.
- 3 Already ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you.
- 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me.
- 5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit; for apart from me ye can do nothing.
- 6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.
- 7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.
- 8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; and so shall ye be my disciples.
- 9 Even as the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you: abide ye in my love.
- 10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.
- 11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.
- 12 This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you.
- 13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.
- 14 Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you.
- 15 No longer do I call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I heard from my Father I have made known unto you.
- 16 Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”*
(Matt. 7: 20.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 7: 16-20.

Daily Bible Readings

December 5. M.....	The Righteous are Fruitful (Psalm 1: 1-6)
December 6. T.....	They Bear Fruit in Old Age (Psalm 92: 6-15)
December 7. W.....	God's People are his Vineyard (Isa. 5: 1-7)
December 8. T.....	The Unfruitful are Cursed (Matt. 21: 18-22)
December 9. F.....	Unfruitful are Cut Down (Luke 13: 6-9)
December 10. S.....	Bearing the Fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5: 16-26)
December 11. S.....	Filled with Fruit of Righteousness (Phil. 1: 3-11)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his disciples.

Introduction

The figure of a fruit-bearing vine or tree to represent the people of God is very common in the Bible. God is pictured as bringing a vine out of Egypt, preparing the ground in Canaan by driving out the nations then inhabiting the land, and planting his vine in a choice vineyard. (Psalm 80: 8-11.) He is also represented as building a hedge about it to keep it from being overrun, digging the stones out of it, and building a wine press in the midst of it, thinking it would bear good fruit. (Isa. 5: 1-7.) But he was disappointed in that his vineyard bore wild grapes. However in our lesson the picture is a little different, as Jesus is represented as being the vine, and individuals are the branches on the vine.

Not only are vines used to teach lessons of fruitfulness, but trees are used. We read of three kinds of trees which represent God's people. (1) There is the good tree, or the tree which bears good fruit. We are expected to bear the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5: 22), and the fruit of righteousness. (Phil. 1: 11.) (2) There is the tree which bears no fruit. It is of the variety that is expected to bear fruit, but does not do so. Jesus cursed the fig tree. (Matt. 21: 19.) He taught that this tree shall be cut down. (Luke 13: 7.) (3) There is the tree which was expected to bear good fruit, and it was fruitful, but it bore wild fruit. The prophet says God expected Israel to bear good fruit, but they bore the wild fruit of oppression. (Isa. 5: 7.) And Paul teaches that the land which yields that which is fit for them who till it shall be blessed, but if it bear thorns and thistles, it is nigh unto a curse, and its end is to be burned. (Heb. 6: 7, 8.) The application is that if we who receive the blessings of God daily respond in such way as to glorify him, we shall be blessed; but if we use these blessings for sinful purposes, we shall be punished.

Golden Text Explained

Setting of the Text. Our text is found in a warning which Jesus gave his disciples concerning false prophets. He said, “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves.” There were men among the leaders of the Jews, and the majority of them were such, who professed to be very pious, but they were proud, covetous, self-righteous, and hypocritical. They were not to be measured by what they professed

to be, but were to be judged by the fruits they bore in everyday life. To develop the rule further Jesus said, "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." James expresses the same thought in these words, "Doth the fountain send forth from the same opening sweet water and bitter? can a fig tree, my brethren, yield olives, or a vine figs? neither can salt water yield sweet." (James 3: 11, 12.) And from this premise he concludes that we ought not from the same mouth bless God and curse men. Luke gives this same rule in these words, "For each tree is known by its own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth that which is evil: for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh." (Luke 6: 44, 45.)

Application of the Text. 1. A person is not to be judged alone by what he is on Sunday. He may go to church and lead the prayer or preach the sermon, but if he beats his wife, cheats his neighbor during the week, he is to be judged as an evil man. His fruit is predominantly evil, therefore he is to be judged as evil.

2. A person may profess to be a peace-loving person, but if he is continually fussing with his family and neighbors, we must judge him to be a factious, disturbing element in the society in which he moves. Some people do not know the art of getting along with others; they carry their feelings on the cuff, or have a chip on their shoulder; they are easily offended, quick to take up differences and to press claims for adjustment and apology. Regardless of their profession by their fruits ye shall know them.

3. A preacher may be a troublemaker instead of a peacemaker in a congregation. If there is trouble in every church where he labors, there is a good possibility he is to be judged as the cause. A preacher may think the elders smart when they hire him, but dumb and uncooperative when they ask him to leave. Some have yielded to the temptation to line up as many members on their side as possible, and either force the elders to let them stay or divide the church. This is an evil work, and by their fruits we must judge them evil men. A child was asked, What is the opposite of the rule—"Blessed are the peacemakers"? The child responded, "Cursed are the fuss-makers." But preachers are not the only ones who cause disturbances in churches. Any member of the church can cause trouble by getting offended and telling others about it, asking for sympathy and cooperation to force certain changes they wish to see brought about.

4. All false teachers are to be judged as evil men, because false doctrines do harm. They cause people to fall away from the faith, they divide churches, and dishonor God. These are evil things, and those who produce them must be judged as evil men. Their fruit is bad, so the tree must be judged to be of the same nature.

Exposition of the Text

Source of Fruitfulness. (Verses 1-5a.) *I am the true vine.* Jesus says he is the *true* vine. As he was *the Lamb* of God in a sense

that no lamb ever offered belonged to him, so Jesus is the true vine. Vines and vineyards had been used by the Lord to teach lessons, but none of them were the true vine. And the Father is the husbandman of this vine. Husbandman means one who tends the vine; it would be better expressed as the vinedresser.

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away. Here is suggested, to be developed later, the thought that we are branches in this vine. The vine does not bear the fruit, but the branches in the vine bear the fruit. But it is suggested that there are such things as fruitless branches, and it is the business of the husbandman to prune out or take away, all branches that bear no fruit. The doctrine of "once in grace always in grace," receives a deathblow in this statement. Jesus speaks of branches being in him, but bearing no fruit. It is usually denied, by the defenders of this doctrine, that these are real branches, or that they were ever really in the vine. But the statement of Jesus is too plain for any doubt. There are branches in the vine which bear no fruit, and the Father takes them away. So people in Christ, enjoying the blessing of that relationship, and who cease to bear fruit are taken away by the Father.

He cleanses it that it may bear more fruit. The Father cleanses, or prunes, those branches that bear fruit to make them more fruitful. Grapes are produced on the new growth of a vine, so constant pruning is necessary to keep the branches fruitful.

Ye are clean because of the word. The dead wood of their lives had been pruned out by the teaching Jesus had given and they had accepted and followed. So we today not only become Christians through hearing, believing, and obeying his word, but we are fruitful by continuing under the influence of his teaching. By adding the Christian graces named by Peter we become fruitful. (2 Pet. 1: 5-8.)

The branch cannot bear fruit of itself. The vine does not bear fruit without the branches, neither can the branch bear fruit separate from the vine. So our fruitfulness depends upon our connection with Jesus. Those who are not in Christ cannot bear fruit. We are baptized into Christ (Rom. 6: 3; Gal. 3: 27), so those who have never been baptized into Christ cannot bear fruit. But to be in Christ is to be in his church, so those who are not in the church of Christ cannot bear fruit to the glory of God.

He that abideth in me beareth much fruit. Not only does our fruitfulness depend on our connection with Christ, but it depends on our abiding in him, and on him abiding in us. The idea of abiding in Christ and him in us is simply a way of expressing our relationship to him and his relationship to us. Through faithful, loving obedience we abide in him (John 15: 10) and through his constant blessing and care he abides in us. Such a relationship between us and him will be productive of much fruit, but without it there can be no fruit at all.

The Fate of the Fruitless. (Verses 5b-8.) *Apart from me ye can do nothing.* This is the negative of the foregoing proposition. As the branch withers when severed from the life-giving vine, so we die spiritually when we depart from Christ, or are cut off by the Father for fruitlessness.

They gather them, and cast them into the fire. The King James

Version says "men" gather them, but there is no word in the original for men. Jesus said at the end of the world the "Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity." (Matt. 13: 41.) But the idea here is that as men gather up the branches which have been cut off at pruning time and burn them in fire, so those individuals who have not been fruitful and have been cut off shall be gathered, by the angel, and shall be burned.

Ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you. This promise of answer to prayer is made on the condition that we abide in Christ, and let his words abide in us. If we abide in him, we will partake of his disposition and nature, and so will not ask anything God would be unwilling for us to have. And if we allow his word to abide in us, we will be taught as to his will and the things pleasing to him, so will not be inclined to ask what is not good for us or contrary to his will. John says we have the things we ask because we keep his commandments and do the things that are pleasing to him. (1 John 3: 22.)

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit. It seems impossible that such weak and unworthy creatures as we are could do anything which would glorify God, the creator and preserver of the universe. But bearing fruit in the Christian life will do that.

So shall ye be my disciples. Fruitfulness is a sign of true discipleship, while fruitlessness is a sure sign that one is not a disciple of Jesus. One cannot be an active follower of Jesus without bearing fruit. And such fruitful discipleship glorifies God in our life, and causes others to give glory to God. (Matt. 5: 16.)

Continuing Fruitfulness. (Verses 9-16.) As *the Father hath loved me.* For the comfort of the disciples, and as a reward to encourage them, Jesus assures them that he loves them like the Father loved him. Surely there could be no greater love than that. God so loved that he gave; Christ loved his disciples so much that he gave; and the gift of the Father was as great as the gift of the Son. The affection of one was as enduring as the other; one was as constant as the other.

Abide ye in my love. The words "my love," do not mean the love Jesus has for us. This statement is a commandment, and his love for us cannot be commanded. It means our love of him; we are told to continue to love him, for love is the condition of abiding in him as a branch. If we cease to love him, we cease to abide in him, and so cease to bear fruit.

If ye keep my commandments. By keeping his commandments we prove our love for him (2 Cor. 8: 24), as he proved his love for God by obeying his will. And as the Father loved him for submission at all times, so Jesus will love us for our obedience to him. All the way through this lesson on fruitfulness Jesus stresses the idea of obeying his word; there is a necessary connection between obedience and fruit bearing; they cannot be separated.

These things have I spoken unto you. Jesus spoke these things that the disciples might be faithful, and so be a joy to him. He would get no joy out of their discouragement and apostasy; but rather he would get joy out of their faithfulness and fruitfulness. The second reason for speaking these things was that the disciples might have joy. They would better understand why he was to be

taken away, would be consoled over his departure, and be better prepared for the trials that lay ahead of them.

This is my commandment. In this parting hour he would give but one commandment, and in that would be summed up all their duty to one another—love one another as I have loved you. This included everything they owed to one another. And greater love than this they could not possibly have. Jesus loved enough to die for them, and they could not do more than that for one another.

Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you. Friendship with great men is a privilege; but friendship with God is most wonderful. Abraham was called the friend of God. (James 2: 23.) Abraham had no greater blessing in all his life. But contrast this with being a slave. True, from another point of view and to teach another lesson, we are said to be the bond servants, or slaves, of Christ. But Jesus says he accepts those who obey him into a closer relationship than that of a slave, they are his friends. Those who refuse to obey him can never be his friends; they are his enemies.

The servant knoweth not what his lord doeth. This is said to prove that his disciples were his friends. He was treating them as friends, not as bond servants. The master of slaves commanded them, but did not open up his heart and tell them all things. But Jesus was telling his disciples what he had received from his Father. This would encourage them to continue faithful, and so would assure and increase their fruitfulness.

I chose you to bear fruit. This, as some of the foregoing, refers to the apostles in a way it could not refer to us. He had chosen and appointed them to be apostles. They did not select him out of many to be their teacher; the choice was his. On account of this they were all the more obligated to love him and be faithful to him. But their selection and appointment to the apostolic office did not exhaust the list of reasons why they were to be faithful to him, for they also had the privilege of praying to the Father in his name for anything they needed with the assurance he would give it to them.

Topics for Discussion

1. Christ's relationships are stated in Verse 6 as follows: (1) Toward the Father—husbandman and vine. (2) Toward man—vine and branches. (3) Toward good works—vine, branches and fruit. (4) The negative condition, or *lack* of relationship—the vine, the dissevered branches, the fire. (McGarvey.)

2. It has been suggested that we have the three persons of the Godhead in this parable, The Father is the husbandman; the Son is the vine; and the Holy Spirit is the sap, or life-giving principle, from the Son to the disciple, which makes fruit bearing possible.

3. Obedience to Jesus is both the condition and manifestation of abiding in the love of God. How can people who refuse to obey even one commandment say they love God?

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What is said about the people of Israel being the vineyard of the Lord?

What trees are used to teach us about fruit bearing?
 How does Paul teach us this lesson?
 From these, what do you conclude as to the necessity of fruitfulness?

Golden Text Explained

Against whom did Jesus warn his disciples?
 How were the disciples to judge these teachers?
 What figures of speech are used to teach them how to judge teachers?
 Why is a person not to be judged by what he does on Sunday?
 How do we judge between peaceful and factious people?
 How may preachers be judged by their fruits?
 How do we judge false teachers?

Source of Fruitfulness

Why did Jesus say he is the "true" vine?
 What bears the fruit, and what is done with those who do not bear fruit?
 Show why this destroys the doctrine of "once in grace always in grace."
 What is meant by cleansing the branches?
 With what are the branches cleansed?
 On what does the branch depend for its power to bear fruit?

How do we become branches in Christ the vine?
 On what condition are we able to bear much fruit?
 How can we abide in the vine?

The Fate of the Fruitless

What becomes of fruitless branches?
 Who does the gathering and burning?
 Why may we have what we pray for if we abide in him?
 On what condition is the Father glorified in us?
 What is the sign of our discipleship?

Continuing Fruitfulness

What kind of love does Jesus love us?
 What is meant by the command to abide in his love?
 What blessing is derived from keeping his commandments?
 Why did Jesus speak these things to his disciples?
 What one commandment did he give in the parting hour?
 Whom does Jesus call his friends?
 Show the contrast between friends and servants.
 For what purpose did Jesus choose and appoint his apostles?
 What did you get from the daily Bible readings?
 What is there of interest in the topics for discussion?

Lesson XII—December 18, 1949

JESUS PRAYS FOR HIS DISCIPLES

The Lesson Text

John 17: 5-7, 14-23

5 And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

6 I manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them to me; and they have kept thy word.

7 Now they know that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are from thee:

14 I have given them thy word; and the world hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

15 I pray not that thou shouldst take them from the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil *one*.

16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

17 Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth.

18 As thou didst send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world.

19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.

20 Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word;

21 That they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me.

22 And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we *are* one;

23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that thou didst send me, and lovedst them, even as thou lovedst me.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one.”* (John 17: 20, 21a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Cor. 1: 10-17.

Daily Bible Readings

December 12. M..... Unity a Pleasant Thing (Psalm 133)
 December 13. T..... Jehovah Hates Discord (Prov. 6: 6-19)
 December 14. W..... Keep the Unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4: 1-16)
 December 15. T..... Unity of First Church (Acts 2: 42-47; 4: 32-37)
 December 16. F..... Church Divisions Condemned (1 Cor. 3: 1-17)
 December 17. S..... False Teaching Brings Strife (1 Tim. 6: 3-10)
 December 18. S..... Strife and Faction from the Devil (James 3: 13-18)

TIME.—A.D. 30, the night of the betrayal.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his disciples.

Introduction

The Psalmist said it is both good and pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity. (Psalm 133: 1.) It is good, because it is godlike. The three persons of the Godhead dwell and work together in perfect unity. They set for us a perfect example in this as well as in everything else. When brethren differ and divide over their differences, when they bite and devour one another, they are about as far from being godlike as it is possible for men to become. If it is *good* for brethren to dwell together in unity, and they *divide* and destroy that unity, they are not good; no one can be good unless he does that which is good.

Unity is a pleasant thing, because it makes possible Christian fellowship. The greater the unity that prevails, the richer and more profitable becomes the fellowship of brethren; but the lack of unity will cause their fellowship, or work and worship together, to be barren and productive of no real joy and satisfaction. As contention and strife in a home can make it a “little hell” on earth, so the church can be robbed of the peace and joy which the Lord intended should be had there. Complete unity of desire, purpose, and action can make a home a little “paradise on earth,” and a most pleasant place to be. And the church is a foretaste of heaven when brethren dwell and worship together in unity.

But the early church had their trouble. The church at Corinth was divided in sentiment over preachers. (1 Cor. 1: 11, 12.) Several churches were divided over matters of doctrine, especially the matters of being circumcised and keeping the law. (Acts 15: 1-5.) If there was contention among Christians when they had living apostles to whom they could appeal, we need not be discouraged if there are contentions among people today. There is no justification for divisions, but neither is there justification for people to quit the church just because there is occasional strife, and even division, over doctrine and practice. Jesus prayed for the unity of believers, and we ought to strive to keep “the unity of the Spirit in

the bond of peace." (Eph. 4: 3.) We should be willing to sacrifice every personal desire in order to preserve the peace of the church.

Golden Text Explained

For whom. Jesus prayed. When Jesus had prayed for his apostles, he then thought of all who would be influenced by them in their personal work during life, and all who would read their writings from that time to the end of time, and he included them all in his prayer. He said he was praying for them also that "believe on me through their word." So we would say that Jesus was praying for all believers. Of course this means all active believers. Jesus would not expect a dead faith to enter into Christian unity. The demons believe in Jesus, but they do not have an active faith; they are among the "faith only" class, so are not included in this prayer. The believers who are included in this prayer are such as we read about in Acts 4: 32: "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul"; and again in Acts 5: 14: "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women."

But another idea is suggested in that Jesus prayed for all believers who made such *through their word*. People become believers through the word, or teaching, of the men who were inspired of God. One cannot become a believer in Christ by reading the works of science and philosophy, as profitable as these branches of study are for other things. We become believers in Christ only by reading the word of God. (Rom. 10: 17.) Since the writings of inspired men are consistent, and never contradictory, all those who believe in Christ through their word ought to believe the same thing; they ought to "be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (1 Cor. 1: 10.)

For what Jesus prayed. Jesus prayed for the unity of believers. He had taught them that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. (Matt. 12: 25, 26.) And the time for the establishment of his kingdom was but a few days in the future. His disciples had contended for places of honor and authority in that kingdom, and he knew there would be many down through the years who would love the pre-eminence (3 John 9) enough to destroy the kingdom in order to satisfy their lust for position and power. He was praying that there would be a sufficient number of believers who would be humble enough, and love the kingdom enough, to maintain its existence and preserve its peace.

Denominationalism destroys that unity for which Jesus prayed. Religious leaders thank God for the multiplicity of denominations so every man may have his choice. They teach and practice things not taught in the word of God, and inconsistent with each other. They try to claim the unity for which Jesus prayed because they all believe in the same God, in Jesus as his Son, and in the personality of the Holy Spirit. But Jesus prayed for a unity that can be seen by the world, and one that will lead the world to believe that God sent his Son into the world to save people. A unity which can be seen and appreciated by the world is of necessity an organic unity; it is a unity of belief, doctrine, practice, and organization. Denominationalism stands condemned because it prevents that for which Jesus prayed.

Exposition of the Text

Jesus Prays for Himself. (Verses 5-7.) *Father, glorify thou me.* This is in the concluding part of our Lord's prayer for himself, which begins in verse one. He prays for the glory he had with the Father before the world was. This clearly shows that Jesus, in his divine nature, existed from eternity; he became Jesus when he was born of Mary—the Word was made flesh. (John 1: 14.) The glory for which he prayed was his exaltation at the right hand of the Majesty on high, to be made King of kings, and Lord of lords, and to enjoy the fellowship of the Father in heaven.

I manifested thy name. To manifest the name of God was to make known the character of God. The word "name" is often used to stand for and represent the person who wears that name. Jesus said people are to be baptized "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matt. 28: 19.) And Peter said there is salvation in the name of Christ. (Acts 4: 12.) To be baptized into the name of the Father is to be baptized into the Father, or into such relationship with him that he becomes our Father and we his children. And to say there is salvation "in the name of Christ" is to say that salvation is in Christ. So when Jesus said he had manifested the name of the Father, he simply meant he had made known the character of the Father; he had acquainted them with the Father.

Whom thou gavest me out of the world. Jesus frequently refers to the apostles as being given to him. (John 10: 29.) In the providence of God these men were brought into contact with Jesus, and their hearts were inclined to love and accept him. They were not bound and delivered to Jesus against their wills; but neither can we say that God had nothing to do in bringing them into the fellowship of Jesus.

They have kept thy word. Judas was not in his company when he said these words. This means that they had believed and had lived in harmony with the word of God as taught them by Jesus. If when we come to die it can be said that we have kept God's word, all will be well with our souls. Paul said as much when he said he had kept the faith. (2 Tim. 4: 7.)

Now they know. Jesus did not try to hide from the disciples his source of wisdom and power. He had freely told the apostles that all was given him of his Father. (John 5: 19.) And he had been able to convince these apostles by his teaching and the miracles accompanying, that both he and his works were of the Father, and so had glorified God.

Jesus Prays for Apostles. (Verses 14-19.) *I have given them thy word.* This division of the prayer begins with verse 9, but only a part of this division is included in our lesson text. Jesus had been faithful in delivering the message the Father had given him. (Verse 8.) God has spoken through his Son in these last days. (Heb. 1: 1, 2.)

The world hated them. These apostles had so completely identified themselves with Jesus and his work that the world hated them even as it hated him. They had given up all to follow him, so were not of the world. The world loves its own (John 15: 19), and when people heed the call of Jesus to come out of the world, they lay themselves liable to the hatred and persecution of the world.

I pray not that thou shouldest take them from the world. It is not best for the world, for the Lord, nor for disciples themselves that they be taken out of the world as soon as they obey the gospel. If such were done, there would be none to preach the gospel; the disciples would not be strengthened and purified by the fires of trials and hardships; the world would have no examples of godly living before them to encourage them, and they would have no living proof that the standards of Jesus can be met by people in the flesh.

Keep them from the evil one. Jesus knew that the devil would be after these men all the time with all the subtlety and deception at his command. He knew they might fail if he did not pray for them. (Luke 22: 31, 32.) And if it were not for the help from God the devil would get the last one of us. (2 Thess. 3: 3; 2 Pet. 1: 5.)

Sanctify them in the truth. The word "sanctify," means to set apart to a holy service. But since the service we are to render is holy, we must be pure; so the word includes the idea of purity on our part. An unholy thing, or person, cannot be used in God's service, so when Jesus prayed for God to sanctify these apostles, he prayed for their purity as well as their use in a holy service. The truth was the *instrument* of sanctification. The Holy Spirit is the *agent* in sanctification. (Rom. 15: 16; 2 Thess. 2: 13.) Sanctification, is the process of growing into the likeness of Christ. This growth is begun in conversion, and is continued in sanctification, and should go on toward perfection as long as we live. But with the average person a graph would show many "ups and downs" during life. Jesus then adds that God's word is truth, so the word as revealed to us in the Bible is the instrument used in our sanctification. Our growth in Christlikeness, then, will depend on how much we study and meditate upon God's word.

As thou didst send me into the world. As Jesus came from God to represent God, so Jesus was sending these men into the world to represent himself. He was praying that they might be faithful in that representation, so the world would be able to know him. We need to remember that we are representatives of Jesus, and should be careful how we live.

Jesus Prays for the Church. (Verses 20-23.) *Neither for these only do I pray.* It was most important that he pray for his apostles, for they were his ambassadors made responsible for the revelation of the gospel to the whole world. But the interests of Jesus were larger than this group of twelve men. He prayed for all who believe on him through the teaching of the apostles. That prayer includes you and me. Surely we should be willing to make any sacrifice that his prayer be answered.

That they may all be one. The first request of Christ for all believers is that they be one, that there be Christian unity. This suggests the importance of unity, and is a reason why Paul said we should strive to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. The religious world has never considered unity as being very important. And some Christians do not deem it very important when they will divide a church over such trivial affairs as who will be our preacher, what songbook we will use, or how much money we will spend building a house of worship.

As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee. The unity which exists between the Son and the Father is the kind of unity Jesus wants

between believers. Can you conceive of Jesus teaching and practicing one thing and the Father another? Can you imagine them having such differences that they cannot worship together, or fellowship one another? When believers get into such conditions, the unity for which Jesus prayed does not exist. There is perfect unity between the Father and the Son, and we may never reach perfection in unity any more than we will in other things, but that is no reason why we should not strive to do so.

That the world may believe. The unity for which Jesus prayed is one that can be seen and appreciated by the world. Christian unity will tend to make the world believe in Jesus as the Son sent from God. Denominationalism has destroyed unity among believers, and it perpetuates division; nothing can be more obstructive and destructive of the purposes of our Lord. And every person connected with denominationalism bears his portion of the responsibility for this great sin against the wishes of Jesus.

The glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them. This glory consists, (1) In sonship. Jesus was the Son of God and enjoyed that union with the Father. It was an honor and a privilege, the very highest possible. (2) Fellowship and partnership of labor. Jesus was a partner with the Father in the glorious work of redemption and reconciliation. Now, Jesus says he has given this glory to those who believe in him through the word of the apostles. This is not something given only to the apostles, but to those who believe through their teaching. So the believer is a son of God (John 1: 12; 1 John 3: 1.) And the believer has fellowship with the Father and the Son in the redemption and reconciliation of the world to God. (2 Cor. 6: 1; Mark 16: 20.) The part which the Son does make it necessary for him to go back to the Father, and he is depending on those who believe in him to carry on down here. It is our part to preach the gospel to all, to carry on the worship in its purity, to keep ourselves unspotted from the world, and to maintain that unity for which Jesus prayed so the world will believe on him.

I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one. Notice the interlocking of this union—the Father in Jesus, and Jesus in the believer, and the believers bound into one body. Such unity has never existed since shortly after the apostles died. Such union would be proof of two things. (1) It would prove that God sent Jesus into the world. (2) It would be proof of the Father's love for the believer; and that love is the same as the love he had for the Son.

Topics for Discussion

1. The importance of unity among believers is emphasized by the fact that Jesus gave so much attention to it during the last hours of his work with the apostles. Messages just prior to death do not include anything but the most important matters.

2. The disregard of the religious world for unity is emphasized in the fact that more than two hundred religious bodies have been founded, and are being supported.

3. If the church of the Lord wants the unity for which Jesus prayed it, (1) will preserve unity in its own ranks; (2) urge unity of all believers on the word of God as the only basis.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What did the Psalmist say about unity?

Why is unity a good thing?

How can brethren prove themselves not good?

Why is unity a pleasant thing in the church, and in the home?

Did the early church have perfect unity?

Is lack of unity in the church a reason for quitting?

What should we be willing to do to gain and keep unity?

Golden Text Explained

For whom did Jesus pray in our text?

He prayed for people with what kind of faith?

How does Jesus suggest that we become believers?

How may we all believe and practice the same things?

What did Jesus teach about a divided kingdom?

Did the ambitions of the apostles make a prayer for unity timely?

What is the effect of denominationalism on unity?

On what does the religious world base its claims for unity?

For what kind of unity did Jesus pray?

Jesus Prays for Himself

For what glory did Jesus pray? Describe it.

What does this suggest with reference to his pre-existence?

What is meant by manifesting the name of God?

In what way had the Father given Jesus these apostles?

What disposition did the apostles make of God's word Jesus gave them?

What had the apostles come to know about Jesus?

Jesus Prays for His Apostles

What had Jesus given the apostles?

Why did the world hate the apostles?

Why did Jesus not wish the apostles taken out of the world?

What was his prayer since they were to be left in an unfriendly world?

Discuss sanctification as to, (1) agent; (2) instrument; (3) nature.

Jesus Prays for the Church

What was the prayer of Jesus for his church?

What things do church members sometimes consider more important than unity?

What is the standard of unity Jesus set for the church?

Why did Jesus want believers to be one?

What glory did Jesus have with the Father?

In what way can he give that glory to us?

Of what two things is this unity the proof?

What did you get from the daily Bible readings?

What is there of interest in the topics for discussion?

Lesson XIII—December 25, 1949

PETER DECLARES HIS LOVE

The Lesson Text

John 21: 5-19

5 Je-sus therefore saith unto them. Children, have ye aught to eat? They answered him, No.

6 And he said unto them. Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

7 That disciple therefore whom Je-sus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. So when Si-mon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his coat about him (for he was naked), and cast himself into the sea.

8 But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from the land, but about two hundred cubits off), dragging the net full of fishes.

9 So when they got out upon the land, they see a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

10 Je-sus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now taken.

11 Si-mon Peter therefore went up, and drew the net to land, full of great fishes, a hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, the net was not rent.

12 Je-sus saith unto them, Come *and* break your fast. And none of the disciples durst inquire of him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

13 Je-sus cometh, and taketh the bread, and giveth them, and the fish likewise.

14 This is now the third time that Je-sus was manifested to the disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

15 So when they had broken their fast, Je-sus saith to Si'-mon Peter, Si'-mon, *son* of John, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him. Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

16 He saith to him again a second time, Si'-mon, son of John, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Tend my sheep.

17 He saith unto him the third time, Si'-mon, *son* of John, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Je-sus saith unto him. Feed my sheep.

18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not.

19 Now this he spake, signifying by what manner of death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments."*
(John 14: 15.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Luke 22: 31-34, 54-62.

Daily Bible Readings

December 19. M.....	An Early Fishing Experience (Luke 5: 1-11)
December 20. T.....	A Young Man's Love Tested (Matt. 19: 16-22)
December 21. W.....	Proof of a Risen Savior (John 20: 19-29)
December 22. T.....	Prospective Followers Tested (Luke 9: 57-62)
December 23. F.....	Jesus Demands Our Highest Love (Luke 14: 25-35)
December 24. S.....	Peter a Fellow-elder (1 Pet. 5: 1-11)
December 25. S.....	Peter Faithful Unto Death (2 Pet. 1: 12-21)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Sea of Tiberias, or Galilee.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his apostles.

Introduction

Our Lord made ten appearances to his disciples between his resurrection and his ascension, and one, after his ascension, to Saul of Tarsus. (Acts 9: 1-9; 1 Cor. 15: 8.) Our lessons deals with his seventh appearance as they are listed by Bible scholars. It will be well for us to have a list of his appearances and the scripture references where the records of these appearances may be found.

The first two appearances were to women. The first to Mary Magdalene (John 20: 16), and the second to a group of women who went to anoint his body. (Matt. 28: 1-10.)

The third appearance was to two disciples, unnamed, who were on their way to Emmaus. (Luke 24: 13ff.) The fourth appearance was to Peter alone. We are not told anything about what took place at this meeting; it is only mentioned twice. (Luke 24: 34; 1 Cor. 15: 5.) His fifth appearance was to all the apostles, except Thomas who was absent for some unknown reason. (John 20: 19-25.) And his sixth appearance was just one week later when Thomas was with the group, and was asked to satisfy his doubts about the resurrection. (John 20: 26-29.) The seventh appearance is the one on which our lesson is based. (John 21: 1ff.) His eighth appearance was on a

mountain in Galilee, in the presence of his apostles and before more than five hundred brethren. It was here the Great Commission as stated by Matthew was given. (Matt. 28: 16-20.) His ninth appearance was to James, but which James we do not know. And we would not know of this appearance if Paul had not told about it. Nor can we be sure whether it is placed in the proper order in this list. (1 Cor. 15: 7.) His tenth appearance was on Olivet when he talked with his apostles for the last time, and then ascended back to the Father. (Acts 1: 3-12.)

Golden Text Explained

Love Described. When Jesus told these disciples they would obey him if they loved him, he did not have in mind a weakly, sentimental, halfhearted attachment which people can forget when it is convenient to do so. Some people love the Lord like they love their pets. They wish to fondle pets when it is convenient, but put them down and go about their business and pleasures when they wish to do so. In like manner some people love the Lord on Sunday, and work up quite a show of emotion with no intention to be hypocritical; but through the week it is convenient to put the Lord in the background and go places and do things the Lord cannot approve. This is not the love Jesus had in mind when he spoke our text.

Jesus said man's first duty is to love God "with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." (Matt. 22: 37.) The word translated "love," is one which means, when speaking of persons, "to have a preference for"; and when used with reference to things it means, "to prize it above other things, be unwilling to abandon it or do without it." (Thayer.) So to love Jesus in the sense in which our text speaks of love, is to have a preference for him above all other objects of our affection. He taught his disciples that they must love him more than they love father, mother, husband or wife, son or daughter; and more than they love property, or any other thing under heaven. He demands, (1) our greatest love; (2) our constant love; and (3) our undivided love, one without reservations.

The Proof of Love. Jesus was about ready to leave this world when he spoke the words of our text, and the disciples were sorrowing on account of his going away. He has told them to let not their heart be troubled because his going away is for their ultimate happiness. And furthermore, he suggests there is a better way to show love for him than by sorrowing—it is to love him enough to obey his commandments. It was as though he had said, If you really love me, you will not show it by sorrowing over my departure, but in doing my commandments; I will be working in heaven and you will be carrying on the work I give you to do on earth; and faithful performance of your duties here will be a greater proof of your love than sorrowing over my absence.

So we today show our love for the Lord by our obedience to him; or we show our lack of love by our neglect or disobedience. Many claim to love the Lord while living in disobedience to certain commandments. For convenience they may be grouped as, (1) those who consider certain things small and insignificant. Jesus teaches us to meet every Lord's day, but some think it a small thing to miss worship *occasionally* to go fishing or visiting relatives. The Lord

teaches us to give thanks for food, but some think that an unimportant command so do nothing about it. (2) Those who see no sense in certain commandments, no connection between what is commanded and the results to be obtained. Many religious people look thus upon baptism, and for this reason refuse to be baptized; yet they claim to love the Lord. Jesus did not say, If you love me, you will obey my commandments provided you can see a scientific reason for doing it. (3) There are those who claim to love the Lord, and are willing to do what they have been taught is the will of the Lord, but they have been mistaught; they are doing things the Lord has not taught, and they are leaving undone things they should do just because they have been taught in this way. This may be called a misguided love. Many of the common people of our Lord's day were in this class. The scribes and priests had misguided them. But misguided love is disobedience; true enlightened love will keep the Lord's commandments. Hence the need of Bible study is all the more emphasized.

Exposition of the Text

Jesus Appears by the Sea. (Verses 5-14.) *Children, have ye aught to eat?* The word for children is diminutive, and is a term of familiarity and affection. But it was no more than an extra friendly man of the community might have said if he had been intending to buy fish from them. But the disciples had caught no fish during the night, so had nothing to eat, much less to sell.

Cast the net on the right side. Jesus told them to cast where he knew there were fish. Here again we have evidence of divine knowledge. This was his way of revealing himself to his disciples. No doubt this reminded them of that morning three years before when he told them to let down their nets, and they said they had toiled all the night without success, but at his word they would let them down. And they took a great multitude of fish that time. (Luke 5.) There might possibly be some man who would look enough like Jesus for them to be deceived, especially at a distance, but there was not another man on earth who knew where the fish in the sea were. Such evidence of his identity is unanswerable.

It is the Lord. This is the language of John, that disciple whom Jesus loved. John does not call himself by his name, but refers to himself as the one Jesus loved. No higher recommendation is needed, or can be desired, than to have it said that we have so responded to the Lord that he loves us. And when Peter knew it was the Lord on the land, he threw himself into the sea and made for the shore.

He girt his coat about him. The Greek word means an *upper garment*, a blouse or frock which fishermen used to wear at their work. (Thayer.) And the word "naked" in this verse need not be taken as we used the word. The margin says, "had on his undergarment only."

The other disciples came. Peter left the others to come with the fish they had caught. They were two hundred cubits from the shore, which is about three hundred feet, or a hundred yards as we measure distance. It was easy talking distance, but not close enough for them to recognize the features of a man in the early morning light.

They see a fire of coals there. Commentators guess whether Jesus made the fire by a miracle and provided the fish and bread thereon in the same way. It is possible there were other fishermen in the vicinity and that a fire was kept going, and cooking being done most of the night. In the next verse we see that Jesus told them to bring the fish they had taken, suggesting that the food on the fire was for others.

Drew the net to land, full of great fishes. The number and size of the fish caught were somewhat unusual. The nets were not as strong as nets now, as many times that number of fish may be taken in one net without danger of breaking.

Come and break your fast. Whether Jesus ate with them is not actually said here, though it is said, "He taketh the bread, and giveth them." The "taking" of bread here does not mean that he ate. But it is said in Luke 24: 43 that he ate with them on another occasion. So Jesus in his resurrected body did eat. Angels ate when they appeared with Abraham, and one of them was the second person of the Godhead. (Gen. 18: 2, 17; 19: 1.) Flesh and blood cannot enter heaven, and Jesus said a spirit does not have flesh and bones. (Luke 24: 39.) This he said to convince his disciples that he was the same person they had known before his death. Yet he could enter or leave a room without the door being open. (John 20: 19.)

This is now the third time. This was his third appearance to the apostles as a group. One time he appeared when Thomas was absent; one time he appeared to all of them; and this made the third time. However, there were only seven of them in this group, Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James and John, and two unnamed. (John 21: 2.) But three appearances to a majority of them, talking with them about things which happened before his death, eating with them, and showing them the prints of the nails and spear are sufficient evidence to prove to any court that he was the Christ they had known and loved for three years.

Jesus and Simon Peter. (Verses 15-19.) *Lovest thou me more than these?* Notice that Jesus addresses Peter as Simon. That was the name he had formerly worn, but Jesus gave him the name Peter, a rock. Perhaps Jesus went back to his former name to remind him that he had not acted like a rock during his temptation. It is about impossible for us to know what is referred to by the word "these." Did Jesus ask Peter if he loved him more than he did the fish and the fishing business? Or did he ask Peter if he loved him more than the other disciples loved him? Good scholars are on both sides of this matter. The Greek word for "these," so far as its form is concerned, may be either neuter or masculine. If it could be proved that "these" is neuter, we would know it refers to fishing; but if masculine, we would know it refers to the other apostles. Peter had boasted that he would not forsake the Lord, regardless of what all the others did. (Matt. 26: 33ff.) In this he implied that he loved Jesus more than the balance, and that he would do more to show his love. And now Jesus asked him if he still thought he loved his Lord more than the rest of the apostles loved him. Or it may be that Jesus asked him if he loved him more than he loved his old business of fishing; or would he continue to deny him and stay with his business of fishing? This writer prefers the former explanation.

Thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus used one word for "love," and Peter used another, to which some significance may be attached. The word Peter used is never used to express one's love for God; it "denotes an inclination prompted by sense and emotion." The word Jesus used, when used with reference to God or Christ, means affectionate reverence and prompt obedience. (Thayer.) Peter humbly declined to claim that love; but he did say, Master, you know that I have a very high regard, and a deep abiding friendship, for you.

Feed my lambs. Here again we find different words for feed. In this place and in verse 17 we have a Greek word which simply means feed, to provide food for; while in verse 16 we have another Greek word, which is translated "tend," and means both feed and care. On the basis of his love, Peter is told to accept the position of a shepherd, to feed and care for the Lord's flock. This would be one way for him to prove his love. Faithful performance of his duty along these lines would prove his love, and in a measure atone for his lack of courage and steadfastness in the matter of his denial of Jesus.

Said unto him the third time. Perhaps Jesus asked this question of Peter three times because Peter denied him three times. But this last time, Jesus used the same word for "love" that Peter had been using. It was as if he said, Peter, are you sure you have a high regard and an abiding friendship for me?

Peter was grieved. By being asked three times, no doubt Peter was reminded of his three denials of Jesus, and he was grieved to be reminded of that humiliating experience. He was ashamed of the way he had treated Jesus, and every mention or reminder of it was a source of regret. As long as we are thus ashamed of our sins there is hope of salvation; but when we get to the point we are not grieved at remembrance of our sins, there is little hope that we can be saved. (Rom. 6: 21.)

Thou knowest all things. Peter told Jesus that he regarded him as all-wise, and certainly he did not have to ask about his love for him. It seems that Peter did not know just why the Lord would ask the same question three times. But Peter was willing to make this affirmation of love in spite of the fact that he knew Jesus could read his heart. If we would never do or say anything we are not ashamed of the searcher of hearts to know and accuse us of, we would leave many things unsaid and undone.

When thou wast young. Jesus gave Peter a glimpse of what was in the future for him. When he was young he went where he pleased and did what he pleased, but the time would come for Peter when that privilege of freedom of action and speech will be taken from him. And John explains that Jesus said this to signify what manner of death Peter should die, and how, in that death, he would glorify God. This implied his martyrdom. And it is said that Peter was crucified. Tradition says that when they started to nail him to the cross Peter made the request that he be crucified with his head down, and gave as his reason that Jesus died with his head up in its natural position, and that he was not worthy to die like his Lord had died. Little dependence can be placed in such traditions, but this one may very well be true, since Peter changed from such a boasting confident man before the death of Christ to such a penitent

humble man who would not claim to have even the highest form of love for his master, but only an affectionate friendliness.

Topics for Discussion

1. We should be careful about affirming what we will or will not do under certain conditions, for we may, like Peter, live to regret our boasting. A humble estimate of our strength and courage is more becoming in people so prone to sin.

2. Patience under reproof and correction is a very beautiful characteristic. Peter accepted the correction of Christ's searching questions with due humility. Solomon says he that hateth reproof is brutish. (Prov. 12: 1.)

3. From our study of the four gospel records we should have learned, (1) that the writers were qualified witnesses, and reliable from every point of view; (2) That their testimony is corroborative, but never contradictory; (3) that there actually lived a man named Jesus, and that he was crucified and buried, and that on the third day his tomb was found empty; and, (4) that he was seen by many competent witnesses who were living at the time these records were written, and so they all testify that he was raised from the dead.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

How many appearances did Jesus make after his resurrection?

To whom was his last appearance made?

To whom were his first two appearances made?

How many times did he appear to a majority of his apostles?

To about how many people did he appear during the forty days?

Golden Text Explained

What kind of love did Jesus not have in mind in our text?

What is man's first duty to God?

What is the meaning of love as used in our text?

By what three things should our love be characterized?

How did Jesus wish his disciples to prove their love for him?

Is it possible for people to think they love the Lord and be mistaken?

Name and discuss three groups of people who think they love the Lord, but for one excuse or another they do not obey him.

Jesus Appears by the Sea

How did Jesus address his disciples at this time?

What did he tell his disciples to do,

and of what other experience does this remind you?

Who was the first to recognize Jesus?

How did Peter respond to this information?

Why did not all of them recognize Jesus?

What about this incident which proves the divinity of Jesus?

Tell about the three appearances of Jesus to the apostles.

Jesus and Simon Peter

What question did Jesus ask Peter?

By what name did Jesus call him? Why?

What do you think is the meaning of the question Jesus asked?

What was Peter's answer to this question?

In what way did Peter partially evade answering the question?

What duty did Jesus lay upon Peter?

What words did Jesus use in connection with this duty, and what was their meaning?

Why was Peter grieved at the Lord's question?

Why did Jesus ask him the question three times?

Why was Peter sure the Lord knew he loved him?

What did Jesus say about the death of Peter?

What did you get from the daily Bible readings?

What is there of interest in the topics for discussion?