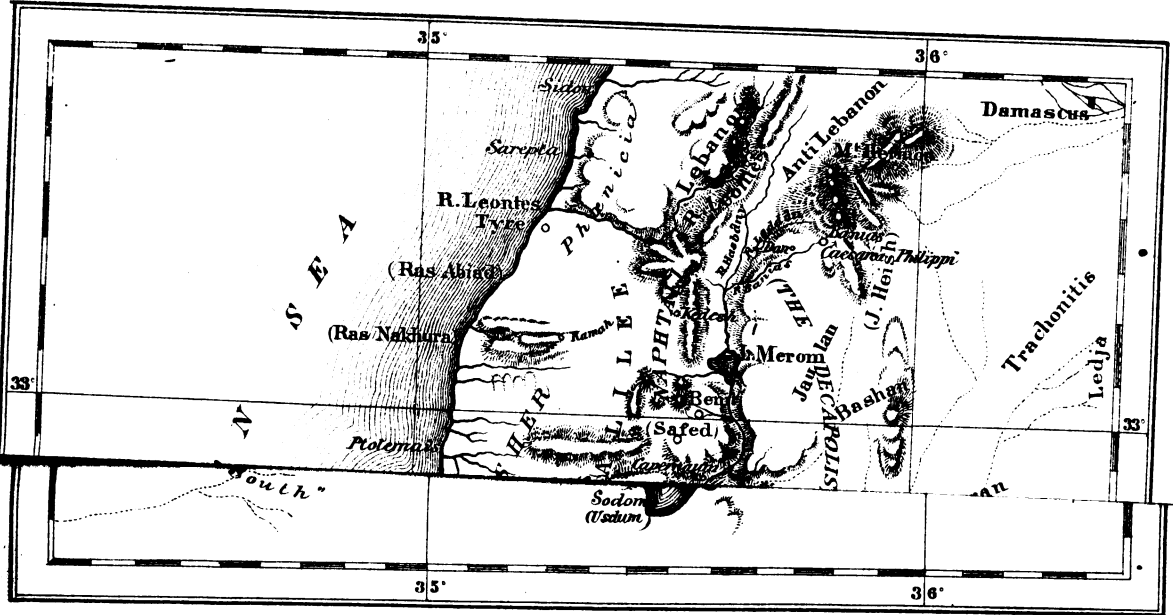




# PALESTINE.



Theo. Leunhert & Co. 512 & 514 Chestnut St. Phila.

THE •

TEACHER'S COMMENTARY

ON THE

GOSPEL NARRATIVE

OF

THE LAST YEAR OF OUR LORD'S MINISTRY.

PREPARED FOR THE USE OF THOSE WHO ARE TEACHERS OF THE  
WORD IN SABBATH SCHOOLS, BIBLE CLASSES, LECTURE ROOMS,  
PRIVATE SCHOOLS, CHARITABLE AND REFORM-  
ATORY INSTITUTIONS, AND FAMILIES.

WITH A COMPLETE INDEX.

BY  
HENRY C. McCOOK,  
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

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*ILLUSTRATED.*

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## PREFACE.

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THIS volume and a second which is now in preparation are intended to form a practical commentary for teachers upon that portion of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ that is commonly assigned by harmonists to the last year of our Lord's ministry. That the starting-point for such a series of lessons should have been the last rather than the first of the Gospel narrative, was determined by the coincidence of my own studies upon this period, in the ordinary course of preparation for pastoral work, with the request to undertake the publication of a series of lessons for Sabbath-school teachers. It is my hope, however, should God so indicate by his providence, to prepare, after the same plan, studies upon the entire Gospel.

It will be seen by consulting the ORDER OF SECTIONS that my plan embraces the annotation of nearly the whole of the Gospel record. But it will also be observed that certain sections have been omitted. Such omissions resulted almost necessarily from the idea of *selection for the practical use of teachers of children and youth* which controlled my arrangement of the list of studies for the year. I have dropped from the list such sections as would involve a repetition of the leading thoughts and images, and similarity of the accompanying incidents. For example, the familiar incident of the blessing of the little children (Matt. xix. 13-15; Mark x. 17-31; Luke xvii. 18-30), which one might certainly expect to see in a commentary designed chiefly for Sabbath-school teachers, is omitted from the list of lessons, and finds place only in the Historical Connection. But Lesson X. (Mark ix. 33-50), The Greatest in the Kingdom, is in the truth which is conveyed, and in the general tone of the narrative portion of the section, *substantially a parallel passage*. And by reference to Lesson VIII., The Cure of the Lunatic Boy, and Lesson XLIV., Children's Hosannas in the Temple, it will be seen that the many sweet truths and suggestions which the omitted passage might furnish have, nevertheless, not been omitted.

The arrangement of the sections according to THE HARMONY

5/4/29 copy of W.C. Lawson's Report

needs at this day no defence. The "Commentary on the Harmony of the Evangelists," by JOHN CALVIN, and among the moderns the commentary of OLSHAUSEN, may be cited as abundant authority, were any required.

One feels in the class-room and in the superintendent's desk the vast helpfulness of some available thread of continuity upon which to string the pearls of Gospel truth. And in view of the varied methods and various departments of modern Sunday-school efforts—the map, the review, the blackboard, the address, the infant school—I am convinced that there is no more satisfactory thread, all things considered, than that of the actual or proximate order of the events and teachings. Each incident of the sacred history links itself to that which preceded and that which follows it; each step of the holy company, as we trace their progress in order from point to point, reminds of that which has just been passed, and points to that which lies before. Thus is preserved the *unity* of the Gospel story, which is a great point with children; thus vividness and realness of the persons, scenes and sayings are maintained. The persons seem more like *real* persons, the events like actual events, the truths like veritable teachings. And to those who have noted how prone the children are (as are adults also) to put the Gospel stories away into the region of dream-land, or into the vague realm of romance along with the stories of Crusoe and Sinbad and Aladdin, there is a most important use in whatever helps the teacher to make the sacred history *live and move* before the scholar's mind.

Of course it will be understood that I do not presume to speak with absolute authority as to the order of events which I have adopted in the Historical Connection. I have examined and pondered all the available information, and while I have not felt called upon in that or in other matters to put in frequent qualifying expressions, or to disclaim dogmatizing, I have set down my own conclusion with, I hope, the due and usual reservations.

THE UNEQUAL LENGTH of the sections is one of the difficulties which is necessarily involved in the plan of selecting lessons by subjects. But greater objections lie against any other plan; and the teacher, knowing the difficulty, must be left to overcome it himself, by concentrating his teachings upon the central truth or incident of each lesson. So in securing the memorizing of the lesson, the teacher must direct the assignment of verses, if the section be too long. But I believe that, as a general rule, the scholar can memorize lessons containing *complete subjects* more readily than shorter lessons, which,

by being broken into equal sections, must often contain several *fragments* of subjects or events.

**ARRANGEMENT OF THE MATTER.**—The arrangement, under separate departments, of the material here furnished needs a word of explanation. Chiefly I have consulted the convenience of the student and the diversity of wants among workers. Even those who may find it practicable to study the entire section will not care to wade through the whole when occasion requires a quick reference to some point in the history or geography. And to those who do not care for these matters, and those who do not value practical reflections, it certainly will be an advantage that the exposition stands by itself unencumbered (as it is for the most part) by all except that which is really important to explain *the sense of the text*.

But to many the **ANALYSIS**, with its practical and devotional thoughts, will be very helpful. I have confined myself to no set style of analysis, and have occasionally omitted that feature when I conceived that the expository and practical could not be divorced without damage to the whole; as, for example, in the parable of the Prodigal Son. My justification for the frequent **DEVOTIONAL** expressions and ejaculations is the firm conviction that anything which is helpful to the *spirituality* of the teacher is great gain to him in the matter of aptness both to understand and to teach. As my object as an expositor is "to cause to understand," what could I do better than frequently to lift up the heart to that Holy Spirit who alone leads into truth?

**THE QUESTIONS** are meant to serve the double purpose of assisting the teacher in the study and review of the lesson, and of furnishing indicators of the subject matter and of the manner of class questioning. These are manifestly of such construction that the teacher *must* digest and recast to suit the wants of his own scholars. A series of questions suited to every age and grade of attainment is impracticable in such a work as this; and, I add, undesirable. Indeed, I earnestly express the hope that no teacher who may use these helps will slavishly follow them. One who brings a thoroughly independent mind and heart to both his studying and teaching will have the best success in acquiring and imparting.

Under the **SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK** is grouped matter intended especially for the platform and the infant school. In the **SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY** the **THEME FOR PRAYER** I think worthy the especial attention of teachers and officers. In the opening exercises, and in the short closing prayer-meeting, it surely is well that there should be

agreement touching the things which are asked of God. The advantage of associating the teachings of the CATECHISM with kindred Scripture instruction is apparent. And no better illustrations could be suggested than those which, under BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS, have been drawn from the matchless stores of Scripture incident.

The QUOTATIONS from authors, which I have given freely with names in full, have generally been made from those whose names and character are best known and most esteemed, and yet whose works cannot readily be consulted by the ordinary teacher.

I may be allowed, before I conclude, to speak of the doctrinal cast which this TEACHER'S COMMENTARY may reasonably be supposed to have. The Westminster Lessons, which are substantially reproduced in this volume, are avowedly published by the Presbyterian Church of the United States for the use of its own schools and those of churches holding kindred views upon the doctrines of the Word. As I cordially accept those views, no honest handling of Scripture could possibly prevent my expositions from taking upon them the impress of my theology.

Yet in no sense are these studies controversial. The common evangelical doctrines are those which stand out prominently. I am glad to conclude that I have written nothing in a sectarian spirit, nothing which I judge can injure any evangelical believer, nothing which is at discord with that spirit of broad charity and Gospel liberty which pervades the ancient and noble Church for whose spiritual helping I have in an especial manner prepared these pages.

Many teachers who are already familiar with these Notes through the use of the Westminster Lessons will wish to preserve them in permanent form, either as a memento of pleasant labors or for reference in subsequent studies and teachings. As the *second year's course* of the Westminster Lessons is a continuation of the studies in *The Last Year of our Lord's Ministry*, it is apparent that this volume will be of value to those who purpose to continue that course of study.

I call attention to the INDEX, which is a new feature in Notes upon the sacred Writings.

The MAPS I have drawn after the best and latest authorities, and will, I hope, prove valuable to the teacher and student.

I am indebted to Rev. JOHN W. DULLES, the Editorial Secretary of the Board of Publication, for valuable assistance in the preparation and arrangement of the illustrations.



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THE

# TEACHER'S COMMENTARY.

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STUDIES

IN THE

## LAST YEAR OF OUR LORD'S MINISTRY.

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LESSON I.

THE GREEK MOTHER'S PLEA.

**Matt. xv. 21-28. Parallel, Mark vii. 24-30.**

HISTORICAL CONNECTION.

The discourse of Jesus (John vi. 27-58), which followed the feeding of the five thousand at Bethsaida Julias (John vi. 5-15), alienated and angered many of the people. John vi. 61. The feeling was such that Jesus passed hastily through the country, shunning public gatherings. Mark ix. 30. This was a change favorable to the hostile schemes of the Pharisees. They sent out a delegation from Jerusalem (Mark vii. 1) to aid their Galilee confederates in working up the popular hate and in betraying Christ into such action or utterance as would give them legal hold upon him. The utter confusion of these emissaries is given. Mark vii. 1-23. These facts account for our Lord's departure from Capernaum into the coasts (borders) of Tyre. Ver. 15.

## GEOGRAPHICAL REFERENCE.

OUR LORD'S JOURNEY FROM CAPERNAUM TO THE NORTH  
BORDER.

In attempting to trace our Lord's footsteps through this interesting section, it will, of course, be understood that the precise path cannot be determined. The general direction taken, however, seems to be in little doubt; and, with the above explanation, I will speak, in marking out the route, as though the matter were fact and not conjecture, leaving each reader to take his own observations and make his own corrections.

From *Capernaum*, where the Pharisees had been met and confounded, they passed up, north-westerly, toward *Safed*, through the "land of *Naphtali*." From the sea-shore the land gradually rises, the path at first thickly strewn with black volcanic stones. The Great Teacher and his little company of apostles, if they stopped to look back, would here have a noble view of the surrounding region. There is the *Sea of Galilee*, the pelicans swimming in its waters, and the fishing-boats anchored along its shores or dotting its smooth surface. There at the north enters the *Jordan*, across which, to the fertile, alluvial flats of the eastern bank, herds of cattle and buffalo are swimming, their noses held high above the stream. There too is *Capernaum*, with its "woe" hanging over its unconscious people.

The hills over which the travellers pass are cut by deep ravines, are rather barren, but relieved by occasional fields of grain and gardens of pomegranates. At *Safed*, if that village then existed, they were on the highest point of the hills of Galilee. It is as "a city set on a hill;" and here a wide prospect opens before them. *Lake Tiberias* lies in its deep basin to the south-east, with the high hills of *Bashan* rising upon the eastern shore and stretching out a vast uneven plain, cut by deep valleys and chasms running to the lake. Far in the south-east the fine mountains of *Gilead* rise beyond the deep *Jordan Valley*; nearer, *Mount Tabor* lifts its round poll on this side Jordan, marking where farther to the west *Nazareth* nestles upon its hills.

Or, from another point of view (*Benit*), *Lake Merom* lies just below in the valley, within its triangle-shaped shores, the Jordan



entering at the north in the middle of the "base," and issuing from the "apex" at the south. Above *Merom* (Bahr Hûleh) the western bank of Jordan, for six miles northward, is a marsh land or swamp, covered with tall reeds and flags. Through this marsh several small streams are seen threading their way, swelling out occasionally into small ponds that glitter among the reeds. On the eastern side extends, as far north as the mountains, a fertile, alluvial plain, rich as the prairie-land of the Mississippi Valley. Twenty miles to the north-east is the site of ancient *Dan* (Banias), the chief source of the Jordan; and ten miles beyond that *Hermon* rears his high head, streaked with white lines of snow and ice, like the hair and beard of a Santa Claus. The whole country around the sources of the Jordan is in view, with the streams which unite to form that river—the *Dardâna*, *Hasbeiya*, *Leddân* and *Banias*.

Thence the holy company would press on toward the north-west, across black, volcanic rocks, down deep ravines, along winding, wooded valleys, through villages surrounded by fertile fields. The whole country is a succession of swelling, wooded hills and valleys, the ridges covered with small oak trees, and the distant hills rising still higher and more thickly wooded. On the second day of their journey, near the modern village *El-Hâris*, they come out upon the brow of a long, steep descent, leading down from the mountainous region over which they had been travelling, to a lower tract lying between this region and the plain of Tyre. If the air were not filled with haze, they could see from this point the coast and bright waters of the *Mediterranean*, with here and there a ship bound for or from Tyre, looking like white specks upon the green sea. *Tyre* itself would be seen spreading over its peninsula, with its plain stretching around it to the bordering hills, each teeming with villages and coloured and fringed with green fields and wooded heights. As they pass down the descent, the prickly oak, the maple, arbutus, sumac, oleander and other trees rise on either side along the valley path.

We cannot tell where they stopped, of course; perhaps near the site of old *Ramah* of Asher: if so, it would not be hard to find solitude; for the region is wild enough, abounding, in parts,

in bears, hyænas, wolves, jackals, foxes and many other animals. Or, more likely, they may have halted farther to the north, at *Kanah*, described in Josh. xix. 28 as one of the towns in the northern part of the tribe of Asher, whose border extendeth unto Sidon. In any case, they would likely need the shelter of the "house" in which our Lord sought to be hid; for at the season of their journey (probably April) the wind at times would be high and cold, and even if they had carried their tents with them, like modern travellers, they would need the shelter of walls.

---

#### NOTES.

21. Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

22. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

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21. *Coasts*—Still in Galilee, for the woman *came out*; on the border. "He entered into a house and would have no man know; but he could not be hid."—Mark says. . . . 22. A *Canaanitess*, from the ancient name of her country. She was, in language and education, a Greek (Hellenist), of the province of Syria, district of Phœnicia (Syro-Phœnician). So a *Canadian* (the provincial name) might be called a *British* woman, from the ancient name of England; from her residence, an *American*; and from her language, *English*; these names corresponding (in order) to those of the *Phœnician* woman of *Canaan*, *Syrian*

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Ver. 21. What place did Christ leave? what *tribes* did he pass through? what is the nature of the country? What is meant by the *coasts* of Tyre and Sidon? Where did Jesus stay? for what purpose? with what success? Mark vii. 24.

22. Explain the names given the woman here and in Mark vii. 26. Why did the mother say, "Have mercy on me?" Why was Christ called the *Son of David*? Luke i. 32, and ii. 4, 11. Was the daughter old or young?

23. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

24. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

and *Greek*, as used here and in Mark. *Came*—Jesus had come near, yet she *came*. “*Come*, all ye!” *Me*—She made her child’s case her own. *Son of David*—Even the heathen knew the hopes of Jews as to the Messiah. David was born and anointed king in Bethlehem. Christ was born of the house of David and at the city of David, and sits as King upon the throne of David. Luke i. 32, and ii. 4, 11. *Daughter*—She was *young*. *Grievously*—The sadder the case, the stronger the plea with Jesus. . . . 23. *Not a word*—No encouragement, but no refusal. Unanswered prayers are not unnoticed nor unavailing. If God does not say “*No!*” still hope for “*Yes!*” *Disciples*—She had gone to them to get their influence with the Master, hoping their prayers would avail, though her own did not. It is well to seek the prayers of the Church, of the pious. *Disciples came*—Jesus may have been in one of the apartments of the house, the disciples in the court. *Besought*—But she *cried*. *Send her away*—Satisfied. It was sympathy that urged their request; they wished her plea granted. So Jesus understands them. . . . 24. *Said*—To the disciples; the woman is not present now. Our Lord would have them notice that they were interceding for a Gentile. Not to chide, but that they might afterward remember that this act of love toward, and recognition of faith in a heathen, was at their own request. He thus led them on, and they were self-committed to his war on caste. “Do you not forget? This is a Gentile, and I am sent but to Jews. Can you intercede for such? Your Jewish prejudices must have been soundly shaken, then.” *Not sent, but*, etc.—

23. Did Jesus *refuse* her request? Was his silence encouraging? Who induced the disciples to come to Jesus? Did they wish the child to be healed? What shows this in Christ’s answer? Why did the woman “cry after” the disciples? Is it well for Christians to intercede for others?

24. Did the disciples know that the woman was a Gentile? What did this request of theirs indicate as to their liberal views toward heathens? Was Jesus *less* liberal? Did he wish to censure or to confirm their charity?

25. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

26. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.

(1.) It was economy of time and effort, for Israel was best prepared of all nations, and Christ's time was short. (2.) The covenant obligations were with Israel. (3.) Prudence required some regard to the prejudices of Jews; had the work of Jesus not been first and chiefly with them, they all would have repelled him; they were to be led gently. (4.) Concentrated effort upon one people would most likely establish a vital centre of influence. *Sheep*—But lost, all lost! *House of Israel*—It embraces now all the family of the faithful: to the Jews first, before whom He was fleeing; but also to the Gentiles, who now came out to meet him. . . . 25. *Then*—When the disciples had besought. This Gentile is received at the request of His Jewish disciples. *Came*—The second time. *Worshipped*—Prostrated herself. *Lord!*—My Lord, therefore Master over devils too. *Help*—By helping my child. Love is best served when its suffering objects are served. *Me*—“Even me.” Short prayer, but it has all the points; and we are not heard for much speaking. . . . 26. *He answered*—Not at first, as she had hoped, but *answered*. *Said*—Kindly, we cannot doubt. *Let the children first be filled*—So Mark. “You must wait your turn, which does not come until the Jews are served. My ministry is children's bread; it is not fitting to give it to aliens.” The woman doubtless knew the peculiar views and expressions of the Jews, and would take this remark in its true figurative sense; it would not seem harsh and insulting, as such would now to us; simply as giving a good ground for refusal. *Children's*—Yet he had just denounced them, and they were seeking his life; long-suffering Jesus! Did he mean to awaken in the woman's heart the thought, “Am I a

What good reasons can be given why Jesus should *first* have been sent to the Jews, based on economy, God's covenant, prudence, success? Why were the Jews called the *house of Israel*? Meaning of *Israel*?

25, 26. What was the *children's bread* here referred to? Did Jesus mean that it was not fitting to give it *at all*? See Mark vii. 27. In what sense would the woman understand the word *dogs*?

27. And she said, Truth, Lord : yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table.

28. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith : be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

child? for I have asked a child's blessing." *Dogs*—Little dogs, a diminutive. Troops of half-wild, hungry dogs infest the villages of the East, roaming outside the walls of house and town. 2 Kings ix. 10, 30.—Jezebel's death. They were unclean animals. Isa. lxvi. 3. The terms *dog*, *dog's head*, *dead dog*, were used as terms of reproach and humility. The word as used by the Jews and here, signified a profane person, a Gentile, one outside the pale of the Jewish Church. "Without are dogs." Rev. xxii. 15. So Mohammedans now speak of Christians; and the word among us has a like use; even the diminutive *Kunaria*, which here commentators suppose to have softened our Lord's remark, among us adds force to the expression. *Pup!* is a strong utterance of contempt, but *puppy* is still stronger. Yet the dog is a noble and useful animal, and its qualities were not unknown to the ancients. Isa. lvi. 10; Job xxx. 1. And the Egyptians had many breeds of beautiful and valuable dogs, particularly hunters and house-dogs. . . . 27. *Truth*—"Yes, we Gentiles are dogs, and it is not fit that thy ministry, the Jews' portion, should be given to us; but may we not have the crumbs which the children do not care for—which they unwittingly or wantonly drop?" She may have known and referred here to the fact of Christ's being now hidden from the Pharisees. Christ's word is truth, even when it seems counter to our will. *Crumbs*—"If I am a dog, give me a dog's care, the help which the children want not." But the children eat crumbs too; as Lazarus. Luke xvi. 21. *Master's*—She recognizes the spiritual superiority of Jews. . . . 28. *Great*—The praise was fitting and not hurtful to one so humble. *Faith*—It was faith that conquered; for she

27. How were the Jews now *wasting* the Bread of Life sent to them? How did this fact strengthen the woman's plea?

28. Why was such praise a benefit to this woman? How had it shown

certainly walked not by sight. *Wilt*—We have our will when our will becomes Christ's will. *Made whole*—And so she proved herself an "Israelite indeed"—one who, as a prince, prevailed with God. Gen. xxxii. 24.

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## ANALYSIS.

### I. The Sufferer.

*Facts.*—She was young; in the power of Satan; a very bad case; cured at her mother's plea; by Jesus' word; instantly; exhausted by the struggle of the departing devil, or resting after the release; either probable.

*Thoughts.*—How many souls of youth are in Satan's power, possessing and possessed by unclean spirits! If Satan so ravages the body, how sadly must he mar the soul!—Value above rubies a mother's prayers.—Friends' words may reach the heart of Christ in our behalf, but Christ's words alone can reach our hearts with healing.—It is better to be exhausted by a struggle in which Satan is cast out than to be exhausted in the devil's service.

### II. The Suppliants.

*Facts.*—1. *The Mother.*—She came; cried to Jesus; besought aid of the disciples; prostrated and cried again; confesses her unworthiness, but pleads again; returns home and finds her child restored. . . . 2. *The Disciples.*—Came to Jesus and interceded for the woman.

*Thoughts.*—"Go and tell Jesus."—FAITH overcomes, for she leans upon the Almighty One; is *importunate*, for she reaches toward the everlasting arms; has no confidence in the flesh, but all confidence in Jesus; therefore *Humility* is her handmaid; is prudent, for her only Counsellor is He who was made unto us wisdom, and all whose words are truth.—Take the lowest place,

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her faith? In what sense did she prove herself an "Israelite indeed"? Have you praying mothers? Why should you value their prayers?

the very lowest, if Christ says it is yours. By and by he may say, Go up higher!—The joy of finding our children saved! Teacher, have you felt it? To-day go to Jesus, and at your next return to your Sabbath-home look to find some of your little family with "clean hearts." . . . 2. *The Disciples*.—Never forget a request to pray coming from your class; encourage them to make such requests.—Christian charity destroys caste. Remember the heathen in prayer.—How we ought to pray when our prayers so help others! How sweet this work of intercession! Do you pray for your scholars *personally*, presenting them by name to Jesus?

### III. The Supplication.

*Facts*.—It was direct, short, in modest phrase; fortified with argument—*i.e.*, a plea.

*Thoughts*.—What arguments we may bring for our children's salvation: "Grievously vexed;" "Help me;" give me at least crumbs; if not a child's, a dog's portion! Only crumbs asked, and Thou art a KING! Lord, canst Thou refuse?

### IV. The Saviour.

*Facts*.—He retires; grants the woman audience; is silent; gives the disciples audience; explains his mission; receives the woman again; tries her faith; gives praise and healing.

*Thoughts*.—Jesus knows the proud Pharisee afar off, but is not hid from this humble mother.—He withholds blessings to test and deepen faith.—Even the outcast of Israel he receives.—He loves our importunity. He accounts our faith righteousness, and approves it. He encourages to most earnest prayers for our friends and children. "He is able, even to the uttermost."—"Do not be discouraged, for Jesus is your FRIEND."

### V. The Success.

*Facts*.—The disciples were heard; the woman was heard; the child was healed.

*Thoughts*.—The best gift to a mother—to a teacher—is a child's salvation. May this "*gift of God*" come to all ours! How close and plain the correspondence between a mother's

(a teacher's) prayers and a child's conversion!—If the body is worth such efforts, how should we work and pray for the soul's weal!—Strong, persistent, humble, prudent faith will bring saving to all our children.—Sure reward of a mother's intercessions for her child; but it is Jesus who now intercedes for us.—A mother's love! Can she forget? She may, yet will not I, saith the Lord.—The joy in that home, in the child's heart and in the mother's heart.—The joy in heaven over the penitent. Thus, the prayers of the saints give songs to the angels.—Our success in prayer is as our faith and resolution.

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### DIRECTORY.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.” Luke xviii. 1. THEMES.—*For Thought*: The power of prayer in behalf of others. *For Devotion*: Lord, save our young friends (children, scholars) from Satan's power! *Practical*: I will never despair of any soul as long as I can pray. . . . CATECHISM.—Q. 98. What is prayer? A. Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.

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### SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK.

BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS.—Jacob's wrestling at Penuel, Gen. xxxii; Abraham pleading for Sodom, Gen. xviii. 23-33. . . . On the blackboard write at the top,

 *My Mother's Prayers!*

For review, use the Analysis, thus:

SUFFERER.  
 SUPPLIANTS.  
 SUPPLICATION.  
 SAVIOUR.  
 SUCCESS.



## LESSON II.

### "EPHPATHA"—THE STAMMERING TONGUE LOOSED.

Mark vii. 31-37. Parallel, Matt. xv. 29-31.

#### HISTORICAL CONNECTION.

From the scene of the interview with the Syro-Phœnician woman, Jesus passed around the north border of Galilee, and along the eastern border of Phœnicia, as far north, it may be, as the Leontes. Hence the holy company must have turned eastward, through Merj Ayun to Hasbeiya, and so around Hermon, through Cæsarea Philippi to the eastern coast of Galilee. They would encompass the foot of Mt. Lebanon, passing through wild, solitary regions, in the midst of most sublime scenery, being continually in view of the peaks of Lebanon and Hermon and the head waters of the Jordan. The territory of the Decapolis through which, in the main, their path lay, was so called from *ten cities* (for so *Decapolis* signifies) whose local governments had entered into a confederacy after the manner of the Greeks of that time. Wandering through these solitary regions, an exile from his country, an object of persecution by his countrymen, we may believe that our Lord's heart was heavy and cast down.

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#### NOTES.

31. And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the Sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coast of Decapolis.

32. And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an

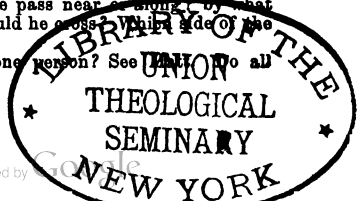
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32. *They*—Great multitudes came. (Matt.) *Bring one*—Mark records but one case; many afflicted were brought. They cast them at Christ's feet, and hastened off to bring others. *Deaf*

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31. Where were the coasts of Decapolis? trace the route of Jesus; would he see Tyre? What river would he pass near or along? by what mountains? The sources of what river would he cross? Which side of the Sea of Galilee would he come to?

32. Did the people bring more than one person? See Matt. xv. 29.



impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him.

33. And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue;

*stammerer*—He could not speak because of deafness; and besides, the muscles of his tongue were diseased. *Put his hand*—Heal him; they supposed the virtue must be conveyed by touch. Laying on of hands was an ancient and natural sign of transfer of authority, or of some quality (usually good) from one to another. It became an equivalent phrase for “blessing” or “benefiting.” . . . 33. *Took*—Beckoned. *Aside*—He would have the man’s mind wholly fixed upon himself. And then the signs which were used in the healing of the mute, and which seemed necessary and were appropriate in his case, might have been misunderstood by the ignorant and superstitious multitude, who would have attributed the healing to the signs, or would have attached undue importance to them, to the hindrance of God’s glory. *Fingers into ears*—As much as to say by signs, “Be opened!” He thus showed the man that he could and would unstop his ears. *Spit*—Spittle was supposed to have healing virtue; perhaps arising from the fact that animals cleanse their wounds by licking, which, however, is only healing, because the tongue cleanses, and the spittle moistens and cools inflammation. It was a popular sign, at least, of communicating healing virtue. Our Lord used it, Mark viii. 23; John ix. 6. It was not only here a sign of Christ’s purpose, but the medium by which he chose to communicate his curing power. It was especially appropriate in this case, as saliva moistens the tongue and mouth, keeping it flexible. When it is not secreted freely

deaf mutes have impediments in their speech? what is the usual cause of their dumbness? Wherein was this man’s case worse than most mutes? Why did they wish Jesus to put his hand on the man? what did such an act usually signify? In what religious rites is it still used? Who brought this man to Jesus, probably?

33. Why take him aside? why put his fingers into his ears? could the mute understand these signs? Does the spittle of animals have healing virtue? why do they lick their wounds? What notion had the people about the healing properties of spittle? When did Jesus do the same thing? John ix. 6; Mark viii. 23. Show the special propriety of spittle as a sign in this case.

34. And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.

35. And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.

the organs of speech are parched, and speaking is impeded and made painful. Jesus by this sign said in the only language which the mute understood, "Be unloosed by my power!" *Touched*—With the tip of the finger which had been wet by the spittle. . . .

34. *Looking up, &c.*—The sign that the Father wrought through him. *Sighed*—An agonizing, ejaculatory prayer; he ever sought the co-operation of the Father. The look for the man's instruction, the sigh for his own strengthening. *Saith*—The man (so some) could now partially hear; or, rather, as in the cases of the Widow of Nain's son and Lazarus, the power of opening went forth with the word. The man's attention having been fixed, his thoughts rightly directed, his mind enlightened, and faith imparted by the methods described, the Lord's "*Ephphatha!*" goes forth, and the man is healed. *Ephphatha* is an Aramean (Syro-Chaldee) word, the vernacular language of the people of Palestine, after the Babylonish captivity; spoken along with Greek, in our Lord's time. . . . 35. *And straightway*—Not a gradual, but an immediate cure. *Opened*—Restored to the natural, healthful state. They now communicate sound to the nerve (auditory) of hearing; the mind was opened to the outer world by opening Ear-gate. *String*—Ligament; showing disease here also. *Spake*—Here was a miracle, the man could speak, having never learned. Or, it may be only meant that he now had the power of distinct utterance. Perhaps it may not have been a case of congenital deafness, and the man may in child-

34. Interpret all these signs of Jesus—the spittle, the touched ears and tongue, the look up to heaven. Why did he sigh? Of what language is this word, *Ephphatha*? Did the man hear it? what power went with it? What power will go with Christ's words to open your heart if you trust him?

35. How long was the mute being cured? How did he know how to *speak*? when had he learned that? Show how this spirit of Jesus represents the effectual call of the Spirit. *What is it to be "Renewed by the Spirit;" to have the heart opened?* A. To have the mind enlightened, Acts xxiv. 18; the will subdued and changed, Ezek. xi. 19; the old man

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 were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath

hood have heard, and have spoken a few words, but never plainly. Such cases are not uncommon. *Plain*—Accurately. This fact would strike the popular mind: “He speaks; yes, and *correctly!*” . . . 36. *Charged them*—Who brought him; they had seen the cure then; it was apart from the *multitude*; the man was doubtless included. *Tell no one*—So often; Mark iii. 12; v. 43; viii. 26; ix. 9. For various reasons; to prevent popular excitement, tumult or demonstrations of personal regard; to prevent false or partial statements; to check self-inflation and keep the thoughts on the *CURER* rather than on the cure. This last reason seems of force here; the soul was opened to the life of God, as well as to the sounds of the outer world; and frequent and public detailing of experiences is not the best thing for spiritual growth in case of new converts. In this same region, Mark v. 19, 20, the Gadarene demoniac, at the Lord’s bidding, published his cure; it may be as a guard against his solitary habits. *So much*, etc.—This strange prohibition stimulated the desire to tell. *They*—It may only apply to the man’s friends, but doubtless also to himself. *Published*—An act of disobedience, showing weak faith; their conduct showed the wisdom of our Lord’s charge; they were incompetent heralds, because not adhering to the Master’s strict word. If *they* applies to the friends alone, we cannot so much wonder, as only the mute was spiritually healed. Yet all were bound to obey. . . . 37. *And were astonished*—That is, the multitude (Matt.) who heard the report. They heralded *more abundantly* and *superabundantly* the people were astonished, *saying*: “*He hath done*

put off, Eph. iv. 22, 23, 24; all sins put away, *ib.* 25-32. *How and by whom is the heart to be renewed?* A. By the holy calling of God, 2 Tim. i. 8, 9; washing of regeneration, Tit. iii. 4, 5; quickening with Christ, Eph. ii. 4; drawing of the Father, John vi. 44; sanctification of the Spirit, 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14; belief of the truth, John vi. 45; inward working of God, co-working with our wills, Phil. ii. 13.

36, 37. Whom did Christ so charge? why? Did they sin in disobeying

done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

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*all things well!*" and "by this they glorified the God of Israel"—Matt. Contrast the conduct of the Gadarenes, Matt. viii. 34. *Deaf, dumb*—Plural, in the original, referring to the many of Matt. xv. 30; or the power to cure one showing the habit.

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### ANALYSIS.

#### I. The Mute's Condition.

*Facts.*—He was deaf; dumb; with tied tongue; beyond human healing; beyond hearing of Christ's word.

*Thoughts.*—The ear of the impenitent's heart is deaf to the promises, warnings and threats of God. . . . The tongue of the evil man is in bondage to Satan, tied by him from praising God. . . . The tongue's natural uses are to bless God and benefit men; is yours so used? . . . He *could* not hear, nor confess; you *will* not.

#### II. The Methods of Cure.

*Facts.*—He was brought; Jesus took him apart; touched his ears and tongue; looked up; prayed; spoke.

*Thoughts.*—Bring your impenitent friends with faith to Jesus; he alone is the soul's Physician. A quiet, private interview is often the best opportunity for making religious impressions. Take your friends and scholars apart from the school, to your own home or the minister's house, for conversation and prayer; this secures attention, disarms opposition, exposes the heart outside its iron-clad sheet. . . . Jesus often takes us apart to the sick room, the retirements of leisure, the humbler walks of life, that he may bless us with his sweet "*Ephphatha!*" . . . The wise teacher adapts his methods of instruction to the minds to be reached. If Ear-gate cannot be reached, attack Eye-gate or Feel-gate. Where there is a will there is a way to reach even

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this? Did the mute also so offend? Is it ever right to disobey Jesus in order to do good?

the worst cases. . . . Jesus seeks entrance to our hearts by all the senses: what persistent love! We may preach to men even with hand and eye; children and the simple-minded are often reached by the manner, when words are useless. . . . A model for the Christian worker: study privacy; fix the mind on Christ; adapt the methods to the mind; agonize in prayer before speaking the word. . . . "*Ephphatha!*"—the teacher's text; it is his to say "Be opened!"—to the mind to know, to the heart to feel, to the mouth to speak, and to the hand to distribute the love of the dear Jesus. . . . Do you not understand? Then seek Jesus who says "*Ephphatha!*" to his word; he "opened the Scriptures" on the way to Emmaus. . . . Do you not feel? Lydia's heart was "opened;" and Jesus says "*Ephphatha!*" to the closed heart. . . . "*Be opened!*" a New Year's motto for mind, heart and hand. . . . Christ's "*Ephphatha!*" opens for us the gates of the eternal kingdom. . . . "The priest who administers baptism moistens the catechumen's ears and his nostrils with spittle while pronouncing the words used by Christ when touching the ears and the tongue of the man possessed by a dumb devil—'*Epheta.*'"—*Weninger's Cath. Manual*, p. 251. This is but a small part of the Romish ceremony in baptism. How strongly and sadly in contrast with the few, simple signs of Jesus, each one of which had a distinct and necessary use! In studying Christ's methods we should rather seek to know and act upon the *principle* which prompted them than to imitate the very acts.

### III. The Mighty Change.

*Facts.*—Straightway; his ears were opened, his tongue loosed; he spake plainly.

*Thoughts.*—You too, although never dumb, hear by Christ's power and will. . . . A soul open to all the holy words and thoughts and joys of the new life, and the better world! Such is the renewed man. . . . If one could really hear how sweet are the songs, the prayers and the teaching of the church and Sabbath-school, he must have Christ open his heart. . . . The soul healed by Christ should utter itself with no uncertain sound. . . . Is your tongue tied and your speech stammering when you would

speak and pray in the social meeting? the touch of Jesus will give you fluent words, for it gives a full heart. Go near to him in prayer. . . . Dear children, Jesus stands before the gates of your heart, ready to say, Ephphatha! Will you say to him, "Be opened?" "Behold I stand at the door and knock, if any man *open unto me*, I will come in." Rev. iii. 20. "Knock, and it shall be *opened*." Matt. vii. 7. But *now*, or you may stand saying "open," unheeded. Luke xiii. 25. . . . Blessed name of Jesus: "*He that openeth*, and no man shutteth!" Rev. iii. 7.

#### IV. The Master's Charge.

*Facts.*—He charged them, Tell no man!

*Thoughts.*—There are times when even God's goodness to us should be kept within our own hearts; always so, when the telling would run to vain boasting, false coloring or hindrance of God's will. . . . Silence is often a duty. But *our* commission is: "Let him that HEARETH say, Come!" Rev. xxii. 17.

#### V. The Mistaken Calling.

*Facts.*—They published; even more widely than if not charged.

*Thoughts.*—Beware of the strong temptation to tell prohibited news. . . . What shall I not tell? Whatever is contrary to the word and spirit of Christ. . . . An act of disobedience is never a good act, for we may not do evil that good may come. Rom. iii. 8. God calls some to preach and teach the gospel; some he restrains from this holy work. Am I sent? Jer. xxiii. 21. Who is restrained? Only he who can find in God's providence to him a plain "Tell no one!" . . . Disobeying Christ's commands shows weak love and faith.

#### VI. The Multitude's Doxology.

*Facts.*—They were greatly astonished; they praised his doing; they repeated his deeds; they glorified Jehovah.

*Thoughts.*—The more abundantly Christ's work is published the more abundantly the people will wonder. . . . Christ's work is indeed well done; for it is wrought by a perfect worker; it is "very good." Gen. i. 33.

## DIRECTORY.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*He that openeth and no man shutteth,*”—*Rev. iii. 7.* THEMES.—*For Thought:* The *Senses* are the gates of the *soul*; and the objects which appeal to them need to be sanctified by Christ’s touch. *For Prayer:* Lord Jesus, touch by thy Spirit our deaf ears and stammering tongues that we may hear thy word and speak thy praise! *For Life:* Keep both ears and tongue under the power of Christ. . . . CATECHISM.—Q. 31. What is effectual calling? A. Effectual calling is the work of God’s spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.

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 SUPERINTENDENT’S DESK.

BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS.—Lydia, Acts xvi. 14; The blind man, Mark viii. 22-26; Paul and Ananias, Acts ix. 17, 18.

PICTURE LESSON ON THE BLACKBOARD.—A section of a city wall, showing a gate; an *ear* represented as carved over it. In the foreground, a soldier in ancient armor, representing a teacher or preacher; in one hand a standard displaying a cross, in the other a trumpet for the summons to surrender. The fancy is suggested by Bunyan’s siege of Mansoul in his “Holy War.” The gate is *Ear-gate*. The soldiers now occupying Mansoul are Mark vii. 21, 22; Gal. v. 19, 20, 21. Those which follow Immanuel, and would go in with him, are Gal. v. 22, 23; 2 Peter i. 5, 6, 7. Below, the *Golden Text* for the day: “EPH-PHATHA—*Be opened!*”



## LESSON III.

### THE MOUNTAIN FEAST—FOUR THOUSAND FED.

Matt. xv. 32-39. Parallel, Mark viii. 1-9.

#### NOTES.

32. Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.

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32. *Then*—During the three days' stay upon the mountain, referred to in Lesson II. The scene of the miracle was one of the high hills upon the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, which form the supporting wall of the table-land of Bashan. These rise to the height of from one to two thousand feet, are steep, but flat upon the top. *Called*—As the future "witnesses" to the world of such acts, He would satisfy them that the use of divine power was fully justified. There is the same regard for fitness in all Christ's miracles; they were not arbitrary exercises of power. *I have compassion*—The key to all Christ's life and works. He had been showing his compassion for three days by healing the diseased. He here asserts it as a reason for further benefits. *They continue with me*—They had bivouacked upon the mountain; their tents were pitched in groups around; an animated and picturesque scene. These people were well used to such open-air life. Some of them *may* have been of the wandering tribes who still yearly visit this region for the sake of the rich pasturage of the Jaulan, about the beginning of May, the probable period of this event. *Eat*—Their food was very simple, chiefly wheat or barley cakes; they were used to preparing "daily their daily bread," and rarely had any very great

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32. Where did this event occur? Why did the people come to Jesus? what had he been doing for them? Why did he take pains to call the disciples and explain to them? What three reasons does he give for his pity? what purpose does he declare? and what two reasons for it? See

33. And his disciples say unto him, Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude?

34. And Jesus saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and a few little fishes.

provision made for emergencies; especially now, as they came in haste, and tarried longer than expected, they would *have nothing*. *I will not*—I do not wish; “Not willing that any should perish.” *Fasting*—Unfed, hungry. *Faint*—Become weary, exhausted. *In the way*—To their own place of abode, which in some cases was distant. Mark. There were no hotels, as with us, furnishing all necessities. The wayside accommodations rarely went further than lodgings simply, travellers carrying, as they now do, their own provisions. All these details of the people’s condition and wants were considered by the Great Master. . . . 33. *Say unto him*—They freely inquired and reasoned; but afterward obeyed. *Whence*—A proper question commonly; their thoughts turned to human agencies to execute Christ’s will; but in thinking hastily of the place and way, they forgot the Source. *Should we*—Including the Master. “How is one able?” says Mark. Or, they expressed their own lack of power as servants to gratify his wish. *Much bread*—Many loaves. *Wilderness*—Uninhabited spot; but the hills on the seashore were bare. “Even if we could get the grain how prepare it?” *Fill*—Satisfy. . . . 34. *Loaves*—Round, flat, about an inch thick and six inches across; they were crisp, like biscuit, hence easily broken. *Have ye*—He asks for their own supply; they had not thought of that. *Seven*—He only asked for loaves, but they returned account of all their little stock; contrast Ananias and Sapphira, Acts v. 1, 2. *Fishes*—Fresh from the sea, where were plenty; or dried, and used with

Mark also. Were there many houses near? Were there good hotels on the various road-sides? Does Jesus still think of all the wants of the people? Did he think of the children too? were there children present?

33. What are the difficulties which the disciples state? was their question a proper one? what scene had they forgotten? Matt. xiv. 15-21. Did the phrase “should we” include Jesus?

34. Describe these loaves. How did their *return* correspond to the Lord’s *request*—more or less? How did this contrast with Ananias and Sapphira? Acts v. 1, 2. How long would such a supply have done Jesus and his own disciples?

35. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground.

36. And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

37. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full.

the bread as a relish. This was a small supply for thirteen men. . . . **35. Sit down**—Recline; that is, he told them to take the usual position of persons about to eat; as we would say, Be seated at table. It was a test of their faith: "Why should we sit; there is nothing to eat?" It was also decent, orderly and convenient that they should observe the usual forms. . . . **36. Gave thanks**—This seems to have been Christ's custom before eating. Mark speaks of blessing the fishes separately. For blessing among the Jews, see 1 Sam. ix. 13; Deut. viii. 10. The custom prevailed, and still prevails, in the East. The present manner among the Egyptians is a fair sample of all. Each person before he begins to eat says: "In the name of God!" this in a low, audible voice, and by the master of the house first. It is considered both a grace, and invitation to any present. If any one so addressed do not partake he must say: "May it be productive of enjoyment!" or like words; else it is thought the evil eye has been cast upon the food, and "there is no blessing." **Gave to disciples**—Returned to them with his blessing; but only to give out to the needy. From Mark it would seem that the bread was distributed first. **Disciples to multitude**—A great crowd for twelve men to wait upon; but there was probably, as when the five thousand were fed, some order by which this could readily be done. . . . **37. Did all eat**—Not a partial feast; *filled*, not a mere pretence; but a genuine, hearty meal. **Baskets** (spyrides)—The same as that

35. What was the usual posture of people at meals? Why did Jesus want them to recline as though at table? how would this act test their faith? Did they too know the scantiness of Christ's larder?

36. Why is it proper for *us* to give thanks before meals? How did the bread differ as it went to the disciples from its condition as it came *from* them? what had Jesus done to it?

37. Who caused the bread and fish thus to grow and multiply? How

38. And they that did eat were four thousand men, besides women and children.

39. And he sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coast of Magdala.

in which Paul escaped, Acts ix. 25; the number here corresponded to the loaves; in case of the five thousand, with the disciples. The basket then used was different, the *cophinus*, probably smaller. *Full*—The reward of those cheerful givers. . . . 38. *Men*—They would greatly exceed the number of women and children under these circumstances. *Children*—And the children too were fed! Yes, and by apostles! . . . 39. *Sent away*—For they were loth to leave. *The multitude*—Their friends healed, their souls instructed and purified, their bodies fed.

## ANALYSIS.

### I. The Compassionate Lord.

*Facts*.—Jesus calls his disciples; declares his pity, and the grounds of it; (1.) the destitution of the people; (2.) the cause for which they came and tarried; (3.) the length of their stay. Declares his purpose or wish to relieve their hunger, and the reasons for it; (*a.*) they had far to go, (*b.*) and might faint on the way.

*Thoughts*.—The friends of Christ are made partners of his compassionate plans. . . . Disciples, teachers, Jesus calls you to him to learn pity for fainting souls. . . . Boundless compas-

does Jesus do this in the fields and in the waters every year? How does this act of "creation" differ from the creation of the world? Who received these *fragments*? did they get back as much as they gave? In what way does this fact encourage to liberality? How does this order of Christ's teach *economy*?

38. What reason to suppose that there were many more men here than women and children? From whose hands did the children receive the bread? From whose do they now receive spiritual food? How did these people realize the promise of Ps. xxxiv. 10?

39. Did the people want to go? How long had they been with Jesus? Wherein was their condition better than when they came? Do you think they told of Christ's goodness? But if not, what would you say of them?

sion of Jesus, it embraces the multitude! . . . The infinite thought and care of Jesus compass *all* our wants; our store of food, our homes, the roughness of our way, our weakness. . . . Did not Jesus think of the little children, too? for they were in the multitude.

## II. The Ministering Disciples.

*Facts.*—They state the difficulties; (1.) the wilderness; (2.) the multitude; they gave up all their store to Jesus; they distributed to the crowd; they took up the fragments.

*Thoughts.*—Do not say “whence?” while Christ is before you bidding you do his will; yet ever say “whence?” for Christ’s will is to be done by your hands, with your means. . . . When Jesus bids, even apostles serve tables. . . . Economy, saving fragments (of time, and money, and labor, and supplies) is truly apostolic. Dare we waste the bread which Christ gives? . . . A missionary box is a good “basket” for a child to gather “fragments” in; will you not try it this year? . . . Their seven loaves came back to them seven baskets full! Prov. xi. 24, 25.

## III. The Meal—The Multiplied Loaves.

*Facts.*—The people sat at Christ’s bidding; the Lord blessed the bread; broke and gave to disciples; they to the people; the pieces multiplied to satisfy all, and to fill seven baskets.

*Thoughts.*—How often God tries our faith in the prayer, “Give us this day our daily bread!” . . . Never fail to give thanks for food before eating; if not audibly, silently. . . . Supping with our Lord! Christ at the head of the table; the ministering apostles, and the multitude of guests! So He who is the Bread of Heaven daily gives spiritual meat and drink to his own family. . . . “It was not a creation out of nothing, but an act of creative accretion, the bread growing and multiplying.” —*Alexander*. Yet so are all the God-wrought processes of nature; from the seed, spear, stock, head, come the grains multiplied “thirty, sixty, a HUNDRED FOLD.” Man’s hand gathers the grain, and forms it into the loaf, which the “Wonderful Numberer” again receives, and by his will multiplies a *thousand fold*

—for the hungry people on this mountain! We can no more explain one work than the other; and each confesses the Hand of God. So, too, the tiny egg becomes the little fish, whose spawn multiplies its species very many fold. The fish here becomes the object of the Master's power, and the multiplying process simply *goes on!* In each case the common object is the supply of man's daily wants; and the common power the energy of Him without whom "was not anything made that was made."

#### IV. The Many Witnesses.

*Facts.*—They remained hearing Christ until food was gone; they were fed and filled; were sent away.

*Thoughts.*—Three days with Jesus; *for ever* with the Lord! John xiv. 3. . . . What a "great cloud of witnesses" to the love and power of Jesus! Ought they to have spread his glory? Yet we all are daily fed by him. . . . Were there any who sat at that Mountain Feast, who went away to forget Jesus, and be lost? . . . Fellow-teachers, some are to give the Bread of heaven to men and women; but *we to the children.* Oh, that we may ever bear it to them, fresh from the hand of our Lord!

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#### DIRECTORY.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"I have compassion on the multitude." vs. 32. THEMES.—*For Thought:* The Divinity of Christ as shown here; and his Goodness as shown in feeding men year by year. . . . *For Prayer:* Lord Jesus, pity the suffering, dying millions who hunger for the Bread of Life! . . . *For Life:* I will seek that blessing of Christ Jesus which can multiply to me all needed mercies. . . . CATECHISM.—Q. 104. What do we pray for in the fourth petition? A. In the fourth petition, which is: *Give us this day our daily bread,* we pray that of God's free gift we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life, and enjoy his blessing with them. . . . BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS.—Elijah and the ravens; and the widow's barrel of meal and cruse of oil, 1 Kings xvii. 1-17. Elisha and the widow whose sons were to be sold; the pot of oil, 2 Kings iv. 1-8.



RUINS OF MAGDALA.

## LESSON IV.

### SEEKING SIGNS—THE SIGN OF JONAH.

**Matt. xvi. 1-13. Parallel, Mark viii. 10-21.**

#### HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL CONNECTION.

The facts of this lesson followed immediately the miracle of the loaves. The object of this trip across the Lake may have been to procure supplies for the contemplated journey to Mt. Hermon. Apart from the incident given below, the only N. T. association of *Magdala* is with Mary Magdalene, who was a native of the place. Magdala was situated about midway between Tiberias and Capernaum, three miles from each city. It was in the south-east corner of the plain of Genezareth. The present name is El-Mejdel. A few huts compose the modern town. The mountain which curves around the town on the west and south is steep, and from three to four hundred feet high. South of Mejdél the path to Tiberias runs along the side of this

hill, which pushes out boldly quite to the sea. About one mile south of Mejdal, two miles north of Tiberias, a small wady or glen breaks through this hill, at the mouth of which is a small arable plain now occupied by a few huts. Just by the beach, near together, are five or six fountains of clear water, each enclosed by a round reservoir of stone ten or twelve feet deep, and fifteen or twenty feet in diameter. Oleanders and thorn trees grow upon the plain. This place bears the name of 'Ain el-Barideh, "Cold Spring," and is supposed to be the site of *Dalmanutha*.

Somewhere along the shore, between this point and Mejdal, the boat containing the Lord and his apostles probably touched. Thus Matthew, in designating the point as "the coast of Magdala," and Mark as "the parts of Dalmanutha," were equally correct. It was more likely at or near the latter point that the vessel stopped. A steep hill would lie between it and Tiberias two miles south. Along the path over this hill, which runs some distance above the water, the Pharisees and Sadducees "came forth" to tempt Jesus. Tiberias was at that time the capital of Galilee and the residence of Herod; and it may be that there went forth with them some of the Herodians, for they all seem to have been in league to destroy Jesus, as the "leaven of Herod" is included by Mark in the warning given to the disciples.

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#### NOTES.

1. The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting, desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven.

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1. *Pharisees*—Mark omits *Sadducees*, but adds in the Lord's reproof, *the leaven of Herod*. It was probably another (or partly the same, Mark vii. 1) deputation from the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem, composed of the priestly and superstitious Pharisees, the skeptical and intellectual Sadducees, and the corrupt and time-serving Herodian courtiers. Or the first two may have simply

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1. What miracle had preceded this event? Matt. xv. 38. Where was that miracle wrought? To what place did Jesus then go? Matt. xv. 39.



been acting in concert with Herod. Each party was opposed to the others, but all were united now against Jesus. Formalism, Atheism, Erastianism,—a devil's tripod, certainly. *Came (forth)*—From Tiberias probably, or Capernaum; either place was near, and the news of Christ's landing could soon be carried by spies on the look-out for him. From the nature of the sea, a vessel could hardly be unnoticed at any point upon it, as the hills around it thoroughly commanded the view of the surface. There is no evidence that Jesus sought to escape them, or that his landing was in the night. *Tempting*—Trying; putting him to proof as to his Messiahship; yet it was a temptation indeed. *Desired*—Demanded as a condition of their belief. *Show*—to their sight. *Sign from heaven*—The third demand of this kind: (1.) John ii. 18; (2.) Matt. xii. 38, and now; it was regarded as more difficult, and indicative of power from heaven. If Jesus wrought by the power of Satan, whose sphere was the lower regions, they fancied that this kind of a sign would be beyond his power; so, also, if he wrought by magic, or by natural agencies. Perhaps, too, they urged the evidence which is spoken of in Joel ii. 30, 31, as attending the outpouring of the Spirit, and preceding the coming of the Lord,—“I will show wonders in the heavens,” &c.—which, indeed, was literally fulfilled at the Crucifixion and at Pentecost. Of *signs from heaven*, we have in the Old Testament, The Plagues of Hail, Ex. ix. 23; Darkness, Ex. x. 23; The Pillar, Ex. xiii. 21; The Sun and Moon Stayed, Josh. x. 12; The Dial of Ahaz; Elijah's Sacrifice on Mount Carmel, 1 Kings xviii. 38. In the New Testament, The Star and Glory at

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What name is given to this region by Mark? viii. 10. With what Bible woman is Magdala associated? Where was the place located? How near was Capernaum? and how near Tiberias, the capital of Herod's dominions? When had these officials been to Jesus before? Mark vii. 1. What brought them back? were these two parties friendly to each other? what now united them? How did they know when and where Jesus had landed? From what chief cities north and south of Magdala might they have come forth? Concerning what did they wish to tempt or rather *test* him? Why ask for a sign from heaven? Had they ever before made the same request? John ii. 18; Matt. xii. 38. What signs in heaven were wrought in the Old Testament?—By Moses, Ex. ix. 23; x. 23; by Joshua, Josh. x. 12; by Samuel, 1 Sam. xii. 18; by Elijah, 1 Kings xviii. 38. What in the New Testament? See Matt. ii. 2; Luke ii. 9; Matt. xvii. 5; Luke ix. 34; Mark xv. 23; Acts ix. 3. Did these people

2. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red.

3. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to-day: for

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the Nativity, Matt. ii. 2; Luke ii. 9; The Bright Cloud and Voice at Christ's Baptism, Matt. xvii. 5; The Transfiguration, Luke ix. 34; The Darkness at the Crucifixion, Mark xv. 23; Pentecost, Acts ii. 2; Saul's Conversion, Acts ix. 3. This Sanhedrim committee doubtless knew that Jesus would give them no such sign, and hoped thus to have some plausible grounds for declaring his claims false. . . . 2. *Answered*—Mark says, *He sighed deeply in his spirit*, over their perversity; or struggling in soul against the temptation. *Said*—Only words of reasoning and rebuke! . . . 3. *Foul weather*—A storm. The rains commence in Palestine in the latter part of October, and continue until the close of March. "They come mostly from the west and southwest, continuing for two or three days at a time, falling especially during the nights. Then the wind chops around to the north or east, and several days of fine weather succeed. During the months of November and December the rains continue to fall heavily; afterward they return only at longer intervals, and are less heavy."—*Robinson*. During this period the sky would of course often be consulted in order to determine the weather. The sun setting red in the west would indicate no clouds in the usual quarter at the usual time for expecting rain; and a sky red and cloudy in the morning would be the sure promise of a storm. Weather-signs of course vary with location; but these seem to be quite universal, and everybody has heard them expressed in the couplet:

"Red sky at night is the sailor's delight;  
Red in the morning the sailors take warning."

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really think Jesus would grant their request? Do you think they wanted him to do so?

2, 3. How did they learn these weather signs? At what time of day do the rains usually fall in Palestine during the rainy season? If the sun set red without lowering clouds, what kind of a night might be expected? What is the difference between the *red* of a clear sunset and of a cloudy sunrise? Do weather signs vary with location? Do you remember any couplet about "red sky at night?" What is the sense given to *hypocrites*!

the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?

4. A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign;

*O hypocrites!*—Read the Lord's definition, Mark vii. 6. Skilled in externals only, ye can read the fleeting and varying tokens upon the *outer face* of the heavens of God, but the *heart* of the God of heaven ye do not know; ye read only with eyes, not with heart, therefore are hypocrites. *Discern*—Judge of, distinguish between signs; distinguish between the same sign—a red sky—under different circumstances; distinguish the presence or absence of very important accompaniments, as sky simply glowing red, and a lowering, frowning red sky. *Times*—Eras, periods. The miracles suiting this period are not of the same character as those befitting other eras; can you not discriminate, and allot to it a sign appropriate? . . . 4. *Adulterous*—Figurative; departing from love and allegiance to God. Israel is spoken of as committing adultery with idols, Jer. iii. 9; Ezek. xxiii. 37. The *signs from heaven* especially (see above) wrought by Moses against Egypt; shown in the wilderness to the Israelites; wrought by Samuel when God was rejected from being king, and Saul chosen; and by Elijah on Carmel,—were notably before generations and under circumstances which merit this same reproach of *adulterous*. *Seeketh*—Demands. *No sign given*—To its demands, nor such as it demands. There were proofs enough of his Divinity—his life, his teachings, his beneficent miracles—but they were such as accorded with the character and mission of Jesus, “on earth, peace; good will toward men.” Since they would not have God's appointed and sufficient signs, they truly had *no signs*. *But the sign of Jonas [shall be given]*—To the

Mark vii. 6. How did our Lord's reference to the weather-signs point out this peculiarity in their character? Why do different “times” and people need different kinds of signs or miracles to teach them God's will?

4. In what figurative sense is Israel called adulterous? Jer. iii. 9; Ezek. xxiii. 37. How account for this disposition of the wicked to demand outward signs to prove spiritual truths? What proofs had Jesus already given of his Messiahship? How did the signs which he had already given correspond to Christ's loving character and mission? What benevolent end would a sign out of heaven have then accomplished? When Jesus

and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.

5. And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread.

6. Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

first demand for a sign, John ii. 19, Jesus had said: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." To the second, Matt. xiii. 39, he answers as here, but explains more freely, *ib.* verse 40. The great sign to be given to the Jews, and to all men, was the stay of Jesus in the grave, and his issuing thence upon the third day. This was typified, or at least signified, by the coming forth of Jonah from the whale's belly to witness to the Ninevites. The sailors had cast him overboard, had perhaps seen him devoured, as they thought, by the great fish (shark), and could add their testimony to his own story of remarkable deliverance. He came forth from the belly of the shark to testify to the Gentile Ninevites. *And he left them*—With these solemn words; yet they were not hopeless, for they had promise of the Resurrection and the Life, whose sign should be even to them. There was no effort to hinder his departure. The company stood upon the beach watching the boat speeding toward the north-eastern shore, bearing with it the rejected Jesus. Solemn moment! Will he come again? Did he ever come to them again? Let the very doubt urge us all to shun so sad an ending. . . .

5. Now follows the application of the above to the disciples. *Other side*—And had tied up the ship, ready to take out their provision-baskets and other baggage needed for their journeys. They now observed that they had *forgotten to take bread* in the excitement of the interview with the delegation, and in the hasty departure; they had only one loaf in the ship. . . . 6.

had wrought so many signs already, how could it be true that these unbelieving people had *no signs*? What is "the sign of the prophet Jonas?" How does Jesus answer to the *first* demand for a sign? John ii. 19; how to the *second*? Matt. xii. 39. What does this agreement show as to the Resurrection of Christ? Why did Jesus leave them? In what state were their minds and hearts? Does Jesus come to *you* to-day?

5, 6. What had caused the disciples to forget to take bread? How much

7. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread.

8. Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?

9. Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

10. Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

11. How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to

*Take heed*—Doubtless our Lord observed this as they were disembarking, heard their desponding remarks and uttered his warning. *Leaven*—So called because false doctrine goes through and through the whole character and life. He left them to think before explaining. . . . 7. *They reasoned*—They perceived the occasion of the remark, but utterly failed of its true application: “Since we have no bread, our Lord wants us to shun any prepared, and so made unclean, by those hypocrites across the lake. Does he mean to establish a *caste*, as between us his disciples and them? May we not get even leaven from them for preparing our food?” . . . 8. *Of little faith*—These first words give the clue to our Lord’s meaning. The disciples’ despondency over their scant store was the object of this rebuke. They were looking at external circumstances alone, forgetting the providence of God; they were reading the face of the sky, not the heart of Him whose love and power had fed a multitude; and this was the “hypocrisy” of the Pharisees, the result of the leaven of which he bade them take heed. . . . 9, 10, 11. Compare Mark viii. 18; Matt. xiii. 13. Searching questions! let us put them to ourselves. They make plain the Lord’s rebuke as against a superficial, mere

had they on board? Mark viii. 14. How would this lack of supplies likely affect them? Would they be apt to speak about it? What might have suggested the Lord’s figure of speech—*leaven*?

7. How did the disciples take Christ’s words? What reason could they suppose for shunning the real leaven of the Pharisees?

8, 9. Wherein had the disciples shown little faith? For what purpose does he recall these incidents? How should the recollection of past mercies affect our minds in present troubles?

10, 11, 12. How had the disciples shown the offence for which the Phari-

you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?

12. Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

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external and formal use of mind, heart, eyes and ears in regard to religion and the Messiah. The offence of the apostles was aggravated by their attempt to account for Christ's words, which savored yet more strongly of the condemned "leaven." . . . 12. *Then understood they*—Yet he had told them only what he did not mean; they made their own application. How Christ's searching words quickened their spiritual understanding!

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### ANALYSIS.

#### I. The Sign-Seekers.

*Facts.*—The Pharisees, Sadducees and Herodians united; came forth; in order to tempt Christ; demanded a sign from heaven; were rebuked; received no sign; were left.

*Thoughts.*—The fellowship of sinners is a confederacy against Christ. "Unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united." Gen. xlix. 6. . . . Many of you are waiting for more light, clearer evidence, deeper convictions, purer hearts, and holier ways before accepting and confessing Christ. Leave "sign-seeking!" Come just as you are, and just now. . . . God who is the offended Father rightly makes the conditions of peace; what presumption and folly for the condemned sinner to demand conditions! . . . He who will not be saved on Christ's terms, shall have no terms. . . . Jesus departs from his opposers, but abides with his friends: "Lo, I am with you always!"

#### II. The Great Sign.

*Facts.*—Christ shall die and rise again; this is the great sign to men; its likeness to the sign of Jonah.

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sees had just been rebuked? In what had they relied upon the *evidence of the senses alone*? What influence has doctrine upon life? Why should false doctrine be shunned?

*Thoughts.*—The Death and Resurrection of Jesus is the standing and sufficient proof of Christ's Messianic character. . . . "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." John xv. 13. . . . Do you reject this witness? Then neither signs from heaven nor from hell would convince you. Luke xvi. 30, 31. . . . Our one great theme: The Cross and the Sepulchre! O "Teacher of babes," tell them "the old, old story!"

### III. The Signs of the Leaven.

*Facts.*—The disciples forgot to bring bread; only one loaf left; mourn their destitution; are warned of the leaven, &c.; misunderstand; are rebuked; interrogated; enlightened.

*Thoughts.*—He who forgets God in his temporal reckonings has in him the leaven of the Pharisees. . . . Let the thought of past mercies give confidence for future provision. . . . Forgetfulness is sin. "Remember thy Creator!" . . . Signs of the evil leaven: Doubt, Distrust, Forgetfulness of God's works. . . . Only one loaf in that company of faithful disciples, but they had the Bread of Life!

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### DIRECTORY.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"We believe that Jesus died and rose again." 1 Thess. iv. 14. THEMES.—*For Thought:* The sufficiency of the proof which we all have of the Truth of our religion. *For Prayer:* Lord Jesus, give us *faith* in thee as our Risen Redeemer and as our bountiful Provider! *For Life:* I will not demand more proof, but follow the proof which I have of the Truth as it is in Jesus. . . . CATECHISM.—Q. 28. Wherein consisteth Christ's exaltation? A. Christ's exaltation consisteth in his rising again from the dead on the third day, in ascending up into heaven, in sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and in coming to judge the world at the last day. . . . BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS.—Of inefficiency of signs to the spiritually blind: Pharaoh; Jezebel after Elijah's sacrifice; Dives and Abraham.

## LESSON V.

### THE TRUE CONFESSION.

**Matt. xvi. 13-20. Parallels, Mark viii. 27-30; Luke ix. 18-21.**

#### HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL CONNECTION.

Our Lord and his company, having crossed Lake Tiberias, find themselves secure from legal persecution by the Jews. They return to the region of Mt. Hermon, which was under the government of the tetrarch Philip. Cæsarea Philippi lay at the foot of Mt. Hermon near the site of ancient *Laish* or *Dan*. It was afterward called *Panias*, from a name of the mountain above it which was held sacred to the sylvan god Pan. The name *Cæsarea* was given by Prince Philip in honour of the Roman emperor, and the town was known as *Cæsarea Philippi* (Philip's *Cæsarea*) to distinguish it from *Cæsarea Stratonis*, near the foot of Mt. Carmel, the town so frequently spoken of in the Acts of the Apostles.

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#### NOTES.

13. When Jesus came into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?

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13. *He asked*—Luke says he was in a private place praying, his disciples being with him. The neighborhood of Cæsarea Philippi abounded in solitudes. Mark says, "by the way he asked," &c., which may mean that the incident occurred while travelling upon the road; or, more probably, that it was during one of their halts for rest. *Whom do men say*—The disciples' familiar intercourse with the people gave full opportunity to know. . . . *The Son of man*—The Son in likeness of man, incarnate. Jesus gives thus his own confession of his Messiahship.

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13. Where is Cæsarea Philippi? From what place and what course did Jesus travel? what reason for making this journey? meaning of *coasts*?



14. And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

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

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The sense attaching to the term *Son of man* among the Jews may be seen Dan. vii. 13. See also Rev. i. 13; xiv. 14. . . . 14. *John the Baptist*—Risen from the dead. This opinion prevailed at the court of Herod Antipas, who had murdered John. Herod himself so thought. *Elias*—Elijah the Tishbite. "He was the prophet for whose return in later years his countrymen have looked with most eager hope. Passover after passover the Jews of our own day place the paschal cup on the table, and set the door wide open, believing that that is the moment when Elijah will appear."—*Stanley, Hist. J. Ch.* The last sentence of the Old Testament, Mal. iv. 5, 6, is a prediction concerning his coming. This our Lord declared was fulfilled in John Baptist. Matt. xi. 14. *Jeremiah*—The life and writings of this prophet were associated intimately with the calamities of the Jews upon the destruction of the first temple; it seems to have been thought that in like manner he would be associated in some way with the restored glory of the second temple during the reign of Messiah. One of the traditions concerning Jeremiah is that he hid in a cave the tabernacle, the ark and the altar of incense, which he declared should remain concealed until the time that God should gather his people together again, when they would be revealed with the Shekinah and the cloud, as in the days of Moses and Solomon. Maccab. ii. *Prophets*—Ancient (distinguishing from John), risen again, so Luke explains; their notions were vague, their expressions indefinite. . . . 15. *Who say ye*—The contrast was to appear so that the truth might be plainer. *Ye* is plural, addressed to all. The period was one which required an intelligent review of their faith and renewal of their confession; ene-

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Under what circumstances (Mark viii. 27; Luke ix. 18) did this conversation occur? Why should Jesus ask the disciples this question? What did Christ claim in calling himself *Son of man*?

14. Who supposed Jesus to be John Baptist? Luke ix. 7-9; Matt. xiv. 1. What led some to suppose Jesus to be Elijah? Malachi iv. 5, 6. What was the character of Elijah? Who was Jeremias? what led men to look for his reappearance? Maccab. ii. and xvi.

15. To whom did Christ address this question? What was to be gained by having them now declare their faith?

16. And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou,

mies multiplied and waxed fiercer, and the Master's death was nigh. To every man this is the pivotal question of the spiritual life. O Christ, most holy Catechist, to thy most searching catechism may I ever prove as prompt, hearty, and heaven-taught a catechumen as thy great apostle and confessor! . . . 16. *Simon answered*—To the question addressed to *all*, therefore evidently in behalf of all; he spoke for the twelve, as a foreman does for a jury. "We are all agreed; and our answer is, *Thou art Messiah, the Son of the living God!*" The Jews thought that their Messiah would indeed have great power given him of God; but they did not expect him to be a divine person. They seem at times to have been ready to recognize Jesus as the Christ of God; as the SON OF GOD, never. John xix. 7; Luke xxii. 70. Peter here confesses Jesus to be both Messiah and Son of God—*i. e.*, the Christ-Son, eternally divine. As the Son of man, He is man, and represents man before God; as the Son of God, He is God, and represents God before men. The same truth expressed here by Peter he also expressed at Pentecost, Acts ii. 36: "God hath made that same Jesus both LORD AND CHRIST." . . . 17. *Simon*—Son of Jonah—*i. e.*, son of John. *For*—Introduces the reason for Peter's blessedness. *Flesh and blood hath not revealed*—As the sayings of "men" just quoted show. *But my Father*—The sole source of spiritual life and knowledge and liberty. Hence the blessedness of Peter; for his confession proved him to be in spiritual union and communion with God. *Hath revealed*—This truth was early revealed by the voice at the baptism. Matt. iii. 17; of which John Baptist testified, John i. 34, and which Nathanael confessed. John i. 49. Our Lord's approval would indicate that Peter at this moment spoke with a true perception

16. For whom did Simon answer? how could he have known the views of the other disciples? Meaning of the word Messiah? To whom did the Jews apply it? What is meant by the phrase *Son of the living God!* Ps. ii. 2 and ii. 6, 7, with Heb. i. 5. What equivalent does Peter give for this title? Acts ii. 26.

17. Meaning of the words Simon, Jonah and Peter? Who had moved

Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

18. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon

of the letter and spirit of this confession. . . . 18 *I say*—"Men say," "Simon said," "the Father (said) revealed," "*I also say.*" "*Thou art,*" &c.—"The usual explanation of the passage which the Protestant Church is wont to oppose to the view of the Catholics, according to which *the faith of Peter and the confession of that faith* is the rock, is entirely the correct one—only the faith itself and his confession must not be regarded apart from Peter himself personally."—*Olshausen*. Living confessors of the truth that JESUS is the anointed Son of the living God, are the lively stones upon which and with which Christ builds his Church. *Unto thee*—As Peter had answered for all the apostles to the question addressed to all, so Christ addressed all the apostles in this response to Peter; in the next verse *thee* and *thou* are evidently used in this representative sense, for in Matt. xviii. 18 the same authority is given to all the apostles; also John xx. 23. *Upon this rock*—That is, the living confessors of the truth, represented by Peter; the rock here is equivalent to the "foundations of the apostles and prophets" in Eph. ii. 20, where Christ himself is the chief Corner-Stone. In the First Epistle of this same Peter, ii. 4, 6, Christ is called the chief Corner-Stone, the Head of the Corner, and a Living Stone. Peter calls *all believers* themselves "lively stones built up," v. 5, which is the only sense in which any man can be called a rock of the Church, for "Who is a Rock save our God?" Ps. xviii. 31. "That Rock was Christ." 1 Cor. x. 4. *I will build*—It is not improbable that this entire figure may have been suggested by a view of the castle of Banias, which stood about two miles north-east of Cæsarea Philippi. Somewhere in this neighborhood our Lord and disciples doubtless were, and such a conspicuous object

Peter to make his confession? When had this truth been revealed before this? Matt. iii. 17; John i. 34. Did Peter fully understand what he said?

18. How do the Romanists understand the words, *upon this rock*? what is the true sense? Eph. ii. 2; 1 Peter ii. 5. Upon whom is the whole Church built? 1 Peter ii. 4-6. In what sense is our divine Lord called a

this rock I will build my church ; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

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could not have been unnoticed. This fortress stands upon a ridge cut off by a chasm from the flank of Mt. Hermon ; it is at least one thousand feet above the site of Cæsarea Philippi, overlooks the whole region below, and commands a view of the plain of the Huleh and the mountains opposite. This specimen of ancient military architecture would be well calculated to impress the mind of Jesus and his apostles, and may have suggested the figures used upon this occasion. Certainly all the terms used could have been readily furnished by such an establishment. The castle of stones, towering great and high upon the ridge of solid rock, might well represent the Church which Christ was to build ; the gates of hell might be well suggested by the chasm under the fortress ; or better perhaps by the plains of Damascus and the Huleh, the road between which the castle was erected to command. The ponderous keys of the castle gates, and the fact that the prisoners held within the castle would be bound and released at the wish of the authorities residing in the city below, might have furnished the imagery of verse 19. The plainly *martial* character of the entire passage, especially appearing at "prevail against it," is favorable to the above view. *I will build*—Heb. iii. 3, 4 ; the apostles were "master-builders." 1 Cor. iii. 10 ; we all are co-laborers, *ib.* 9 ; the Builder, of course, is superior to the rock or to the completed edifice. *My church*—Not Peter's, nor Rome's, nor Calvin's, nor Luther's. Confessors of peculiar dogmas are the founders of denominations ; confessors of the Divine Christ are the foundations of the CHURCH. *Gates of hell*—At the gates of Eastern cities the chief men assembled, the courts and councils were held, and the forces of the place mustered ; hence *gates* is used figuratively for dignities, powers and numbers. The phrase *gates of hell* is equivalent to the entire

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rock ? 1 Cor. x. 4. Who alone as the foundation of the Church can be called a rock ? Ps. xviii. 31 ; Eph. ii. 20. In what sense are all true believers and confessors *rocks* for the building upon of Christ's Church ? 1 Peter ii. 5. What honour is due the Builder ? Heb. iii. 3, 4. What name does Jesus here give his Church ? For what were the gates of Eastern

19. And 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 his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

hostile forces of the lower life, Sin, Death and the Devil, as opposed to the forces of the higher life, Christ and the Church. . . . 19. *I will give unto thee*—i. e., all the apostles. Matt xviii. 18. Yet Christ is "He that hath the key of David; he that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth." Rev. iii. 7. The power of the keys is therefore given in subordination to Christ. The authority given here corresponds with the "*Feed my sheep*" in the similar case, John xxi., which refers to the authority to instruct. Our Lord, Luke xi. 52, denounces the lawyers because they had "taken away the *key of knowledge*; ye enter not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." The knowledge of the truth just confessed by Peter was the key by which the kingdom of Christ was to be opened to men. This was committed to the disciples; and in their applying of this truth, heaven was to follow and give efficiency. Therefore, whomsoever the apostles should leave bound in ignorance, the truth being withheld, heaven, that works by means of this truth, would leave bound; and heaven would cause to "stand in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free," all whom the apostles should, by the truth, unloose from the bondage of error. Gal. v. 1. This passage is ordinarily referred to the committing of church discipline to the apostles.

cities used? What idea became associated with the word? what is the meaning here? meaning of *hell*?

19. To whom does *give unto thee* apply? Matt. xviii. 18. Who alone has the supreme control of the keys? Rev. iii. 7. To what does this authority correspond? John xxi. 15, 16. Meaning of the figure *key*? Luke xi. 52. How does the word get that meaning? What is a key used for? In what sense are ministers and teachers keepers of the key? In what sense alone can ministers cause the binding and unloosing of souls in Christ's heavenly kingdom? John viii. 32; 1 Tim. ii. 4, 7; Rom. x. 14. What blessing shall come to those who confess Jesus Christ now and hereafter? Have you confessed Jesus?

## ANALYSIS.

**I. The Wrong Confessors.**

*Facts.*—Jesus while in the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi asks of his disciples the opinion of the public as to his official character. They answer that he is thought by some to be John Baptist, by others Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. vss. 13, 14.

*Thoughts.*—“John Baptist,” so say Herodian confessors; men with troubled consciences, who look at Christ and religion as a disturbing element in their life of sinful pleasure. . . . *Elijah confessors*, men who fail to recognize the present Christ, but are ever looking for a coming One; the voice that says, “Confess Jesus now!” is to them only and always the voice of one crying, “Prepare ye the way!” . . . “*Jeremiah confessors*,” men who say, “the old is better;” who live in hope of the revival of some buried ark, and altar, and tabernacle, but who see not the Tabernacle of God that *is with* men; or men who sanctify the machinery of the temple, forgetting the True Light, the Shekinah that shines among them; who would replace the altar of sacrifice, buried for ever by the sacrifice of Calvary. . . . *Indifferent confessors*; to whom Christ is simply one of the prophets; whose knowledge of Jesus is vague, without any of the sweetness and assurance of a personal knowledge and faith. Is this the army of confessors with whom I appear?

**II. The True Confessors.**

*Facts.*—Christ asks their own view; Peter, speaking for all, declares him to be the Divine Messiah. vss. 15, 16.

*Thoughts.*—They confess in face of contradiction and danger; they confess a divine Saviour; they are taught and moved to this by God, the Author of faith.

**III. The Confessor's Reward.**

*Facts.*—Jesus blesses Simon, on the ground that man had not revealed the truth just spoken, but the Father. vss. 17, 18.

*Thoughts.*—The confessor is pronounced blessed by Christ here and hereafter; is a child and disciple of the Eternal Father; has a place in the spiritual Temple, and is built upon by the Master

with many lively stones; is an instrument of, and sharer in, the triumph of the saints, and the overthrow of Satan.

#### IV. The Confessor's Duty and Responsibility.

*Facts.*—Christ gives to the apostles, through Peter, the keys of the kingdom, viz.: the knowledge of salvation through Jesus the Christ, and declares that as they shall give or withhold this shall men be left bound in sin, or made Christ's freemen. vs. 19.

*Thoughts.*—Solemn thought! our faithlessness as bearers of the key of knowledge may keep our scholars out of the kingdom. Inspiring thought! our faithfulness in confessing, in uttering the truth, may deliver their captive souls from the snare of the fowler. . . . He who works under the guidance of the Spirit may expect the sanctions and support of heaven. . . . Is he a true successor of that apostle to whom the Master said, "Feed my lambs," who uses his power over the keys to open the Door of the fold only to adults? Will you lock the little children out, and leave them to find ways to the gates of hell?

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#### DIRECTORY.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." vs. 16. . . . **THEMES.**—*For Thought:* The place of true confessors in Christ's church. *For Prayer:* "Hallowed be thy name!" Lord Jesus, save us from dishonouring thee by unworthy thoughts of thy character and office! Help us to confess truly! *For Life:* Am I a lively stone in the heavenly Builder's Church, supporting others in that temple to the glory of the eternal Foundation? What am I doing to spread that truth which makes free? . . . **CATECHISM.**—Q. 89. How is the word made effectual to salvation? A. The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation.

## LESSON VI.

### THE FRIENDLY TEMPTER.

**Matt. xvi. 21-28. Parallels, Mark viii. 31-ix. 1; Luke ix. 21-27.**

#### NOTES.

21. From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

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21. *From that time*—From the clear, complete recognition of his divine Sonship. *Began to show*—That is, plainly, Mark viii. 32; before, he had only shown in figures, as, destroying and raising the temple, and the sign of Jonah. *Must go*—To fulfil the prophets, and to enter into glory. That the believer might not perish—this was the compulsion which said *must*; yet the freeness of it all is manifest in the word *go*. *Suffer and be killed*—This was the point which he now sought to bring out clearly in close connection with the confession of his divinity; they had yet to learn the harmony of the two characters, or rather the two features of the one character given in the Old Testament to the Messiah as both the *conquering* and the *suffering One*. Their confession of the first character they were ready enough to adhere to while Christ lived. But they must be fortified against the temptation to disbelieve this after the second character should be fulfilled. And this was done by teachings which would be recalled in after days as *prophecies*. Simply as a kindly precaution also, it was well for them to be forewarned. *Many things*—Betrayal, Gethsemane, Arrest, Desertion, the Judgment Hall! And he bore them by anticipation. Mark and Luke add *and be rejected*, which, indeed, includes all. *Elders*—The rulers of Synagogues, Presbuteroi. *Chief-priests* (Archiereis)—The ex-high-priests, and

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21. What *time* is here referred to? How had Christ heretofore shown his death; by what figures? In what way does he now begin to show it? Why "must go?" Luke xviii. 31; xxiv. 25-27. What was Christ's object



22. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord : this shall not be unto thee.

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the twenty-four presidents of the classes of priests, as well as the officiating high-priest, bore this title. *Scribes* (Grammateis)—Men distinguished for their knowledge of the law. These all, seventy-one in number, including the presiding high-priest, constituted the Sanhedrim. This was the highest tribunal of the Jews, before which the most important cases were tried, especially such as involved questions of the Law. The disjunction of *be killed* from the sufferings imposed by the Sanhedrim is accurate; for three years before Christ's death the Romans took from this court jurisdiction concerning life and death. *Be raised again*—To rise again is the correct reading, which expresses the self-moving power of the Lord upon his own body. . . . 22. *Then Peter*—Who doubtless in this case also represented the views of the others. *Began*—So always the beginnings of the Evangel arouse the beginnings of Satan's opposition. *Took him*—Laid hold upon him as in friendly remonstrance; or, as others read, took him aside; both probably. *Rebuke*—John had just been slain; Jesus and his disciples could hope for no mercy; it only seemed to them a rash sacrifice of that life so dear to them, and a wrongful exposure of their lives, for so vs. 24 would seem to indicate. Alas! that the first recorded act of the new Church should be a rebellion against the preaching of the cross, led on by the chief apostle! *Be it far from thee*—"Mercy on thee, Lord!" is the most literal English idiom equivalent to this Greek expletive, as that phrase is used often to express a decided and sharp disapproval mingled with astonishment. The original is an abbreviation of "God be merciful to thee!" that is, to hinder such a course; implying that Christ's purpose was counter to God's will. *This shall not be*—Not implying violent restraint, but that he must yield to their wishes. Strong language, and

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in doing this now? What were the "many things" that Jesus had to suffer? Who were the elders, chief priests and scribes?

22. For whom did Peter speak? What was his motive in doing this? How would Christ's danger involve the disciples? For whose safety was Peter most concerned? How did Peter expect to hinder Christ's purpose?

23. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

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bold, but showing deep love and friendly anxiety. . . . 23. *He turned*—In Mark, *turned about and looked on his disciples*. The disciples were near, watching the result of this side interview. Jesus turns away from Peter toward them, looks upon them as though to include them also in his burning reproof, and then *said unto Peter*, who had been their mouth-piece, and who rightly received personally the rebuke meant for all, *Get thee [go] behind me [out of sight], Satan*. Precisely the same words were addressed to the devil at the temptation in the wilderness. Luke iv. 8. And *Satan* is used in every other case in the N. T. to signify the devil, and so also here. It was Peter for the time in the power and doing the will of Satan that Christ addressed; the devil was as truly present as was Peter himself, and doing work the devil is swift to do, Mark iv. 15—“Satan cometh immediately and taketh away the word!” *Offence*—Thou art my stumbling-block; the original (*Skandalon*) means the stick by which a trap was sprung. The bait was placed upon the *Skandalon*, or it was so placed that the animal would be sure to strike or stumble against it, and thus spring the trap and bring down the weight upon it. The region of Mount Hermon, in which the disciples now were, abounds in game, and the frequent sight of traps during their journey may have added force to this figure. We might thus paraphrase: “Thou art to me what the trap-stick is to the beast; one set along my path by Satan (the snarer of souls) to decoy me, under the guise of friendliness, to what would be death indeed, though seeming to offer life.” *For*—Showing (1) why Peter’s word was recognized as a word of Satan, (2) why it was put away, (3) and why the apostle in this thing was Christ’s snare. *Savourest*—*Thinkest*, including the

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23. Why did Jesus turn to the other disciples? Meaning of *Satan*? When did Jesus use this expression before? Luke iv. 8. How could Peter be properly addressed as *Satan*? How was Peter doing Satan’s work? Mark iv. 15. Show how properly this word translated offence [*Skandalon*, a bait-stick for a trap] applied here to Peter. What reason did Christ give for bidding Peter go out of his sight?

24. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

25. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

26. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

27. For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father

exercise of the affections. Thou art not disposed toward the declared will and plans of God, but toward the will and plans of men; referring to secular hopes of an earthly kingdom and Messiah. . . . 24. *Then*—After he had called the people to join the disciples, Mark viii. 34; the apostles were not rebuked before the people; a wise principle. *Will*—Wishes. *Deny*—Intensive, utterly deny. Let him say “No!” to self! is literal rendering. *Take up his cross*—Daily, Luke adds. A proverb suggested by the custom of requiring one condemned to crucifixion to carry the cross on which he was to die. *Follow me*—Not the same idea as *come after me*, but: Let him follow me as a soldier or a servant follows a leader or master; not dictating and shrinking as the apostles had just done, but submissively. . . . 25. *Will save*—May desire to save. *Will lose*—May lose, for no good man wishes to lose a useful life. *Sake*—On account of Me or the Gospel (Mark adds), as the cause or the occasion of death. *Shall find*—With the idea of unexpectedly, as one meets a friend, or discovers a treasure; an important distinction, for one must not lose his life *in order to gain* immortality, but for the sake of Christ only. . . . 26. *Profited, gain, lose*—Commercial terms; let men who look at life from the low stand-point of worldly profit and loss consider the problem. *In exchange for*—As the exchange price of his soul. . . . 27. *For* [it shall come to pass that] *the Son of man shall*

24. What is it to *deny* one's self? What to *take up the cross*? What is the difference between *Come after me* and *Follow me*?

25, 26. How can one *lose* life and yet *find* it? Does Christ ask us to recklessly expose life for his sake? How do you answer the Questions of v. 26?

27, 28. What does Christ promise, Mark viii. 38, to those who confess

with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

28. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

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*come*—Which is the guarantee for, and the period of, the “saving” and “losing,” the “confessing” and “denying,” referred to. See Dan. vii. 21, where the phrase “The People of the Saints of the Most High,” is apparently used as equivalent to “Son of man,” vs. 14. This seems to indicate, in the very source of this title of Jesus, his federal or representative character. Humanity exalted may appear at the court of the Ancient of Days in the person of their representative King and Intercessor; and shall at the last appear in the same way, by and with their representative Judge. *Works*—Work, conduct, the sum of life. Blessed he whose life-work has been washed in the blood of the Lamb! The judgment will turn upon the character of the life-work; and that upon the element, whether faith or unbelief, out of which it issues. . . . 28. The “coming” of vs. 27 is to judgment with the Father and the angels; this verse refers to the establishing of the Church with power. Mark reads (ix. 1), *have seen the kingdom of God come*; and Luke (ix. 27), *see the kingdom of God*. This was seen at the transfiguration, the resurrection, the effusion of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the final destruction of Jerusalem. *Some*—He would not say who, that all might watch and be ready; the language was addressed to the disciples and people. He closes with words of encouragement and promises of glorious visions. Fit ending for words of reproof and solemn admonition!

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#### ANALYSIS.

##### I. The Tempter's Occasion—The Cross.

*Facts.*—Christ declares his approaching sufferings, rejection, death and resurrection.

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Christ before men? When shall this be? Who is the Son of man? What does the term mean? Compare Dan. vii. 14 with vs. 21. Where and in what way does Christ represent the human race? Why are works made the ground of reward? What always determines each man's works? Why probably did Jesus add this promise? What *coming* is here referred to?

*Thoughts.*—The theme of the Master's first discourse to the new Church was the Cross and the Sepulchre. May He who showed that saying plainly to his scholars help us so to do to ours! . . . Do you reject Jesus? This was the sin of the rulers. . . . Lord, withhold our hearts from making the chief evidence and the mightiest exercise of thy love the occasion of our deeper guilt!

## II. The Tempter's Disguise and Offence.

*Facts.*—Peter took him aside; rebuked him; sought to dissuade him; he thus did Satan's work; and was a tempter of his Master.

*Thoughts.*—The devil tempted Christ in the wilderness; the Pharisees tempted him, seeking signs; the people tempted, seeking to make him king; and now Peter tempts him, nay, the apostles all! Verily, our High Priest was in "all points tempted like as we are." The first two classes were open enemies, the last two open friends; to which class do I belong? . . . When the devil takes the form of an angel of light, he is more to be dreaded, for he is then more dangerous. . . . What are some of our friendly tempters? Dishonest gains; corrupting pleasures; gratification of appetite; unholy ambitions; positions beyond our ability, or beyond our honest reach; the wine-cup. . . . Does your dearest friend bid you reject the Cross? it is Satan's voice; beware! Yea, "though an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel," bid him begone. . . . How many traps Satan sets for souls! and he baits them often with their friends, even with ministers and teachers. May God save us all from being devil's-bait!

## III. The Tempter Uncovered and Rebuked.

*Facts.*—Christ looked upon the apostles, said to Peter, "Go behind me!" declared the character and cause of his sin.

*Thoughts.*—We may obtain another to be spokesman of our sin, but he cannot be shield to us from Christ's reproving look. . . . In Christ's rebuking, the leader of the wrong-doing shall bear the burden of the reproof. . . . How to meet tempters—with a prompt, decided "No!" A weak, half-yielding negative encourages further assault, but Satan understands the honest ring of the "nay" which is nay indeed. . . . How may I know the

tempter's presence? "Try the spirits" by the word and Spirit of God. If anything is counter to God's word, it is of Satan.

#### IV. The Tempter's Assault Truth's Opportunity.

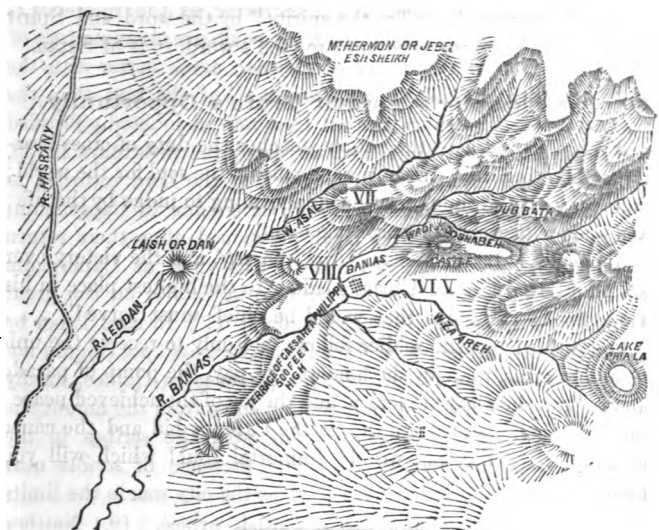
*Facts.*—Christ calls the people, teaches the duty of cross-bearing in following him; the folly of sacrificing the soul for the world; enforces with the thought of his final coming to judge by the life; and ends with words of encouragement.

*Thoughts.*—Learn to say "No!" to *self*, and the victory over sin shall be sure. . . . Christ's ladder to the highest place in his kingdom is still, "He that would be chief must serve!" . . . "Follow me!" as the soldier follows, not only to receive the uniform and arms, to enjoy the honour, the pay, the pomp of parade and review, the glory of victory, and the joy of the achieved peace; but to struggle, suffer and die, if the Captain bid and the cause demand. . . . Fleeting world; immortal soul! which will you gain?

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#### DIRECTORY.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—Get thee behind me, Satan! vs. 23. **THEMES.**  
 —*For Thought*: The value of the soul, as shown by Christ's purpose to die for its redemption, and Satan's efforts to prevent that purpose. . . . *For Prayer*: Lead us not into temptation! Give us wisdom to know and grace to withstand our tempters! . . .  
*For Life*: Have I used my position as a friend to hinder any soul from duty? . . . **CATECHISM.**—Q. 106. What do we pray for in the sixth petition? A. In the sixth petition, (which is, *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*) we pray that God would either keep us from being tempted to sin, or support and deliver us when we are tempted. . . . **BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS.**—Gen. iii., the temptation of Eve; Josh. ix., the inhabitants of Gibeon who disguised themselves, deceived Joshua and became a curse to Israel.



REGION OF CAESAREA PHILIPPI.

## LESSON VII.

### THE TRANSFIGURATION.

**Matt. xvii. 1-13. Parallels, Mark ix. 2-13; Luke ix. 28-36.**

#### GEOGRAPHICAL REFERENCE.

Tabor, about six miles due east of Nazareth in Galilee, is the traditional scene of the Transfiguration. But for the following reasons it is better to believe that Mount Hermon was the true locality: (1.) The preceding events were in the vicinity of this mountain, at its very base, among the villages scattered through the surrounding wadys and along the adjacent slopes and spurs. (2.) Although six days is ample time for a journey from Hermon to Tabor, a distance of about sixty-five miles, yet it is more natural to suppose the mountain in whose very shadow the preceding events plainly occurred, than to suppose this distant and unaccountable transition to the other side of the sea. (3.) Some

of the incidental features of the narrative, as the reference to snow, and to the light cloud, both of which are characteristic of Hermon. (4.) The solitudes of Hermon agree better with the facts and with the "*apart by themselves*" of the text than the summit of Tabor, which at that time was undoubtedly fortified and inhabited. (5.) Matt. xvii. 22, compared with Mark ix. 30, indicates that it was *after* this event that the Lord returned to and passed through Galilee. (6.) The coming to Capernaum, Matt. xvii. 24, as the first place mentioned after their return from Trachonitis, would agree with this view, as Capernaum would be the first place of importance in Galilee on the great Damascus road leading from the Jaulan. (7.) In case Tabor be supposed, the statement in Mark ix. 30, *he would not* (he did not wish) *that any man should know* his presence in Galilee, hardly agrees with the fact that after coming down from the mount the disciples are found openly disputing with the scribes in the presence of much people. (8.) The presence of *scribes* near Cæsarea Philippi is not inconsistent, as the city was in the limits of Manasseh, and Philip was a Jewish prince. (9.) Neither would the snows of Hermon present any barrier to such an incident at that time of the year, the latter part of May; and it is not necessary to suppose that the party climbed entirely to the summit. During the summer the snow lies packed in the ravines which score the side of the mountain, giving the top the white-streaked appearance so often noted. (10.) The expression "high mountain" is more applicable to Hermon than Tabor, the former being about nine thousand five hundred feet, the latter less than one thousand feet in height. However, the only condition in the locality essential to the narrative is solitude; the place must have been one in which they were *apart by themselves*. In the Lange Commentaries, Lange himself (on Matthew) says Hermon; whilst Oosterzee (on Luke) argues for Tabor. The latter, however, quotes a Dutch theologian, Meyboom, as favouring a southern peak of Anti-Lebanon, called Dschebel Escheik, apparently not knowing that Jebel esh-Sheikh is Mount Hermon. Doubtless the south-western ridge of Hermon is referred to, which is separated from the central ridge and summits by the deep ravine El-Asal, and which directly overhangs the terrace



and town of Banais, or Cæsarea Philippi. It is not indeed unlikely that this part of Esh-Sheikh, or Hermon, was the scene of the Transfiguration. Alford thinks it to have been one of the mountains bordering the Sea of Galilee, simply on the grounds that "the six days would probably be spent in journeying." But as our Lord's *object in coming to Mt. Hermon* was retirement, would not that object have been accomplished by *remaining* in that locality during the six days?

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NOTES.

1. And after six days, Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart,

2. And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

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1. *After six days*—At the close of the sixth day after Peter's offence; the Transfiguration probably occurred in the latter part of the night, or early part of the morning, which would make the *about eight days* of Luke. *Jesus taketh Peter*—A week's meditation upon the doctrine of the Cross, and converse with the Master, and reflection upon his sin, had doubtless prepared him for this privilege. Peter, as usual, is named first. *James and John*—These three were also thus favoured at the raising of Jairus's daughter, and in Gethsemane. *His brother*—Sweet fraternity, of flesh and of spirit alike! *Mountain*—Luke adds that they went to *pray*—a custom of our Lord's which would give sufficient reason to all the disciples for his retirement without questioning or remark. These seasons of prayer were usually at night. . . . 2. *And was transfigured*—As he prayed, Luke adds. The same word is used in Matthew and Mark, while Luke omits it. Matthew speaks of both the change of face and

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1. What had happened six days before this? What does this act show as to Christ's feelings toward Peter? When were these three favoured in the same way? What mountain was this? Where had the preceding events occurred? What was our Lord's object in taking these disciples? Why were not the nine alarmed at the absence?

2. What was Jesus doing when the Transfiguration occurred? Luke ix.

of raiment, as does Luke also: Mark only of the raiment. The original word is used in the N. T. only here and at Rom. xii. 2 and 2 Cor. iii. 18. In Romans it occurs in Paul's exhortation to present the *body* a living sacrifice, not *conformed* to this world, but *transformed* (transfigured) by the renewing of your mind. This would seem to refer to a *change of outward life* as the result of a renewed soul. The word used in 2 Cor. follows the comparison to the glory of the old and new dispensation, of which the shining of Moses' face in the mount forms the basis; and refers chiefly to the glorification of the *body*, but through the spirit, as appears from the following chapter, especially at vs. 6 and following. It would seem, therefore, from the force of the original word, from its N. T. significance, and from the narrative itself, that by *transfigured* is meant that the *person* of Christ was so changed from its *ordinary outward appearance* as to shine with great brightness, and that this was probably the result and the manifestation of the glory of his divine nature, which was commonly restrained within the usual human appearance, but which now burst forth and illuminated not only his body, but his clothing and all surrounding objects. There is no ground to think this bodily illumination a reflection from the glory around Moses and Elias, for it was Christ's *own glory* which chiefly attracted the apostles' eyes (see Luke vs. 32), and the bright cloud did not appear until after the Transfiguration. *Face as the sun—raiment as light*—A difference is evidently marked here, the inward glory of Christ shining directly *from* the face, but subdued by shining *through* the garments. *Raiment*—The original is plural, meaning both the *mantle* or *cloak*, a quadrangular piece of cloth like a Scotch plaid, used as an outer covering, and the *tunic*, or long shirt-like garment worn next the skin. These garments in Palestine were usually made from wool, and were generally the white colour of the original materials; a fact to which Mark refers, vs. 3, as though to guard against any thought of the apostles being deceived by *natural* or *artificial* whiteness.

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29. What is the meaning of transfigured? What is the sense of the original word? Rom. xii. 2 (transformed), and 2 Cor. iii. 18 (changed). What caused this shining of Christ's body? What difference between the shining of the *face* and the raiment? how account for it?

3. And behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.

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It was perhaps this same mantle which afterward fell to the lot of one of the Roman executioners. Had relics been of value in the apostolic age, we should surely have heard something of this. . . . 3. *Moses and Elias*—Moses the giver of the law, Elijah the restorer of prophecy. Both had visions of Jehovah upon Mount Horeb. Both were mysteriously translated to heaven, Moses after death, if we so interpret Jude 9, Elijah before. The locality of both these events was in the vicinity of Mt. Nebo, beyond Jordan, opposite Jericho, in sight of and nearly on the same parallel with Mt. Olivet, the scene of Christ's ascension. Moses is the principal figure. They *appeared in glory*, Luke adds. *Talking with him*—They spoke of his decease (Greek, the *Exodus* of him) which he was about to fulfil at Jerusalem (Luke), the same theme which had so lately engaged the thoughts of Christ and his apostles. Thus the apostles were led to associate the heavenly glory with the earthly humiliation, the conquering with the suffering Messiah. Henceforth the glory of the Cross quenches its shame, and the doubting disciples learn the exaltation of the only theme. Law and Prophecy in the persons of their great representatives testify that "it behooved Christ to *suffer* and to *enter into glory!*" The impressions left upon the minds of two of the eye-witnesses of this Transfiguration were deepened convictions of the Saviour's divine Sonship. "We beheld his glory as of the only begotten of the Father." John i. 14. "We were eye-witnesses of his majesty," says Peter. 2 Peter i. 16, 17, 18. It is doubtless chiefly from this stand-point that we must view the whole event, remembering also its relations to the preceding announcement of the Crucifixion. This appearance of Moses and Elijah is often quoted by Spiritualists to sanction their doctrine of spirit-visitations. But apart from

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3. What was the great work of Moses? of Elijah? Where and in what manner had God once revealed himself to them? Of what did these spirits talk? Luke ix. 31, and what was their appearance? What would be the impression upon the disciples of associating Christ's coming death with such a scene as this? What do you think was the object of this

4. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

5. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadow-

the peculiarities of their decease, the mission of Moses and Elijah to the earth is evidently represented as fully as much an exception to ordinary laws of the spirit-world as the Transfiguration was to physical laws; a fact which goes *against* the spiritualists, as does also the side remark of Luke, vs. 33, concerning the request of Peter that the prophets remain. . . . 4. *Tabernacles*—Temporary booths, made of branches, are often used by the people of these regions. Peter's humility is shown here, both in his *If thou wilt* and in the absence of any provision for himself and companions. *One for thee*—Even in the presence of prophet-spirits, Christ is to Peter first and most honourable. He would willingly abide in such company, even as a servant. This remark, according to Luke, was made while Elijah and Moses were separating themselves from Jesus. . . . 5. *Overshadowed them*—i. e., Jesus and the disciples. The cloud came between them and the forms of Moses and Elijah, and enveloped them. The disciples feared as they entered into it (Luke), which implies some peculiarity plainly indicating a supernatural presence. Clouds were often associated with God's presence. Ex. xiii. 21, The pillar of cloud; Ex. xix 9, 16; xl. 34, The cloud in the tabernacle; and 1 Kings viii. 10, 11, in the temple. *Voice*—God had shown himself to Moses in the CLOUD, and to Elijah in the "still, small VOICE." The same Voice testified of Christ at his baptism; and afterward, John xii. 28. *Well pleased*—Which is the ground of our hope of pleasing God; for we are made *one with Christ* by faith. *Hear ye him*—Spoken to the representa-

Transfiguration scene? What was the effect upon the mind of Peter? 2 Pet. i. 16-18, and of John? John i. 14.

4. What caused Peter to speak thus? How did he show his own humility? how Christ's superiority even to the prophets?

5. Where had God before appeared in the cloud? Ex. xiii. 21; Ex. xix. 9, 16. Where had God spoken to Elijah in a VOICE? When had this voice testified before this of Christ? John xii. 28. What prophecy had Moses made, Deut. xviii. 15, which this Voice confirmed? Name all the

owed them: and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him.

6. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.

7. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.

8. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.

tives of the Church, and for all to all time. The Father thus points out Jesus as the prophet like unto Moses, to whom the faithful were to hearken, Deut. xviii. 15. What a company! Earth was never before so honoured. MOSES and ELLJAH—the representatives of the past, of Law and Prophecy and of the heavenly world; the apostles—representatives of the coming, of the gospel and of the earthly kingdom; CHRIST JESUS—in whom met and centred past and future, Law and Gospel, heaven and earth; and the ETERNAL FATHER, announcing and authorizing his BELOVED SON as the eternal Lawgiver and Prophet of men. . . . 6, 7. *Fell—sore afraid*—A great increase of terror, but mingled with awe, reverence, as knowing the voice of God. Note the same effect, Dan. x. 8, 9; and on John again, Rev. i. 17, where also the touch relieves. The touch of the cloud and the voice of the Father bring fear; the touch and voice of Jesus restore confidence; *it is a fine illustration of the need and the office of the “Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus.”* . . . 8. *Lifted up their eyes*—Mark says, *suddenly*, showing the immediate effects of Christ’s touch; and adds that they *looked round about*. *No man*—Neither Moses nor Elijah. *Jesus only*—Alone (Luke), with themselves (Mark). The Law ends; prophecy is fulfilled; the sway of Moses and Elijah over human hearts and lives is done; henceforth “Jesus only” remains for hopes and faith of men. “Only,” but “all in all!”

holy company who appeared in this scene. What were the themes of converse there?

6, 7, 8. What caused the disciples to fear? What removed the fear? What does this illustrate?

9. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.

10. And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes, that Elias must first come?

11. And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things:

. . . 9. *Tell no man*—Having chosen these three as witnesses of the vision, it is not strange that the great favour vouchsafed should be withheld until all could fully understand. Even these three stumbled at the Resurrection, by which Christ limits the command to secrecy, and the others would hardly have borne the wonders of the Transfiguration. Besides, the facts, if known, might have awakened jealousy among the less favoured. Luke records that they kept the secret. . . . 10. It occurred to the disciples that this appearance of Elijah was a fulfilment of the prophecy of Malachi iv. 5, 6, which was generally thought to predict a literal reappearance, and was so taught by the scribes. It is not unlikely that the non-fulfilment of the prophecy had been used as an argument against the claims of Jesus to be Messiah. Christ's prohibition, with its reference to his death, implied that there would be *no further appearance* of Elias; and, as their hopes of a literal appearance, which had been quenched by the Lord (Matt. xi. 14), had been revived by this scene upon the mount, they would naturally wonder when they learned, that so far from all men seeing for themselves that coming whose first glory they thought that they had seen, not even this vision must be told to any man during Christ's life. "What, then, does the prophecy mean? Why, then, say the scribes that Elias is to come, if, as your prohibition implies, he is *not* to come?" . . . 11. *Restore*—Jesus now explains. Elijah was indeed the restorer of prophecy and of the true worship; in like manner,

9. Why did Jesus charge them thus? Would the nine have believed it? If so, would they have been satisfied at having no part in so glorious an event? When was it to be told? Did the three keep the secret?

10, 11, 12, 13. What prophecy, Mal. iv. 5, 6, did Elijah's appearance probably suggest? What in Christ's words implied that this would not be

12. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they know him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed: likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.

13. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

John Baptist, by his preaching of repentance and fruits meet, restores the deeper, spiritual work of the Law, and prepares the way of the Lord. See Luke i. 16, 17. . . . 12, 13. The reference here to John, who came in the spirit and power of Elijah, not only satisfies the apostle's inquiry, but serves to point another reference to his coming death—one which again associates suffering with the idea of a noble person and a great work.

#### ANALYSIS.

##### I. The Three Witnesses.

*Facts.*—Six days elapsed; Jesus takes Peter, James, John, into a mountain to pray.

*Thoughts.*—Meditation upon the cross is the best preparation for spiritual blessings. . . . Be not in too great haste to lead the penitent from the foot of the cross to the height of Hermon. . . . Teacher, spend your six week-days in the prayerful thought of a crucified Jesus, and on the seventh his glory may appear to you in the sanctuary of the Sabbath-school class. . . . Blessed Jesus, faithful to rebuke, but free to forgive, pardon our offences! . . . The friends of Jesus surround him in circles of narrowing and still narrowing nearness. Grant, Lord, that I may enter the inner circle, and ever be coming "nearer, my God, to thee!" Yet, sweet Sovereign, if thou wilt, suffer me to stand even on the outer edge of the holy mount, and await thy coming down! Only separate me not from thee for ever! . . . How often the Spirit of Jesus in my heart bids me go apart to pray;

fulfilled *literally*? In what sense did John Baptist *restore* the law? What had the Jews done to John? Why does Jesus again introduce his coming sufferings?

and how often I fail of spiritual sighs of the divine glory and love by failing to obey!

## II. The Transfiguration.

*Facts.*—While Jesus prayed he was transfigured; his face shone as the sun; his cloak and tunic became glistening white.

*Thoughts.*—It is the GOD that shines through the man; behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ! . . . It was the God in Christ that gave glory to his humanity, and which gives efficiency to his bodily sufferings for us. . . . He still intercedes, but in enduring glory now. . . . Would you have your body glorified? have the Spirit of Christ within you! . . . Blessed hope! Jesus “shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.” Phil. iii. 21.

## III. The Two Heavenly Visitors.

*Facts.*—Moses and Elias appeared in glory; talked with Jesus of his decease; departed.

*Thoughts.*—“God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” . . . “There is a spiritual body.” . . . We shall know each other in our heavenly estate. . . . The souls of the dead saints enter immediately into glory.

## IV. The Three Tabernacles.

*Facts.*—Peter declared it good to be there; asks leave for the disciples to build three booths; he spoke unwittingly, from fear.

*Thoughts.*—The goodly company of the just made perfect shall be ours, if we are Christ’s. . . . It is not God’s will that heaven should be built upon earth. . . . Christ, not Peter, builds the mansions of the blessed. . . . Not on a solitary mountain-side, O Peter, in quiet meditation upon heavenly glories and in spiritual converse with the heavenly world, but on the dusty plain, in the busy mart, among the sinning and the suffering, yea, even upon the cross, would the Master have thee win thy crown and build his Church! . . . Popish *hermitages* are the witless thoughts of St. Peter’s terror. Yet how many who might have built up (edified) many living souls into temples of God are content to spend their days in hewing boughs and build-



ing booths! Is that apostolic work? Protestant brother, does the *spirit* of the popish hermitage mark your home?

#### V. The Testimony of the Father.

*Facts.*—While Peter spoke, a bright cloud overshadowed and enveloped them; they feared; the voice of the Father was heard.

*Thoughts.*—Before such an audience, with such a voice, what was the theme? (1.) Christ is the Son of God. (2.) There is no way of reconciliation with the Father save by the Son; but through Jesus there is peace with God. (3.) The duty and privilege of all men is to hear and follow Jesus. The divine Sonship, the At-one-ment, personal faith in and allegiance to Christ by all, teach these truths, and you have taught *the* truth. . . . *Hear Christ* is our word; therefore let us speak with authority, and not as the scribes.

#### VI. The Terrified Disciples and the Touch of Jesus.

*Facts.*—The disciples heard; fell on their faces sore afraid; the voice passed; Jesus came and touched them; they looked up and around, and saw Jesus alone.

*Thoughts.*—“Perfect love casteth out fear,” and in Jesus the love of God is so commended that we see God as our Father, and banish terror. . . . *We* are not come unto the mount that burned, but unto Jesus the Mediator. . . . The apostles trembled in that presence; yet heedless youth come before God during the solemn service of church and Sabbath-school with irreverence. . . . The touch of Jesus banishes the terror of the Law. . . . **JESUS ONLY** for salvation, for sanctification, for glorification. . . . The true state of mind for the inquiring sinner; see no man save **JESUS ONLY**.

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#### DIRECTORY.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—“This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him.” vs. 5. **THEMES.**—*For Thought:* Christ

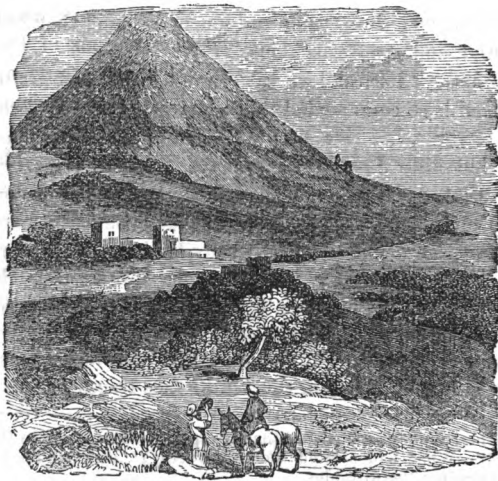
the appointed and glorified Mediator between God and man. Humanity glorified in Jesus. *For Prayer*: Lord, fill us with the Spirit of Christ, that we may show the world his glory! *For Practical Life*: I will seek to "please God" by obedience to the Son of his delight. . . . CATECHISM.—Q. 24. How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet? A. Christ executeth the office of a prophet in revealing to us, by his word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation. Also Q. 21.

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### SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK.

**BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS.**—The descent of the LORD upon Sinai. Ex. xix.; the shining of Moses' face. Ex. xxxiv. 29–35. For examples of the glory-cloud and voice, see NOTES, vs. 5.

**PICTURE LESSON ON THE BLACKBOARD.**—At the top the words "JESUS ONLY," surrounded by a halo. Beneath them, an index hand pointing upward.



MT. TABOR, THE TRADITIONAL SCENE OF THE TRANSFIGURATION.

## LESSON VIII.

### THE CURE OF THE LUNATIC BOY.

Mark ix. 14-29. Parallels, Matt. xvii. 14-21; Luke ix. 37-43.

#### NOTES.

14. And when he came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them.

15. And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him, saluted him.

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14. *When*—On the next day following the night of the transfiguration. *Disciples*—The nine who had been left. *Multitude*—Listening to the discussion conducted by the *scribes*. These expounders of the law would be found in the dominions of the Jewish prince Philip; especially in the vicinity of the capital city Cæsarea Philippi, which was embraced within the northern possessions of the tribe of Dan. *Questioning*—The occasion of the controversy was their failure to heal the boy, vs. 18, which doubtless the scribes made the text for denunciations of Christ and the ground for ridicule of the disciples, who would appear at great disadvantage before the crowd, always ready to laugh or rail at the worsted party in a war of words. In physical conflicts their sympathies usually run with the weaker side. The failure must have greatly mortified the disciples, who had wrought cures in similar cases, and had likely committed themselves by confident promises or professions in this case. Christ comes to their relief at the opportune moment. . . . 15. *Greatly amazed*—An amazement tending to stupor: quite stunned, as by something sudden and unexpected. They were not looking for Jesus; they were conscious of having wronged him and his disciples; there may even have been upon the Lord's face traces of the glory of

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14. Where had Jesus been? What disciples were engaged in this "questioning?" What had started the controversy? How would the scribes use this against the disciples.

15, 16. Why were the people so amazed? Why did they run to Jesus? Why salute him? Were they his friends?

16. And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them?

17. And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit.

18. And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him; and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I

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his transfiguration. We notice somewhat of the same effects of Christ's presence upon the people at his arrest in Gethsemane. Certainly something in his appearance, combined with the sudden reaction from a state of levity and mockery, produced this momentary stupor. *Saluted*—With friendly greetings; showing no deep-seated ill-will; or a wish to conciliate. . . . 16. *He asked [the scribes]*—Which would imply that the scribes, too, had been carried along with the multitude. But the best authorities read *them* instead of *the scribes*; applying to all the people as partakers in sympathy, at least, with the scribes. *What*—About what do you dispute with my disciples? That the crowd were in dispute would have been plain, even at a distance, as the violent gesticulation of Orientals on such occasions was, and still is, a marked characteristic. . . . 17. *One of the multitude*—Not one of the scribes. *Answered*—Conscious that he had indirectly been the occasion of the dispute, and most ready to present his case. He cried aloud (Luke), and came and kneeled down before Jesus (Matt.). The expression, "cried aloud," in the original, would seem inappropriate to the plea made upon his knees before Jesus, and indicates that he first cried out from the midst of the crowd, and then pressing forward, fell at Christ's feet, leaving his son in the crowd with friends or attendants. *Master*—(Didaskale), TEACHER, *I have brought unto thee my son!* (not knowing that Jesus was absent.) Thus speaks the parent to the Sabbath-school teacher; thus should the Sunday-school teacher speak to the Teacher divine. *He is mine only child*—Luke adds, which was surely an item greatly to strengthen the plea with the "Only-begotten of his Father." *A dumb spirit*—Producing deafness, for he suddenly cried out, Luke vs. 39; and the charge vs. 25. . . . 18. *Taketh him*—Seizes him, as one *taketh* a prisoner; so we say,

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17, 18. What moved this man to answer the Lord's question? Why had he brought his son to Jesus? Where was Jesus when the father arrived?

spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.

19. He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me.

20. And they brought him unto him; and when he saw him,

an *attack* of epilepsy. *Teareth*—Causes convulsions. *Pineth away*—Expressing the collapse following the paroxysm. Luke adds that the spirit bruised the boy, and *hardly* departed—*i. e.*, with great difficulty, implying the long continuance of each attack; or *scarcely* departed, implying the frequency of the fits. The physical features of epilepsy are undoubtedly here described. Matthew says that he was *lunatic*, which probably refers only to the influence of the moon upon the attacks, and is equivalent to *epileptic*; but such cases as his are usually idiotic. *They could not*—The occasion of the dispute, and a reason for his plea: Thy disciples were not able, but thou art able, and thou art now my only hope! . . . 19. *Answereth* [him] *them*—So read the best authorities. As this man seemed to speak for all to Christ's question, so Christ's reply covers all. *O faithless generation*—The scribes were certainly without faith; the father, having come to obtain help of Jesus himself, would be disappointed and uncertain of the disciples' power, and as he afterward confesses, was in unbelief; the disciples themselves were faithless, as Christ afterward asserts. Matthew and Luke add, *perverse*—*i. e.*, turned aside (distorted, as deformed limbs), for whatever is not of faith is sin—*i. e.*, turning aside from Law. *How long shall I be with you*—Before you shall learn of me faith in me? *Suffer*—How long shall I bear with you ere your unbelief be gone? Being with them, and suffering them to be with him in their earthly imperfection, was part of Christ's humiliation. *Bring him*—(addressed to the father) Luke vs. 41. *Unto me*—Not to the disciples now. . . . 20. *They brought him*—The attendants or per-

How many children had the man? What ailed the boy? What disease has similar symptoms? Was the boy's mind affected? see Matt. Why did the father ask the disciples to cast out the devil?

19, 20. To whom does "generation" apply? Show that "faithless" truly applies to scribes, disciples and the father. In what way was Christ's

straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.

21. And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child.

22. And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him; but if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us.

23. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

sons with whom the child had been left when the father came forward. *When he (the lunatic) saw him (Jesus)*—For the crowd had stood between them. *Straightway*—The devil is in haste to hinder an intelligent look upon Jesus. *Tare*—Convulsed; *wallowed*—Rolled himself about. . . . 21, 22. *How long?*—Asked in sympathy to encourage the father and awaken his faith; also, to show the long standing of the case, both as a clue to the disciples' failure and as a confirmation of his own power. *Of a child*—From infancy, which is against Olshausen's conjecture as to the cause of the disease. *Fire and water*—"It was unable of itself to destroy a man."—BENGEL. *To destroy*—Which was the man's opinion; but destruction is a veritable devil's work. This was more than an answer, but the object was plainly to work upon our Lord's pity. *But*—It suddenly occurred to the father that this view might disappoint his hopes by discouraging Jesus; so he adds: *If thou canst do—Have compassion—Help us*—I and the boy, two mercies in one: so the Syro-Phœnician woman said: *Help me*. Help is the consequent of compassion, with Christ. . . . 23. *If thou canst believe*—The *if* belongs not to Christ's *doing*, but to man's *believing*. *All things*—Opposed to *anything*, vs. 22. Our plea is often "*Anything*," when Christ's promise is

abode among men a great trial to him? Who brought the child to Jesus? What brought on the spasm that followed?

21, 22. How long had the boy been possessed? How had the sickness affected him? How long has your heart been under the effect of *sin*? What has sin done for you? Why did Jesus ask this question? Why did the man say "help us?"—why "us?"

23, 24. What makes "all things" possible to the believer? In what way did he wish Christ to help his unbelief? What is faith?

24. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

25. When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.

26. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him; and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead.

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"*All things.*" . . . 24. *Straightway*—Commendable haste! *With tears*—True contrition! Both the aid and the evidence of faith. *I believe*—In thee, and in thy power to cure. *Help*—By casting it out, for it possesses me as the devil does my child. Or, give me sure ground for faith by helping my child. . . . 25. *The people came running together*—Pressing around Christ and the child, after the fashion of a crowd; an unseemly sight, which Jesus hastened to check, for it is supposable that the people would stop at his solemn charge to the demon. There may have been also a feeling of kindness for the lad, who would certainly be physically worsted by a crowd pressing around, excluding air and even endangering the fallen body by pushing or trampling over it. *Lange* suggests a desire to preserve the secrecy of his journey; but it is hard to see how a rod or two more or less of distance between the crowd and Christ would have effected secrecy. There could be no objection even to suppose that the motive of Christ was to await the assembling of the people, whose faith in him, shaken by the failure of the disciples, it would be a kindness to restore by this exhibition of his power. *Deaf and dumb spirit*—Addressed as a person distinct from, although dwelling within, the boy, *thee—him*. *Enter no more*—His last end was better than his first; happy contrast with the man delivered of the unclean spirit! Luke xi. 24–26, where we see that cast-out devils are wont to seek return. . . . 26. *Rent*—With cries and violent convulsions the devil departed, leaving the boy so prostrated as to seem

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25, 26. Why did the people run together? Why should this have hastened our Lord's action? Why did Jesus add: *Enter no more*? Is it hard to keep *sins* out of our heart? In what condition does the devil usually leave souls?

27. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.

28. And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could we not cast him out?

29. And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

to be dead, which shows the malignancy of the spirit and the greatness of the miracle following. . . . 27. *He arose*—A new miracle in the boy's condition, wrought upon the poor, weak body; Christ is Lord over both spirit and matter. Notice here the union of Christ's controlling power and the child's personal action: JESUS lifted up, *he* arose. Luke adds that Christ delivered the child again to his father, and that the people were amazed at the *mighty power* of God; original, "the majesty," the same word used of Christ, 2 Pet. i. 16, "We were eye-witnesses of his *majesty*," referring to the transfiguration. . . . 28.

*Why could not we cast him out?*—Jesus answers more fully, Matt. xvii. 20, "Because of your unbelief." The use of the *grain of mustard seed* and the *mountain* was simply a common, proverbial way of saying: If you had the least faith, you could remove the greatest difficulties. It was in substance a representation of what had been said to the father, vs. 23, above. . . . 29. *This kind*—So malignant. *Prayer*—For faith is the gift of God. *Fasting*—Which aids to that humbled state of heart in which faith best flourishes.

## ANALYSIS.

### I. The Controversy.

*Facts.*—Christ and the three descend the mount; see a great crowd surrounding the nine and a knot of scribes who are in dis-

27, 28, 29. Why did Jesus take the boy by the hand? What did Jesus then do with the boy? What is the difference between Christ's treatment of men, and the devil's? Why could not the disciples do what Jesus did? What should we pray for when our efforts to do good fail? Why does fasting help in such cases? What does this proverb, *Say to this mountain, etc, mean?*



pute occasioned by the failure of the disciples to cure a lunatic boy.

*Thoughts.*—It is sweet to tarry long in holy meditations, but a sad world waits for working hands. . . . Calm above, conflict below; emblem of heaven and earth, of the Church and the world. . . . Whether Christ leads us to heights of privilege, or to the valley of humiliation, so he but lead us it shall be well. . . . It was in coming down from the Palace Beautiful, where his last view had been of the Delectable Mountains, that Bunyan's Christian met Apollyon. Brother on the heights, beware! Is Christ with you? . . . The disciples' weak faith brings failure, and failure brings reproach upon Christ and upon themselves. . . . The skepticism and oppositions of the wicked can often be traced to our own unbelief. . . . Strong faith preserves from strife by withholding occasion for it. . . . Alas for religionists who urge their controversies in the face of a dying world! Alas for Christians who spend time and strength in strife concerning the articles of their faith, when faith itself is rather needed for works of mercy and salvation! . . . The *economy* of faith, as to time, energy, feelings. The *benevolence* of faith, for it is healing power. The *gentleness* of faith, for it hinders and soothes strife. The *wisdom* of faith, for it assures conviction and forecloses doubt.

## II. The Approach of Christ.

*Facts.*—The people see Jesus; are amazed, straightway run to him, salute him, and are questioned as to the dispute.

*Thoughts.*—Our faithlessness hurries us into trouble, but Christ's faithfulness urges him to our relief. . . . "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." . . . And Christ is still to come; shall he surprise us in unbelief? shall he find us cavilling? "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh!" . . . Why dispute ye? Why do you doubt, delay, deny Christ? Have you an answer ready? For weal or woe, one day, you *must* answer the Master!

## III. The Hard Case of the Boy.

*Facts.*—The father answers out of the crowd; comes forward and kneels before Jesus; tells of his bringing his son to him; of

the disciples' failure; of the deaf and dumb devil that had possessed his only son from infancy; that seized, convulsed, bruised and cast him into fire and water; of the frequency and length of the attacks; of the frothing, gnashing of teeth and wasting away which followed.

*Thoughts.*—Seize all occasions to press thy plea before Christ. . . . In praying for your children, scruple not to lay all the details of their case before God. . . . What earnestness! the plea was *meant* to move Christ's pity. . . . It is a deep-seated disease which the parent and Sunday-school teacher contends with, for the child is "shapen in iniquity." Ps. li. 5. . . . How dreadful the work of evil spirits! yet how many court possession by them! . . . To destroy is Satan's work, but Christ came to save; to which work are *you* apprenticed? . . . To whom should we go with our children but to Jesus? did not he overcome Satan? . . . Many fail of their desires in a first coming to Christ, and resort to human helpers, but find at last that Jesus only can save. Is it not better to "*wait upon the Lord?*" . . . How uncertain the hope which rests upon men, even though apostles! for they *may* fail us, and then what? But Jesus is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

#### IV. The Child Summoned.

*Facts.*—Jesus rebukes all for their lack of faith; mourns its long continuance; summons the boy; the lad is brought; but while coming, is seized by the spirit at the sight of Christ and falls in convulsions.

*Thoughts.*—How often is Jesus wounded in the house of his friends by their unbelief! . . . BRING HIM UNTO ME! This is the great Teacher's standing order to his subordinates. . . . "They brought him." Our work is simply bringing the children to Jesus. Have you brought yours to him? . . . How eager is Satan to hinder souls from coming to Christ! let us be as eager to bring them to him! . . . This is devilish malignancy: to rule or ruin;" nay, rather, to rule *and* ruin. . . . How many are thrown "wallowing" upon the ground by the devil of strong drink! . . . Christ leads to Transfiguration heights; Satan casts into the mire; "Choose ye whom ye will serve."

## V. The Condition of Cure—The Father's Faith.

*Facts.*—Jesus asks the father about his child; the father asks compassion: "Help us!" Jesus announces faith as the condition; the father cries out with tears, praying for faith.

*Thoughts.*—Satan's attempts upon our children give occasion for appeals to the sympathy of Christ. . . . Expressions of sympathy often awaken faith and prayer in the hearts of the sorrowing. . . . Do you say:

*"Perhaps he will admit my plea;  
Perhaps will hear my prayer?"*

Nay, poor soul, there is no *peradventure* if you will come, and ask in faith. . . . "All things are possible to him that believeth." Who need falter before any difficulty with such assurance as that? . . . Teacher, would you have all your class healed of sin? Let this father teach you: (1) "Straightway"—*promptness*; there is no time to lose! (2) "Cried out"—*prayer*; for your scholars, earnestly, with heart and voice. (3) "With tears"—*penitence*; be moved with humility for your failures, and with sorrow for the lost souls of your scholars. (4) "I believe"—*profession and practice of faith*. (5) "Help thou"—*pleading with and dependence upon God*. (6) "Mine unbelief."—*Confession of personal unfaithfulness*. . . . Consider this text also, and use it as a true guide to the inquiring.

## VI. The Cure.

*Facts.*—Christ rebuked the devil, charged it to come out, and enter no more in. The spirit cried, convulsed the child, and left him as dead. Jesus took him by the hand; lifted him up; the child arose cured; and Jesus delivered him to his father. All the people wondered at God's majesty.

*Thoughts.*—"Salvation is of the Lord." . . . O voice of Jesus, bid the evil spirit in our hearts "Depart!" But spare us, good Lord, from the doom of having that word from thee! . . . "Dead"—so the devil finds us, "dead in trespasses and sins;" and so will he leave us, in the pangs of "the second death," if we call not Christ to the rescue. . . . "Jesus took him!" Poor lamb! he is in the Shepherd's care now, and the

sore wounds of the roaring lion will be healed. . . . Will not Jesus take you too, little lamb? . . . Suffer the children to come; Jesus will take them. . . . "By the hand;" sweet touch of Jesus! Dear hand of the good Shepherd, lift up our lambs to thee! Oh to see the wee weak hands of all our children laid trustingly in the strong hand of the Bishop of souls! What a change from a devil's power to the hand of dear Jesus! . . . It is not enough that the spirit of evil be *cast* out; he must be *kept* out; and Christ also helps us to this. Watch the young converts; the world is full of snares. . . . Ye who in covenant, by prayer and faith, have consecrated your offspring to Christ, be faithful, and *thus* shall you see them returned to you again. . . . Do not despair; even the hardest cases are not beyond Christ's cure.

#### VII. The Clue to our Failures.

*Facts.*—Christ and the apostles enter a house; the disciples ask the cause of their failure; are told "unbelief;" and are exhorted to prayer and fasting in hard cases of possession.

*Thoughts.*—Are your scholars unconverted? Ask thyself, "Hast thou faith?" . . . Are you discouraged over the indifference, or unruliness, or viciousness of your class? Fast and pray for them; appoint a weekly day of *dedication*, and humble yourself before God. . . . Do not *pine*, but *pray*.

"Were all the hours thus vainly spent  
To heaven in *supplication* sent,  
My cheerful song would oftener be,  
See what the Lord hath done for me!"

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#### DIRECTORY.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"All things are possible to him that believeth," vs. 23, 24. THEMES.—*For Thought*: The need of *Faith* in working and in praying. *For Devotion*: Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief! *For Practical Life*: I will bear my wants

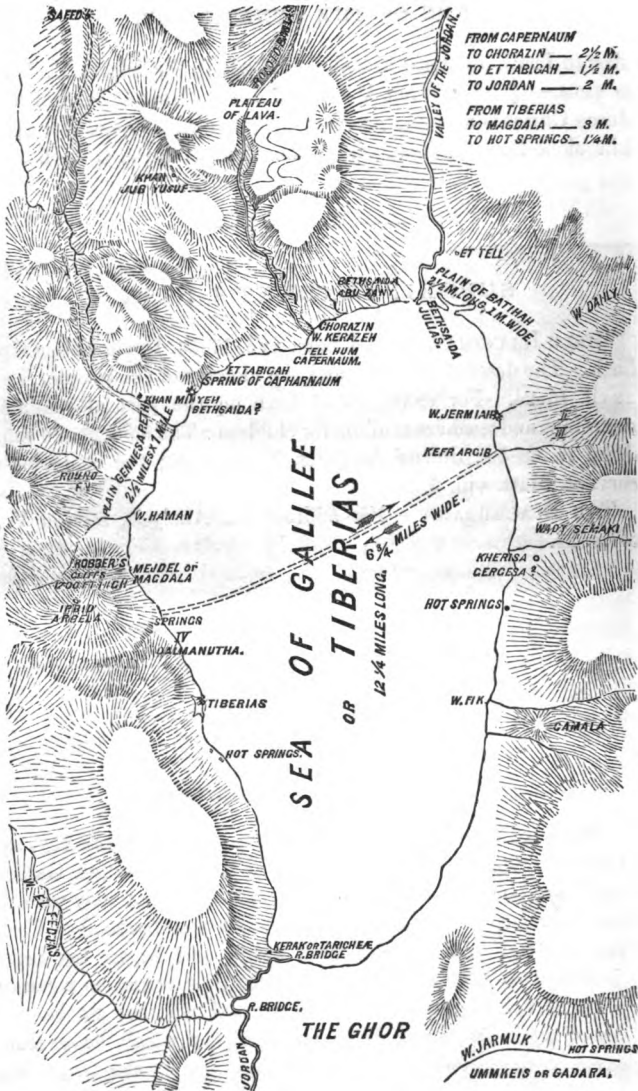
*first to Jesus, and trust him alone and wholly for help. . . .* CATECHISM.—Q. 86. What is faith in Jesus Christ? A. Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the Gospel.

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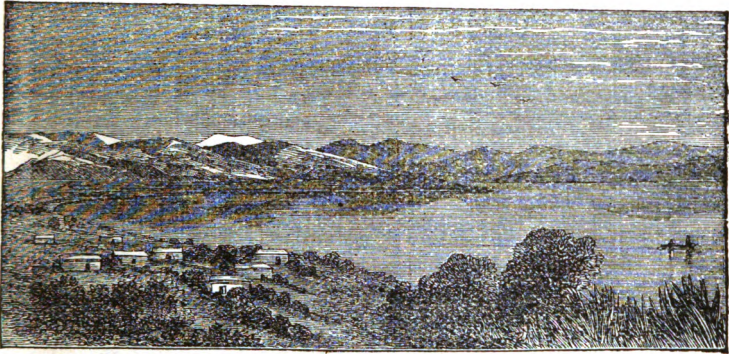
## SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK.

BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS.—1 Sam. xvii. 17-34, David killing Goliath. The descent of Moses and the idolatry of the people. Ex. xxxii. 15-24. For examples of faith on the part of parents, guardians and teachers availing for children: The nobleman's son, John iv. 46-54; Jairus' daughter, Mark v. 22; the centurion's servant, Matt. viii. 5.

THE BLACKBOARD.—For address, see Analysis, section V., of vs. 24.



THE SEA OF GALILEE AND SURROUNDING COUNTRY.



VIEW OF LAKE TIBERIAS OR GALILEE.

## LESSON IX.

### THE FISH AND COIN.

**Matt. xvii. 22-27.**

#### HISTORICAL CONNECTION.

Mark ix. 30, after narrating the cure of the lunatic boy, says that they departed thence and passed secretly through Galilee; and Luke connects the words of vs. 22, 23 immediately with the same incident. Jesus therefore left the neighborhood of Cæſarea Philippi directly after that event, and began his return journey into his own country. There is of course no means of certainly knowing what route he pursued, whether by the most direct road, the great Damascus road, by which he probably came to the vicinity of Mount Hermon; or by the longer way, around the head waters of the Jordan, the Leontes, the base of Lebanon, and in the vicinity of Tyre, the road journeyed on the

occasion of the cure of the Syro-Phœnician woman's daughter. The *through Galilee* favours the latter view, as a large portion of Upper Galilee would thus have been traversed, while the former route would be chiefly through regions outside of Galilee. The additional time required by the longer journey seems also more in harmony with the history of this period.

#### GEOGRAPHICAL REFERENCE.

The SEA OF GALILEE, or Lake Tiberias, the scene of the miracle of the fish and coin, may be considered the geographical centre of the Christian religion. Its shores and waters are fragrant with holy associations with the life and teachings and works of Jesus of Nazareth. As such its physical features are of interest to all Christians. In the Old Testament it bears the name of *Chinnereth* or *Cineroth*; afterward it is known as the Sea of Gennesareth, Sea of Galilee, Lake Tiberias, which (Bahr Tubariyeh) is its modern name. The title of *lake* is much more fitting than that of *sea*. It is about twenty-five miles east of the Mediterranean, and about fifty-five miles north of the Dead Sea. Its shape is oval; its length is about thirteen miles; its breadth six miles. The level of the lake is from six hundred to seven hundred feet below that of the Mediterranean; so that in the summer the climate is very warm and oppressive, although in early spring it is not so. The winter is much more severe and longer at Tiberias than at Jericho; even snow sometimes, though very rarely, falls.<sup>2</sup> The thorn tree grows on the surrounding hill sides in thick jungles; near the town of Tiberias the palm is seen, the oleander grows in great abundance, and shrubs of the tropical thorn fringe the greater part of the shore.<sup>1</sup> The soil is much of a dark alluvial loam and was and is still exceedingly fertile. In the time of Josephus it bore all kinds of trees, walnuts, olives, palm, and grapes and figs during ten months of the year. Wheat, millet, tobacco, indigo and very fine melons now are raised.<sup>2</sup> The entrance of the Jordan at the northern extremity of the lake is marked by a rich, green plain stretching close up to the high wall of the eastern hills; two isolated palms stand on

<sup>1</sup> Stanley.

<sup>2</sup> Robinson.



the brink of the shore.<sup>1</sup> This plain (Batihah) seems to be an alluvial deposit from the Jordan, or to have been driven up by the prevailing southerly winds from the bottom of the lake. These winds have driven up a bank of sand before the mouth which rises above the water, and extends some twenty rods from the eastern shore, forming a channel for the river along the western shore.<sup>2</sup> Vast numbers of gulls flock around this point.<sup>3</sup> Another water-fowl is seen, a kind of large kingfisher with black and white spots, and a fine tuft upon the head.<sup>3</sup> On the south the Jordan issues from the lake through its wide-open valley, descending toward the Dead Sea.<sup>1</sup> Along the edge of the lake runs, the whole way round from north to south, a level beach, at the southern end roughly strewn with black and white stones of volcanic origin, but the central or northern part formed of smooth sand, or of a texture of shells and pebbles so minute as to resemble sand. The western shore abounds in numerous and copious springs which scatter fertility and verdure along their short course.<sup>1</sup> The main formation along the lake is everywhere limestone; yet around Tiberias black basaltic stones are scattered upon the ground, having a volcanic appearance. In this neighbourhood are the celebrated warm springs, the water of which as it issues from the ground is too hot to bear the hand in it. The water of the lake is rather pleasant to the taste but slightly brackish.<sup>2</sup>

On the eastern shore, the hills rise from the beach to the height of from one to two thousand feet. They are deeply furrowed by ravines and quite flat along the summit. Down these ravines the wind sweeps with great violence. There is no recess in the eastern hills of sufficient depth to form a site for a town. They were and still are uncultivated, "desert," but the lower slopes of them, where broken by ravines, were used for grazing, as in the case of the "herd of swine" that ran down the steep place into the sea.

The lake of Tiberias, probably from the numerous streams, including the Jordan, which discharge their produce into its waters, abounds in fish of all kinds, which there increase and

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<sup>1</sup> Stanley

<sup>2</sup> Robinson.

<sup>3</sup> De Sauley.

multiply. 'These fish are some of them of goodly size<sup>3</sup> and are delicate and well flavoured.'<sup>2</sup> The fisheries furnish the chief occupation to the inhabitants of the region. The building of boats, the manufacture of sails and nets, the actual work of fishing, the marketing and curing of the fish must have employed a great number of persons. It is not strange that along the busy shores of this inland sea our blessed Lord sought and found the most fruitful field upon which to exercise his divine power and announce his holy precepts.

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NOTES.

22. And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men :

23. And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry.

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22. The parallels for verses 22 and 23 are Mark ix. 30-32; Luke ix. 43-45. The remainder of the section is found only in Matthew. *While they abode*—Rather, while they were returning into Galilee. *Shall be betrayed*—This was a new item in Christ's revelation to them of his suffering; it implied treachery on the part of some of his friends. *Into the hands of men*—And still it is true; the Son of man in the persons of the saints, of the lowly and the poor, is betrayed into the hands of the cruel and the oppressor. The "old, old story of Jesus and his love" is thus linked with that other old, old story of "man's inhumanity to man." . . . 23. *They shall kill him*—The utmost their malice could do. *Shall be raised*—He shall rise; delivered out of the power of death, out of the hands of men. *They were sorry*—Mark and Luke add that they understood not the saying, and were afraid to ask him. The sorrow was on account of his death, chiefly a natural and unselfish grief, but doubtless also one

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22, 23. Where did this incident occur? In what region had the Lord and his disciples been staying before this? What is the meaning of *betrayed*? Can one be betrayed by a professed enemy? by whom only? How is the Son of man even now betrayed? Why were the disciples sorry

<sup>3</sup> Robinson.

<sup>2</sup> De Sauley.

24. And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute?

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in which fear and disappointment mingled. The ideas of death and kingly glory, of Christ being killed, and yet obtaining the Messianic kingdom, made so strange a paradox that they were perplexed. *They feared to ask*—They remembered their late experience, when Peter sought to rebuke Jesus; and as they could not yet consent, they were silent. In Mark's account this saying of Christ's seems to be introduced as a reason for the secrecy of his journey. . . . 24. *Capernaum*—The place of our Lord's residence. From Nazareth he had been driven; Capernaum had ceased to be a refuge to him, but after his wanderings, where else should he go? He does not seem to have made any public appearance, but abode in retirement at the house of Peter, for we know that Peter had a house in Capernaum, Mark i. 21 and 29, and this would doubtless be the place of the Master's entertainment, and the head-quarters of the twelve. Simon's wife (the tradition calls her Perpetua, and says that she afterward suffered martyrdom), together with the good mother-in-law who ministered to Jesus on a former occasion, Matt. viii. 15, would be quite ready to extend the simple hospitality of their home. This supposition explains why Peter, as head of the house, should have been approached for the tax, and why our Lord should have provided only for the payment of his own and Peter's dues. *They that received tribute*—Not the gatherers of the state taxes, but the collectors of the Temple dues (Greek, *Ta Didrachma*, the double drachma). The *didrachmon* was equal to a half shekel, or about thirty cents of our money. Every Hebrew twenty years old and upward, in whatever part of the world he lived, was required to pay a half shekel yearly for the support of the Temple service. The origin of the custom

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to hear this prophecy? How should the news of Christ's death make us feel?

24. Where did Jesus lodge in Capernaum? Where is Capernaum? Why was Peter asked for the Temple tax? What was this Temple tax? See Ex. xxx. 13-16. How much was due from each person? How was

25. He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?

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was the covenant to pay one-third of a shekel for this purpose, entered into by Nehemiah and the princes and priests of Israel after the captivity, Nehemiah x. 32; suggested, probably, by the half shekel of atonement-money, collected after the completion of the Tabernacle, Exodus xxx. 13-16, from all males over twenty years of age. This tax was paid just before the passover, and those in arrears usually paid to collectors at the eastern gate of the temple, when they went up to the feast. Jesus had not been at the passover this year, and so was waited upon at the city of his residence. *Came to Peter*—At his house, probably; he went out to meet them. *Your Master*—The Master of you (plural) disciples. *Doth he not pay the Temple dues?*—The question seems to convey a taunt because of Christ's poverty, or irreligion; "This *Master of yours*," etc., spoken with a sneer, would certainly have deeply mortified Peter. Nor is it probable that they forgot to remind Peter that he, too, was in arrears. . . . 25. *He saith, Yes*—Surely, such has always been his custom; and He still recognizes his connection with and obligations to the Temple. What further passed we can but conjecture; enough in connection with this assent of Peter's to assure the collectors that the dues would be paid. *When he was come into the house*—With heart filled with mortification at the exposure of their common poverty, and with some anxiety as to where the money was to come from. *Jesus prevented*—Anticipated; the old sense of the word *to go before*; not *to hinder*, as now; so also in Psalms lix. 10; lxxxviii. 13; 1 Thess. iv. 15. Peter was about to relate his interview, and to ask counsel as to payment. It is not, of course, *improbable* that the interview

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this collected? What did these receivers of Temple dues mean by their question?

25, 26. Why did Peter answer *yes*? What is meant by *Jesus prevented*? Thess. iv. 15. How did Jesus know what was in Peter's mind? What is the difference between "custom or tribute" spoken of here and the "tribute" of vs. 24? What is the sense of the word *strangers* here? How

26. Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free.

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with the collectors occurred just outside the walls, and was overheard by Jesus; but this anticipation of Peter's thoughts is, more likely, an evidence of Christ's foreknowledge, and was itself a proof of his divine nature. It would surely awaken in Peter's mind, just then filled with shame because of his Master's mean estate, somewhat of the same emotion which led Nathanael to cry out, Whence knowest thou me? John i. 48. *Kings of the earth*—In contrast with the King of heaven. *Custom*—The tax on all exports and imports, levied on goods not only at harbours, but at the gates of all cities. *Tribute*—The poll-tax paid by every Jew, and therefore held to be a badge of their dishonour. It was of this poll-tax that the Pharisees and Herodians raised the question, *Is it lawful to give?* Matt. xxii. 17. They did not dispute the *lawfulness* of the *custom*, although they were often plundered by its unjustness. *Strangers*—Of their own children, or of the children of other people? Not *strangers* in the current sense, but only as separate from the royal family; subjects. . . . 26. *Peter said*—It was admirable to have him thus overturn his own acknowledgment to the collectors. *Then are the children free*—This conclusion may have derived its force from some previous discourse in which the kingly character of Jehovah, and the royal dignity of Jesus as his Son, may have been brought out, and also the relation of the apostles as joint-heirs with him. This also seems evident from the discussion which follows as to chief places in the kingdom. Matt. xviii. 1. The inference is this: "By parity of reasoning, I, the Son of the Lord of the Temple, am exempt from the Temple taxes." It is a forcible assertion of his dignity as the Messiah. The thought does not stop here; for the sequel plainly includes Peter also among the exempts, and implies the apostles' position as royal children. The whole is surely a comment upon Psalm

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did the mode of raising taxes then prevailing in Palestine differ from our mode? Were the royal family taxed? why not? What relation had Jesus Christ to the Lord of the Temple? Heb. i. 5. What did Jesus mean to teach concerning himself by this figure of the children of earthly kings being free from tribute? See Ps ii. 6-12.

27. Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money; that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

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ii. 6-12, where the Messiah is declared to be king upon the holy hill of Zion by virtue of his Sonship; where the earth and the nations are given to him for possession and inheritance, and kings and judges are called upon to serve him. The assertion of this doctrine in connection with Christ's humiliation is in accordance with the methods of instruction which particularly mark this period. Its influence upon Peter's impressible mind must have been very great, and was greatly intensified by the miracle which followed. . . . 27. *Offend*—Lest we should prove a *skandalon*, a snare. *To them*—Collectors and “outsiders” generally; the people. For they would not have understood the grounds of a refusal, but would have deemed it impiety in Christ, or would themselves have wrongly asserted exemption. Jesus was not against the Temple, but over it; he did not oppose it, but simply nullified its typical service by fulfilling it. *The Sea*—Of Galilee. Peter being a fisherman, his house was near the beach. *A hook*—Angling was common, although the disciples usually fished with the net. *A piece of money*—Literally, a *stater*; this was the Greek imperial tetra-drachm, a coin which with the Roman denarius, one-fourth its value, composed the entire silver currency of Palestine at this period. The tetra-drachm, or four-drachm piece, was twice the value of the di-drachm, and therefore about sixty cents of our money. The didrachms were not at that time in circulation; and it is a confirmation of the accuracy and truthfulness of the sacred narrative that the coin found should be a current coin, just such as a fish would be likely to pick up. The swallowing of coins, jewels, etc.,

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27. Did the Jews think that Jesus was exempt from the Temple tax? What does *offend* mean here? How could Christ's refusal to pay prove a snare to the people? What lesson should this teach us as to yielding our privileges and dignity for the sake of others? What *sea* was this? What did the disciples usually fish with? How did Jesus show his royal power in this miracle? How much money was needed for payment? How much was found in the fish? How did the coin get there? What lesson does

by fish, is not a remarkable occurrence. But the incident is certainly more than an exercise of Christ's *omniscience*, by which he foresaw the approach of a fish which had swallowed a stater. Either in the unconscious direction of Peter's steps to the proper spot at which to cast his line, or, more probably, in such control over the fish as led it to the spot, the Lord's *power* was shown. The object of the miracle was not only to supply a present need, but to vindicate, by the manner of supply, his claims as Lord of all, both upon earth and in the sea. And inseparable from this would be the same lesson taught by the miracles of the loaves, which the disciples were so slow to learn, and which it was now so important for them to know: "The Lord will provide." *For me and thee*—It has been conjectured (BENGEL) that the other disciples were not yet twenty, and therefore not liable to the Temple tax. If this were so, it would be a most interesting feature of the college of the apostles, which would have a manifest bearing upon the Sunday-school work, especially in the Bible-class department. But the evidence upon this point is hardly sufficient to justify even a conjecture (see under verse 24), although it may have been true of *some* of the apostles.

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### ANALYSIS.

#### I. The Wayside Talk.

*Facts.*—Christ with the twelve passes secretly through Upper Galilee; he announces his betrayal, and again his death and resurrection. The disciples are sorry, but fail to understand and fear to ask.

*Thoughts.*—Behold the Son of man, a stranger in his own land, passing through the scene of his benevolent labours and mighty works as an unhonoured fugitive! Let the sufferer and exile for Christ's sake, let the victim of ungrateful beneficiaries remember this, and seek the Master's sympathy. . . . Jesus be-

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this act teach the poor and needy? Do you think Jesus had no money in his purse? Analyze this lesson. Where is the scene of this wayside talk? What is the second scene related? who the parties in it? where did it occur? What is the *third* scene? and where did it occur? What is the *fourth* fact related? What are the lessons taught by the whole section?

trayed! By whom? "Is it I?" . . . Still the glory and the shame go hand in hand. . . . He whose coming was now concealed, and who hid himself from the eyes of men, shall come in clouds one day, and his enemies shall hide themselves in dens and mountain recesses, and call upon the rocks to fall on them and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb. Rev. vi. 15, 16. . . . Never judge a cause by the unpopularity of its advocates. . . . I have heard that "Jesus died;" am I sorry? Lord, teach me godly sorrow for the sins that wrought my Saviour's death, and gird me with strength to rise against them and subdue them! . . . I have heard that Jesus "rose again;" am I glad? O thou, the Resurrection and the Life, give me a part in the first resurrection! . . . How dull is the spiritual understanding! Surely only the Holy Spirit can lead into truth. . . . Are you discouraged that your scholars are dull, and do not understand your preachings of the Cross? Remember the divine Teacher and his dull disciples, and go on with hope, giving "line upon line, precept upon precept." By and by it shall be Pentecost! . . . How many lie in doubt and ignorance and unbelief, because they are afraid or unwilling to ask Jesus! "Ask, and ye shall receive."

## II. Peter and the Tax-gatherers.

*Facts.*—They reach Capernaum; the collectors of Temple dues seek payment of Peter for Jesus; Peter acknowledges the debt, and enters his house to tell the Master.

*Thoughts.*—How sweet to have Jesus dwelling in our homes! Would you be thus honoured? Read Matt. xv. 35-40. . . . "Home, sweet Home!" how bright it seems after a journey! but let us sometimes, as we sing the dear melody, remember Him who, that we might gain the heavenly home, was himself homeless here. Matt. viii. 20. . . . Dear Jesus, by his free submission to poverty, takes away from honest poverty its reproach; let us, then, who are poor, bear our lot with cheerful dignity. . . . "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." 2 Cor. viii. 9. . . . Peter had no money in his purse, but he had Jesus in his house.



James ii. 5. Behold a pauper entertaining the Prince of peace ! . . . Peter said, " Yes " first, and went to consult Christ afterward ; therefore he blundered. In matters pertaining to Jesus and his faith, let us first seek counsel of Him who giveth wisdom, and then decide. . . . Beware that an unguarded " Yes " do not compromise the honour of our King. . . . How many like St. Peter, aye, and in the very name of Peter, would make JESUS subject to the *temple* !

### III. Christ Lord of the Temple.

*Facts.*—Jesus anticipates Peter's statements, and proves by analogy his freedom from Temple dues, on the ground of his divine Sonship.

*Thoughts.*—"Thou, God, seest me," yea, "thou understandest my thought afar off." Help me to pray as David. Psalm cxxxix. 23, 24. . . . "Christ as a Son over his own house." Heb. iii. 6. . . . Wonderful grace, we through Christ become children of the King of kings ! . . . Though delivered from the burden of the Law, we are still subject to the yoke of Christ. Matt. xi. 29, 30 ; and only "if the Son shall make us free, shall we be free indeed." John viii. 35, 36.

### IV. The Miraculous Provision.

*Facts.*—Jesus, to avoid offence, bids Peter go to the lake, cast a hook, take up the first fish, and find sufficient money for the dues.

*Thoughts.*—It is better to waive a privilege and work a good than to needlessly assert our dignity and do evil. . . . Let this concern of Christ's as to causing to offend illustrate Romans xiv. 21, for the guidance of wine-bibbers. . . . Is it strange that He who could read Peter's heart should see what was in the mouth of a fish ? "His eye seeth every precious thing." Job xxviii. 10. . . . The bodies of the shipwrecked that lie in the sepulchre of the deep are not beyond the vision of Jesus ; therefore the sea too shall give up its dead. . . . The fowls of the air, and the fish of the sea, will come at Christ's bidding to feed his own. . . . There was just enough for the present necessity, neither more nor less ; and so to all, the Master promises "daily bread."

Read the prayer of Agur, Proverbs xxx. 8, 9. . . . Is not all our substance the Lord's gift, to be spent *first* for Christ, *second* for ourselves?

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DIRECTORY.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free." vs. 26. **THEMES.**—*For Thought:* The kingly authority of Jesus over all things for the good of his Church. *For Prayer:* Lord Jesus, sustain my body by thy providence, and subdue my soul by thy grace! *For Practical Life:* Have I taken the bounty which God sends to use not only for myself, but for the cause of the Good Sender? . . . **CATECHISM.**—Q. 26. How doth Christ execute the office of a king? A. Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies. Also Q. 11.

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SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK.

**BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS.**—Examples of Providence: 1 Kings xvii., Elijah fed by the ravens; Gen. xxi. 12-21, Hagar and Ishmael; Gen. xxii., Abraham and Isaac.



STATER, THE COIN BROUGHT TO PETER BY THE FISH.

## LESSON X.

### THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM.

Mark ix. 33-50; Matt. xviii. 1-9; Luke ix. 46-50.

#### HISTORICAL CONNECTION.

The time and place of this section are the same as the last, the house of Peter, near the shore of Lake Tiberias, at Capernaum.

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#### NOTES.

33. And he came to Capernaum; and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?

34. But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest.

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**33.** *Disputed by the way*—The Greek here and in the next verse does not convey the idea of a quarrel, but of an argument, a reasoning together. *By the way*—Through Upper Galilee. The argument seems to have been at a time when Jesus was not present—perhaps during one of the halts, or night bivouacs; or while he was apart at prayer. . . . **34.** *They held their peace*—For their argument on such a theme must have seemed to them unworthy; under the question of Him whose life was a continual self-denial, their selfishness came out in its full deformity. *Who should be the greatest*—The prominence given Peter at the confession, with the strong expressions concerning Christ's kingdom, would not only suggest a difference among them, but would strengthen the old views of a glorious earthly kingdom. So, also, the failure of the nine and the miracle following, with the resulting popular applause. BENGEL also cites the Transfiguration; but as the three witnesses of that scene kept it secret, the others would not have been influenced by this; unless, indeed,

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33, 34. Where did the incident of this lesson occur? in whose house? By what "way" was it that this dispute happened? vs.30. What had Jesus been talking about during that journey? vs.31. Where was Jesus during

35. And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.

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the appearance of Jesus at the descent, and the demeanour of the disciples afterward, might have awakened suspicions of some unknown distinction. OOSTERZEE (in Lange) adds the miraculous provision of the coin as influencing their minds, which could not have been, if the conversation occurred *by the way* through Upper Galilee. This, however, may have given the appropriate occasion for Christ's question. At all events, their hopes were high, and while Christ was preaching the cross, they seem to have had their thoughts more bent upon places of distinction. These thoughts were renewed in their hearts by the language of Jesus concerning the Temple dues, and led to the question, Matt. xviii. 1, which they offered without any explanation as to the cause of it (their argument "by the way"), or their application of it (a settlement of the matter favourably to their several ambitions). "Jesus perceiving the thought of their heart," (Luke) puts the question, vs. 33; while vs. 34 at once shows them that their selfish purpose and arguments, as well as their effort at concealment, are known. . . . 35. *Sat down*—As when about to make a formal discourse. *Called the twelve*—Which may imply that all had not taken part in the question put to Jesus at the house. *Shall be last*—Which predicts the result of self-exaltation: "Whoso exalteth himself shall be humbled." So far this is a warning against unlawful seeking to be first. But there is another idea: If any man wish to be first in influence, in order that he may be first in good works, let him be first in humility and first in service, and he shall then, indeed, be first in the noblest, in the Christian sense. The conjunction of *last of all* with *servants of all* for ever shuts out the lawfulness of serving *just to be* sovereign; the humility must be and abide.

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this dispute? how did he know of it? what was the dispute about? what started it? Why did the disciples *hold their peace*?

35, 36, 37. Why did Jesus sit down? Matt. v. 1, 2. What was the text of Christ's sermon? How can one become *first* by becoming *servant of all*? In what sense may we *desire to be first*? By what did Jesus illustrate his text? Whose child was this? Did it fear to be in the arms of Jesus, think you? How may you too rest in Christ's arms? In what respect is

36. And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them : and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them,

37. Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me ; and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

38. And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us ; and we for bade him, because he followeth not us.

See Matt. xviii. 3, 4, in this connection. . . . **36.** *He took a child*—A little boy: tradition says Ignatius the martyr, who was minister at Antioch from A. D. 67 to 107, when, by order of Trajan, he was destroyed by lions in the Amphitheatre at Rome for avowing himself a Christian. Matthew says that Jesus called the child and set him in the midst of the disciples. . . . **37** Jesus, having taught that the disciples must have that spirit of content with a small and dependent sphere of life which marks the child, now speaks of the manifestation of this spirit. *Whoso shall receive*—The attraction of like to like will draw the child-like heart to the child-like and the children. *One of such children*—One of such child-hearted believers as are symbolized by this child. The language of Luke, *this child*, seems almost to demand a literal sense. And indeed the children in years are included here with the class of child-hearted. *In my name*—Because he is mine, as ye also are mine. *Receiveth me*—For I am meek and lowly of heart. Matt. xi. 29 ; xxv. 40. *Him that sent me*—For the Holy Father dwells with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit. Isaiah lvii. 15. Thus through the child-like receiving of the child and the child-like, we have fellowship with God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ. And is not this greatness? . . . **38.** *John answered*—That is, the statement of John was called out by this remark about receiving

a child the emblem of the Christian? Have all children this spirit? What is meant by *receiving children*? See vs. 41. Who may be called *children* in the sense of this passage? How does this fact of having continual fellowship with the eternal Father and his Son show spiritual greatness? What is the rank and standing of those with whom earthly kings and princes intimately associate?

38. What led John to speak out, and put this case? What is meant by

39. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man wh'ch shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me.

40. For he that is not against us is on our part.

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in Christ's name. He wished a decision on the case following—perhaps felt that he had violated the principle just taught, and desired to confess it. *He followeth not us*—He is not one of the disciples, although evidently he had faith in Christ. Even at that period the Name of Jesus upon the tongue of one too weak in faith to be a pronounced follower of Christ was a mighty power. *We forbade him*—They supposed this to be an infringement upon their peculiar privileges. Proud of their power over devils, they were not willing to see this power in other hands. Their pride, in this case, hindered good, just as did their unbelief in the case of the lunatic boy. *Because he followeth not us*—Not because he was failing, and thus dishonouring the dear Name, not because his motives were mercenary, simply because he is not of our party, not one of the twelve. . . . 39. *Which shall do a miracle, etc., that can lightly speak*—Because he will thus be showing faith by his works. Simon Magus could not work miracles in Christ's name, Acts viii. 19, 20; nor could the vagabond Jews and sons of Sceva. Acts xix. 13-16. But see also Matt. vii. 23 for the contrary. . . . 40. CHRIST may truly say: "He that is not for me is against me." Matt. xii. 30; but his followers, in the spirit more becoming short-sighted mortals, ought to say: "He that is not against us is for us." Which was especially true in the primitive age of the Church, when the opposition was so bitter and demonstrative that refusing to take sides *against* Christians was often an evidence of a favourable feeling. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea and others were disciples of the passive kind. Let the

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*followeth not us?* Was the man a Christian? Why did the disciples forbid the man? Wherein was this wrong?

39, 40. What is sectarianism? How does this word of Christ's rebuke that spirit? How are we to look upon and treat all who are doing good in Christ's name? In what way alone can we tell that people are friends of Christ at heart? Can God decide without these? Reconcile vs. 40 with Matt. xii. 30. Which rule of judging is it best for us to take?

41. For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.

42. And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

Christian worker seek and claim the sympathy and support of all who are not in declared opposition. . . . 41. *Whosoever shall give you a cup of water, etc.*—A third class of passive friends of Christ, and a reason for dealing kindly with them and accepting their co-operation. The *first* class, vs. 39, wrought great acts of love in Christ's name; the *second* abstained from popular persecution; the *third* are they who do little acts of kindness to Christians. They shall not be without reward from the Master, and should be recognized and encouraged by his ambassadors. Even the slight tokens of faith's beginning are to be valued and cherished. . . . 42. *Shall offend*—Shall cause them to commit spiritual offences; be snares to them. The thought is the opposite of vs. 37. The dispute about first places, while the doctrine of the Cross was put aside, surely would be a trap for the weak of faith. Thus the disciples were warned against the priestly pretensions of the Pharisees, and all Christians against disputes concerning pre-eminence, on the ground of the evil done to the little ones—the young and the weak in faith. Therefore, the fomenters of church quarrels and the authors of schisms are among the most guilty offenders! *Better for him*—For punishment even worse than capital shall be his. *Millstone*—Not one of the small ones turned by hand, but the great stone, such as required horse-power. Among us the word always conveys the idea of size. This method of capital punishment was common among the Romans, and is said by Jerome to have been practiced among the Jews. Many of the martyrs afterward suffered death

42. What is it to *offend* one of the little ones? Can children believe in Christ? Can children do anything for Christ? vs. 41. Can children cause children to offend? in what ways? How do such disputes as the disciples had put stumbling-blocks in the way of children and weak Christians?

43. And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

44. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

45. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

46. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

in this wise. . . . 43-48. *And if thy hand offend thee, etc.*—In order to avoid the sin and punishment of causing others to offend, the Christian must *free himself* from the *skandalon*—his besetting sins and their occasions. The cutting off of the hand, eye and foot here enjoined teaches proverbially the duty of separating from even the dearest idols. But a wider sense appears if we consider the significance of the hand, eye and foot as symbols. The hand represented power, government, possession. Pa. x. 12; Mark xiv. 62. The foot represented the desires, affections, because the mind is moved toward an object by the affections as the body is moved by the feet; and so, also, is a symbol of zeal. Ps. cxix. 59; Eph. vi. 15. The eye represents the understanding, knowledge, judgment. Acts xxvi. 18; Prov. xv. 3; Ezek. v. 11. From this view of the passage, the offences particularly warned against are those springing from pride of authority, from undue zeal, and from false understanding and hasty or partial or perverted judgment; which well accords with the tone of the whole section. *Where their worm dieth not, etc.*—The expression is taken from Isaiah lxvi. 24. *Hell*—Gehenna. The valley of Gehenna, a ravine skirting the south of Jerusalem, deep and narrow, called the valley of Hinnom. In this place the Jews offered their children in sacrifice to Molech after Ahaz had introduced the worship of the fire-gods. Josiah polluted it, 2 Kings xxiii. 10, and it became the sink for all the city offals. The dead bodies of

43-48. What is meant by cutting off the foot, hand, etc.? What did the *hand* sometimes represent? Ps. x. 12; Mark xiv. 62. What particular sin would this warn against? The *foot*? Ps. cxix. 59; Eph. vi. 15. What particular sins would cutting off the foot warn against? Of what was the



47. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire:

48. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

49. For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.

50. Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

criminals were also cast here. Of course the worm revelled in this filth, and the Rabbins state that fires were kept continually burning as a sanitary necessity. The gnawing worm and the devouring fires, together with the horrible associations of the Molech-worship, made the place the common and very fit emblem of the eternal torment of perdition. The Sunday-school teacher will note the introduction of this figure, whose force is drawn from the horrors of child-sacrifice, Jer. xxxii. 35, in connection with these gracious words to the apostles in behoof of the little ones. . . . 49. *Salted with fire*—With the fire of self-denial and purification from sin on earth; or else, with the everlasting fire of hell hereafter. *And*—For this reason, viz.: to show that the sacrifice is one of purification, not punishment. *Salted with salt*—Lev. ii. 13, for salt is on the sacrifice the symbol of a *covenant of self-renunciation*. Salt was both a symbol of a covenant and a symbol of purification. Num. xviii. 19; 2 Kings ii. 21. The idea of a purgatory which Romanists claim to be taught here is forbidden by the *never shall be quenched* and *dieth not* just preceding. If the passage proved a purgatory at all, it would prove *unending purgatory*, which would be proving too much. . . . 50. *Lost its saltness*—If the covenant is only one of lip, and the purifying only of the outside; if the true *spirit* of self-denial is lacking. *Wherewith?*—Yet how many strive to “season” with the leaven of the Pharisees! See 1

*eye* a symbol? Acts xxvi. 18; Prov. xv. 3; Ezek. v. 11. What particular offences would plucking out the eye warn against?

49, 50. How is *fire* an emblem of self-denial and purification? Of what was *salt* an emblem? Lev. ii. 13; Num. xviii. 19; 2 Kings ii. 21. What

Corinthians xiii. *Have salt*—The true spirit of humble self-denial, purifying the heart of the corruption of self; and, therefore, *be at peace*; which carries us back to the dispute which originated this discourse.

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### ANALYSIS.

#### I. The Disciples Dispute—Who is Greatest?

*Facts.*—On the way through Galilee the disciples argue their several claims to the first place in the kingdom of Christ; they submit the point to Jesus at Capernaum; have their conduct and purpose exposed by a question.

*Thoughts.*—Oh sinful pride, that turns from the thought of an uplifted Saviour to wrangle about an upper seat in his kingdom! . . . When the doctrine of the Cross is distasteful among teachers, look for strife. . . . Be charitable to Christians in their contentions about dignities and power, for even the apostles disputed by the way. . . . We may indeed dispute when our Master's honour is concerned, but to contend in the interest of self is sin. . . . Dear children, if tempted to quarrel about first places in your plays, remember that Jesus sees and hears, and will call you to account.

“Nor let my weaker passions dare  
Consent to sin, for God is there.”

. . . For every idle word must we give an account; how much more for every angry one!

#### II. The Lord's Decision: The Little Child—Receiving Children.

*Facts.*—Jesus calls the twelve around him; takes a child to his arms, and teaches them humility and the receiving of children.

*Thoughts.*—The apostles gather around the Master, and in the Master's arms is a little child. Behold the symbol of the

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is meant by having *salt* in one's self? How does this work *peace* among brethren?

Church in the home, in the school, in the congregation—the centre of interest is a child in the arms of Jesus! . . . Lord Jesus, call thy ministers to encompass the children of to-day with holy words and loving hearts that shall shut them in to thy arms! . . . Jesus set a child in the midst of his apostles, but how many of our churches scruple to admit children to the circle of their communion! . . . The lowliness, freshness, faith and humility of the child-nature is the emblem and the model of the Christian character. . . . The saving grace of God tends to make the *adult* as a *child*; why, then, should men say that the child must first become an adult before it is a fit subject for saving grace? . . . The apostles stand near to Jesus, but the child is in his arms. Lord, call, by thy Spirit, all our little ones to thee! . . . How many lads and lasses forget that childlikeness is most noble, and foolishly imitate the pride, independence and untrustfulness of men! . . . O parents, do not quench the holy nature of childhood by forcing your children, like hot-house plants, into premature manhood and womanhood! . . . Poor little children! how often are they “snubbed,” treated with the grossest carelessness, impoliteness and inconsideration, just because they *are children*! Lord, give the Church and the world a true appreciation of children and childhood! . . . Jesus welcomed the children to his arms; but, alas! to how many homes of our Christian land the wee ones come without welcome! . . . A child-like man or woman is the work of divine grace, but a man-like child is the fruit of sin, a sadness and a shame. Alas for the little waifs of our streets from whom the sins of parents and of society have stolen the boon of childhood! Oh, there is a place in the heart of infinite love and in the everlasting arms for them! Blessed are ye, workers in our mission-schools, who receive these little ones in the true spirit of the Master’s command! . . . What cheer is this for the toiler among the lowly! the unrecognized and unapplauded “last of all and servant of all” shall be, nay—is, “*first*” in the Master’s kingdom! . . . How different the primacy of Jesus and the primacy of Rome!

### III. The Humble Worker Encouraged—Sectarianism Rebuked.

*Text.*—John confesses to rebuking one not an apostle for ex-

orcising in Christ's name. Jesus censures the act, urges tolerance, with reasons for encouraging these little acts of love and faith.

*Thoughts.*—Children should be encouraged to work for Christ. Their benevolence should be developed by constant appeals to it, and opportunities to exercise it. . . . Do not hurt by your condemnations, nor overlook in your commendations, the godly mothers whose hearts are in the Sunday-school work, but who must bide at home to prepare the little ones to go. Remember David's rule: "As his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff; they shall part alike." 1 Samuel xxx. 24. . . . Shall non-professors teach in our Sabbath-schools? Try the question by the Lord's words. If they have generous natures, high principles and pure lives, and you need their help, Yes! . . . In the common work of casting out devils let us obliterate party prejudices and denominational lines. . . . "We must beware of supposing that the application of this saying (vs. 39) is to be confined to *the working of a miracle*; vs. 40 shows that it is general—a weighty maxim of Christian toleration and charity, and caution to men how they presume to limit the work of the Spirit of God to any sect, or succession, or outward form of Church. See Phil. i. 16-18. All those who, notwithstanding outward differences of communion and government, *believe in and preach* Jesus Christ, without bitterly and uncharitably opposing each other, are hereby declared to be *helpers forward of each other's work*. Oh that all Christians would remember this!"—ALFORD.

#### IV. Subduing Darling Sins.

*Facts.*—Jesus under the figure of cutting off and casting away the hand, eye and foot urges the disciples to subdue all sins lest these cause the soul to perish. vs. 43-48.

*Thoughts.*—Through the lowly gate of self-denial and self-sacrifice lies the way that leads to eternal life. . . . Purity of heart and life here are necessary conditions for the entering into life eternal. . . . Lord, Lord, purge us from our sins by thine own blood, that we come not into the fire that shall never be quenched, where their worm dieth not! . . .

“The dearest idol I have known,  
 Whate'er that idol be,  
 Help me to tear it from its throne,  
 And worship only thee!”

## V. The Salted Sacrifice.

*Facts.*—Jesus teaches that every soul must be purified by self-denial, just as every sacrifice was purified by salt, the symbol of a covenant of holiness; he shows under the figure of unsavoury salt the worthlessness of a mere lip-covenant without heart-purity.

*Thoughts.*—It is well to profess religion, but if one would please God, he must also possess it. . . . The time of the Church's greatest purity is the time of its sweetest charity; “*first purity, then peace!*” . . . The surest Peacemaker among brethren is that Holy Spirit who sanctifies the heart. . . . “To the pure all things are pure,” therefore suspicion and envy, the most fertile sources of strife, are banished, and Christ's disciples have peace among themselves. . . . “If this fire which is to act as a preserving salt to you, have, from the nullity and vapidness of the grace of the covenant in you, *no such power*, it can only *consume*—the salt has lost its savour—the covenant is void—you will be cast out, as it is elsewhere added, and the fire will be no longer the fire of *purification*, but of *wrath eternal*.”—ALFORD. . . . “‘Have salt in yourselves!’ See to it that you have this renewing, sanctifying grace, which will render efficacious this salting with fire, by which you are to be tested and purified.”—OWEN. . . . “Our Lord regarded the contention of the disciples, and their zeal against a beginner in faith not walking in their circle, under the same point of view. All undevout and unholy zealotry, whether toward those within or those without, he explains as resulting from one fundamental offence and fault—the lack of salt and self-resignation, the want of the Spirit's discipline and of consecration to God.”—LANGE.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK.

BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS.—The sale of Joseph by his brethren, Gen. xxxvii., to show the sad results of envy. Examples of the early call of children, Samuel. 1 Sam. iii. The boy Jesus among the doctors. Luke ii. 41-52.

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 DIRECTORY.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all and servant of all.” vs. 25. THEMES.—*For Thought*: The infinite God rejoicing in the little child and the lowly heart. *For Prayer*: Lord, bestow upon us the grace of humility; help us to become as little children, that we may see thy kingdom. *For Practical Life*: If I would be truly great, I must subdue self, put aside all self-pleasing, and follow the example of Him who gave himself for us all. . . . CATECHISM.—Q. Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist? A. Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God and the cursed death of the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.



THE DENARIUS OR PENNY.

## LESSON XI.

### THE UNFORGIVING DEBTOR.

**Matt. xviii. 21-35.**

#### HISTORICAL CONNECTION.

The parable of the unforgiving debtor is a continuation of Christ's discourse to his disciples at the house of Peter in Capernaum.

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#### NOTES.

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

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21. *Then*—The warning against leading the weak in faith into offences, and the injunction to cut off all occasions of offence,

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21. Where did this conversation occur? What had Jesus been talking

22. Jesus 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, which would take account of his servants.

lead naturally into a rule for the right dealing with offenders. This is given in vs. 15-20, and should be read in this connection. *How oft?*—The old longing after “the letter;” he wanted a fixed rule, a form. *My brother*—In the church. *Sin*—Implying a serious offence; *against me*, a personal one. *Till seven times?*—The Rabbins said forgive three times, and quoted Amos i. 3, and ii. 6. Peter wanted a rabbinical rule, but he had got beyond the rabbinical measure. *Seven times?*—A sacred number, and hence most readily suggested, with the further idea, perhaps, that it would give greater sanctity to the act. See Lev. iv. 6; Josh. vi. 4; Kings xviii. 43. . . . 22. *I say not*—No, I will not prescribe a rule; I will not fix seven, nor any other number. But I will establish a principle, viz.: *Until seventy times seven*—A proverb to express an indefinite and unlimited forgiveness. In the same sense Lamech uses “seventy-and-seven-fold,” Gen. iv. 24. This is made more plain by Luke xvii. 4. . . . 23. *Therefore*—Because of this principle of unlimited forgiveness. *The kingdom of heaven*—The Church of Christ. *Is like*—Not only as to its constitution, but as to the fundamental law of its control, for unmeasured compassion has founded it, and introduced its subjects into it, and is the fulfilling of its laws. *A certain king*—Original, a human king, in contrast with the implied Sovereign of the divine kingdom just named. *Who would*—Who wished, purposed. *Servants*—Douloi, the subjects of (dunamis) power. The word would seem to indicate subjects who had become so by force of conquest, but it was properly given, according to Eastern custom, to even the chief ministers of State. The “servants” here represented were

about before this? vs. 15-20. What rule did the Rabbins give for the exercise of forgiveness? Amos i. 3. Why did Peter want a rule? Why did he suggest *seven*?

22. What rule did Jesus give? What did he mean by *seventy times seven*? What idea did that number express among the Jews?

23, 24. What is it to take account? What is the meaning of *servants*?



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

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doubtless either foreign princes under tribute, or those chief personages to whom the taxes of various provinces were farmed. Either case answers the conditions of the parable. In the time of Christ the taxes were "farmed" by the Roman government to certain persons or companies who were directly responsible for the entire tax of the province or section procured. This was by them again sub-letted, and the work of direct collection entrusted to parties in the provinces, usually inhabitants; these were the "publicans," of the Jews; indeed it is not unlikely that the mention of this word, vs. 17, suggested the peculiar form of this parable. This same system prevailed most extensively under the late Mohammed Ali of Egypt, and still is maintained. The sovereign thus came in contact with few of the people, and as all that was asked was the prescribed amount of taxes, there was much liberty for the contracting parties and their agents to extort from the people such sums as they pleased. These facts will explain features of the parable which seem to our times unnatural and improbable. I have before me a volume of travels in Egypt, which furnishes almost exact parallels of the vast amounts thus due to sovereigns and of the violent methods of forcing payment from subordinates. . . . 24. *Begun*—At the very beginning of this settlement; which puts the king's goodness in a stronger light, since the example of leniency thus early would seriously affect the revenue from other debtors. *Owed*—In the sense above explained. *Ten thousand talents*—This sum is probably assumed as a general popular expression for a very large amount of money. The talent was the highest standard weight used among the nations of this period, and also the highest standard denomination of money. The original Hebrew word signifies a globe or circle, from the shape of the weight; the Greek (talanton), a balance. Taking the Attic talent (the most current at this time) at its reduced value, 405,000 grains,

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here? How is God continually calling us to account? When will the great reckoning be? What was the value of a talent? of ten thousand

25. But forasmuch as he had not 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.

we estimate the talent to be in weight avoirdupois about 53 pounds. Estimating the value of the *drachm* as 57 grains, nearly the same as the Roman *denarius* (referred to vs. 28), we have 7105 drachms or denarii, which, at a valuation of 15½ cents each, gives a talent = \$1083, which, multiplied by 10,000 = \$11,000,000, nearly. The Hebrew talent was more valuable; from Ex. xxxviii. 25, 26, the Hebrew talent of silver is found equal to 3000 shekels, which, at 61 cents each (two drachms or denarii), makes  $\$1830 \times 10,000 = \$18,300,000$ . There is nothing improbable in a sovereign owing such an amount of tribute, or a contractor being responsible for such an amount of taxes; but the probability of paying so much, when once in arrears, is very small; and thus the boundless indebtedness of the sinner and the infinite compassion of God are illustrated. For as the talent was the *largest coin*, so 10,000 was the constant representative of the *largest number*. . . . 25. *To be sold*—The Roman law allowed the debtor to be enslaved by the creditor until the debt was paid. The same law prevailed among the Hebrews, see Lev. xxv. 39, 47; also vs. 41, 54, which show that the family of the man were included in the sale. The type of servitude among the Orientals was very often quite lenient, a sort of retainer-service, in which much consideration was enjoyed and family rights held sacred. It was evidently a far less severe sentence than the subsequent imprisonment and punishment. . . . 26. *Worshipped*—Did obeisance by prostration, embracing the knees and kissing the feet. *Have patience*—Be long-suffering. *I will pay thee all*—The debtor supposed himself able to

talents? In what sense is the *ten thousand talents* used here? literally? What does this figure show as to the sinner's standing before God?

25, 26. What does the servant's inability to pay represent? Did the Jewish laws allow the sale of a man for debt? Lev. xxv. 39, 47, also vs. 41, 54. Meaning of *worshipped*? In what way did the servant hope to keep his promise to pay all?

27. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

28. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him a hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

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

do so. "This is the voice of mistaken self-righteousness, which when bitten by sense of sin and terrified with the idea of punishment, runs hither and thither seeking help, and imagines it can build up a righteousness before God without having yet any idea that God himself will help the sinner."—LUTHER in ALFORD.

. . . 27. *Forgave him*—That is, agreed to be long-suffering. That an entire discharge is not meant appears from vs. 32, *I forgave thee all the debt because thou desiredst me*, where the forgiveness is asserted to be in accord with the servant's desire, which was simply for patience. This avoids the difficulty suggested by vs. 34 of imputing again sins once forgiven. *The debt*—Literally, the loan, a term which may be applied to revenues farmed out as above. . . . 28. *The same*—This very forgiven servant. *Went out*—From the very presence of his merciful lord. *Found*—Happened upon. *Fellow-servant*—Which itself should have been a plea for compassion. *A hundred pieces*—100 denarii, \$15.25, which, to his own debt (by the Hebrew talent), was less than as *one to one million*. *Laid hands*—So the law allowed; but *he* had been *brought* to his lord. Even the violent method of taking by the throat was in accord with the despotic manners of the government. *Pay me that thou owest*—It was a just debt, but an unjust and unmerciful manner of demanding. . . . 29. *Fell down, etc.*—There is here an almost

27. What moved the king's compassion? What is the meaning of *forgave the debt*? Had the servant asked to be released from the debt? What does this act of the king represent?

28, 29. In what spirit did the servant go away? Did he search for or only happen upon this fellow-servant? What was the value of this man's debt to him as compared with his own to the king? Was it right to make this demand? Where was the wrong? Did the law allow such violence?

30. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

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

exact repetition of his own acts before his creditor. How it should have reminded him of mercy! *Have patience*—How much easier, for so small a sum! *Pay all*—A promise much more reasonable than his own. . . . 30. *But went*—From the place of meeting, dragging the poor debtor with him. We may suppose an intervening trial before the judge, see Matt. v. 25, or an arbitrary imprisonment without trial. The casting into prison, as well as the torture, vs. 34, was with the idea of disclosing hoarded treasure, or moving the compassion of relatives. As, in the first case, the whole construction of the parable brings out into strongest light the compassionate forgiveness of the lord, so in this, every detail shows in most glaring colours the unforgiving cruelty of the merciless servant. . . . 31. *His fellow-servants*—There was no attempt at concealment. *Were very sorry*—Were grieved exceedingly. *Came*—It was an active sorrow, inciting to aid. *Told unto their lord*—A bold measure, considering Eastern customs. The merciless servant had not thought of such an appeal; he took the great favour shown him as an evidence of high standing and firm position at court. And so these friendly fellow-servants must have thought; but their zeal was great, their love strong, and doubtless they knew their lord's compassionate character. The parable itself furnishes sufficient grounds for hoping a favourable hearing; for the same spirit which would forgive so large a debt might readily be supposed to condemn an unforgiving act. Yet they ran great risks of being themselves involved in trouble. The kind offices of these

Was it needed in this case? Show the likeness between this plea and the one before the king. Which promise was the more reasonable?

30. Was this poor fellow imprisoned without trial? See Matt. v. 25. What was the good of casting him into prison? how would that get the money? What makes this act seem so outrageously cruel?

31. Was this cruel act done secretly? who saw it? How did they show their sorrow? Was their generous act attended with any danger? What standing must they have supposed the cruel servant to have at court? What overcame their fears? What lesson here for us?

32. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me :

33. Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee ?

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

35. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you,

men for their fellow join with the compassion of the king to make the strongest possible contrast with the cruel servant's act.

. . . 32. *Called him*—Like Haman, he may have come puffed up, and hoping some new favour. Alas, it was the call to wrath!

*Wicked*—Unforgiveness so aggravated was surely the depth of wickedness. *I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me*—Every word is fraught with reproach and condemnation, reminding the criminal of his own pardon, the vastness of his debt, his honoured plea. . . . 33. *Shouldst not thou also?*—For all the mercies we receive from others are model-lessons for life's practice toward others. While cruelty begets cruelty, all the world knows that love does beget, and should beget, love. . . .

34. *His lord was wroth*—Righteous anger, all the stronger because of that noble pity shown; for the most compassionate are always most indignant at injustice and cruelty. *Tormentors*—Who, by the bastinado and other tortures, might exact payment or punish failure. One who could be guilty of such gross cruelty might well be supposed guilty of fraud in concealing the revenues due, and falsehood in his protestations of poverty. The forgiving point is passed when one proves himself utterly hardened by the entire absence of compassion for his fellows. But we must not forget that this is a rule of God's relation to us, and that the rule for our conduct must ever be our Lord's "seventy times seven"—unlimited forgiveness. For only God can know when the forgiving point is finally and for ever passed. . . . 35. *So*

32, 33. Did the unforgiving servant know for what he was called? Was the name *wicked* deserved? why? What reason does the king give why the man should have been pitiful?

34, 35. Could the man ever make payment? Was there any reason to

if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

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*likewise shall my heavenly Father do*—That is, he shall call, condemn and consign to torment, until our moral indebtedness is cancelled. We may suppose a possibility of deliverance in the case of the unforgiving servant; but what hope of payment is there for the sinner under the sentence of God? *From your hearts*—Genuine and entire, forgiving freely and forgetting fully. And if from the heart, the life will give testimony. *Every one*—Which forecloses your excuse as to a “special case.” *Brother*—For your brother may transgress; therefore you dare not say: “He was a Christian, and should have known and have done otherwise.”

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## ANALYSIS.

### I. Peter's Question—The Precept.

*Facts.*—Peter seeks a fixed rule for forgiveness, and suggests “till seven times.” Jesus rejects such a formal standard, and announces the precept of unlimited forgiveness.

*Thoughts.*—The natural heart seeks a form of godliness, a prescribed rule of service, would be religious by rote. Christ establishes principles of action which are eternal and universal. . . . Never say, I have forgiven often enough, for the duty of forgiveness is not measured by *quantity*. . . . Forgive even as you are forgiven.

### II. The Parable.

#### 1. *The Servant Forgiven.*

*Facts.*—A king, taking account of the revenues with his chief servants, finds one defaulter in the amount of eleven millions of dollars, whom he orders to make payment, and at the same time

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think that his former plea of poverty was false? How does Jesus apply the parable? What is meant by forgiving from the heart? What are trespasses?

decrees the sale of his property and his family. The defaulter prostrates himself, prays his king to grant him time, and promises to pay all. The king has pity, releases the man and forgives the debt.

*Thoughts.*—God is “the King eternal, immortal, invisible.” 1 Tim. i. 17. . . . Each day to us is God’s reckoning day, in which, by some gracious or providential act, he brings us face to face with himself. Are our accounts in order? . . . These are some of God’s calls to reckoning: The voice of the teacher, the written word, alarmed conscience, affliction, death of friends and fellows, the conversion of neighbors and companions. . . . It is mercy to be called to the reckoning, for (1) our great burden of sin is daily growing greater; (2) the knowledge of our sins drives us to seek riddance of them; (3) the Lord calls to account that he may forgive us if we be penitent. . . . Do not stifle a sense of guilt; do not seek to excuse self; confess all; plead pardon for all, for the “blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all.” . . . Oh my sins! how many and how great they are! Lord, I will not rashly promise to cancel them all, but I lay them all on Jesus, craving forgiveness for his dear sake! . . . Figures fail to show how dreadful is the sinner’s guilt, as it lies under the eye of the holy God. . . . “How should man be just with God? If he would contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand.” Job ix. 2, 3. . . . Yet, blessed be thy name! “How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God; how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand.” Ps. cxxxix. 17, 18. . . . Lord, I confess my guilt, I acknowledge that I merit the bondage of eternal death. Yea, I will confess to the praise of thy justice, “that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.” Yet, good Lord, spare me, and forgive me for thy mercies’ sake! . . . The sinner’s guilt is aggravated by the ruin which it brings upon his family and friends. . . .

“Jesus paid it all, all the debt I owe.”

. . . Neither the greatest sin, nor the greatest multitudes of sins, are beyond the reach of God’s compassionate forgiveness.

### 2. *The Servant Offending.*

*Facts.*—The pardoned servant went out from the king's presence, met one who owed him fifteen dollars, seized him violently, demanded payment, rejected the debtor's plea for time, and dragged him away to the prison.

*Thoughts.*—God lays upon our path the opportunities to do good: woe is us if we wrest them to evil doing! . . . Do you say he was tempted? Nay, rather he was given here a test of his gratitude, a sweet occasion for showing the grace of forgiveness. . . . Do you excuse him with the plea that his great debt was to be settled and he *must* be harsh? Nay, but the thought of debt should have recalled compassion. . . . O devil of avarice, woe is the man possessed by thee! . . . He who forgets his own great need of charity will not likely be mindful of the needs of others. . . . How great the measure with which the Lord's mercies are often meted us! how narrow that with which we measure to others! . . . "From all uncharitableness, good Lord, deliver us!" . . . "Here is the climax of depravity, to be beggars with God and tyrants to our brethren."

### 3. *The Servant Accused.*

*Facts.*—The fellow-servants of the poor debtor, moved with grief, go to the king and tell what was done.

*Thoughts.*—Many are the kind hearts who daily sorrow over human wrongs; well is it for the world that the throne of eternal love is open to their pleas. "Weep with them that weep."

"Did Christ o'er sinners weep,  
And shall our cheeks be dry?"

. . . Join hands to oppose all manner of injustice and wrong, and appeal to Him who "will break in pieces the oppressors."  
. . . Teachers, how many poor souls are held by the soul's oppressor in the prison-house of sin! Let us to the rescue, supplicating the King eternal to deliver them out of the pit.

### 4. *The Servant Condemned.*

*Facts.*—The king calls the unmerciful servant, denounces him,



reminds him of his own forgiveness, declares the ground of his sentence, viz.: lack of pity, and condemns him to the tormentors.

*Thoughts.*—"Be sure your sin will find you out!" . . . By dealing harshly with our fellows, we unconsciously establish a rule by which we ourselves are condemned. "With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged." . . . "He shall have judgment without mercy that hath showed no mercy." James ii. 13. . . . Oh the wrath of the Lamb! . . . "Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in goodness; otherwise, thou shalt be cut off." Rom. xi. 21. . . . How the sense of past mercies will haunt the lost soul!

### III. The Application.

*So, likewise, shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses!*

"This parable must not be applied merely to the private relations subsisting between Christians, but also refers to the general administration of the servants of the Lord in the Church, which, however, if not properly exercised, may degenerate into a matter of private interest or favour. Under such circumstances, the contrast between the wondrous pardon granted by the Master, and the cruel exactions made by the servants, would appear in the most glaring manner. Strange that the most harsh and heartless treatment should be connected with the dispensation of highest mercy! Compare the history of church discipline in the middle ages."—LANGE.

### SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?" vs. 33.  
**THEMES.**—*For Thought:* The righteous anger of God toward those who insult his infinite compassion. *For Prayer:* Forgive us

our debts! Lord, Lord, have patience with me, for the sake of thy dear Son, through whom alone I hope to pay thee all! *For Practical Life*: As I hope for forgiveness from my heavenly Father, so must I forgive my fellows who trespass against me. . . . CATECHISM.—Q. 105. What do we pray for in the fifth petition? A. In the fifth petition, which is, *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors*, we pray that God, for Christ's sake, would freely pardon all our sins; which we are the rather encouraged to ask, because by his grace we are enabled from the heart to forgive others.

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#### SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK.

BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS.—The parable of Nathan in his reproof of David. 2 Sam. xii. 1-23. . . . Joseph's assumed harshness to his brethren, Gen. xlii. 7-20, to illustrate the king's first sentence, vs. 25. . . . The certainty of one's sin at last being uncovered, Joseph and his brethren, Gen. xlii. 21, 22; also the case of Haman, Esth. vii. . . . Esther going in to king Ahasuerus to plead for her nation to illustrate vs. 31.

## LESSON XII.

### THE SEVENTY SENT OUT.

Luke x. 1-16.

#### HISTORICAL CONNECTION.

Our Lord was about closing his personal ministry in Galilee. He had said a final adieu to the few loyal hearts in the cities of Gennesareth, and had set his face toward Jerusalem and his cross. The twelve cannot now be spared from his side; they are to be witnesses to the world concerning all the precious sayings of Christ. And yet the Master desired another effort to be made in behalf of the perishing multitude. He therefore creates a special embassy of seventy disciples, whom he sends out two and two into the cities and towns along the line of his proposed route to Jerusalem. Thus the needy might be admonished of their last opportunity, and might come out to the Master for relief, as did the ten lepers who waited upon him at one of the border villages of Samaria. The duties of these seventy being in the main similar to those laid upon the twelve, their instructions are similar. See Matt. x. 1-42; Luke ix. 1-6. Yet the careful reader will observe with STIER "that the language used to the twelve refers to a permanent office for a future mission, but that here (Luke x.) everything is limited to the present temporary mission of the seventy."

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#### NOTES.

1. After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

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1. *After these things*—An indefinite phrase; but referring most probably to the events of the last few lessons, in which we see the twelve being prepared for the closing scene in the Lord's life. *Other seventy*—Seventy others besides the twelve. The

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1. After what "things" did this happen? How many had Jesus appointed apostles? Name them. How did the office of these seventy differ

2. Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

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number seventy was perhaps chosen with reference to the council of seventy judges under Moses, Ex. xxiv. 9, which was represented in our Lord's time by the Sanhedrim. *The Lord*—This title aptly introduces such an act. *Appointed*—In a solemn, formal and public manner. *Sent them two and two*—As mutual supports and checks; a wise regard to human weakness, and a testimony to the power and need of social helps. *Whither he himself would come*—Which shows the character of their mission to be that of forerunners of Christ during his last journey. *Into every city and place*—Not only the towns and the direct line of his journey, but those also in the surrounding regions. This being the last passage of Jesus through the country, the believing would hear from the seventy, and bring their sick, and come with their own wants. If the seventy announced the coming Passion, the remembrance of their preaching must have been a strong confirmation of the subsequent preaching of the Resurrection. . . . 2. *Therefore*—Which introduces his reason for sending them. *The harvest*—The multitude of human souls *ungarnered* for the Lord. But a harvest also implies a state of *readiness* for the reaper. *Labourers few*—Comparatively; aye, and numerically. *Pray ye, therefore*—Even though *you* are to be labourers; nay, there is therefore more reason to pray, for you will need their support. *The Lord of the harvest*—For is not he most interested in its gathering? God is the harvest's Lord, because he prepares and plants and quickens the seed of truth; matures the grain by all heavenly influences; directs the harvesting, and gathers into his own barn the sheaves. *Send forth*—The worker must go out into the field. *Labourers*—More of them; and labourers, men and women who will *labour*, not

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from that of the twelve? Why was the number seventy taken? Where were they to go? Why were they thus to go before Christ? Why sent out two by two?

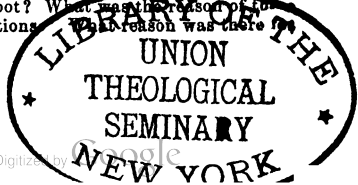
2. What reason did Jesus give for their appointment? In what sense were the people like a *harvest*? What were they to do beside working? What need was there for such prayer?

3. Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

4. Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way.

loaf. . . 3. *Go your ways*—Go ye hence; to the ways appointed you. *I send you*—Which is enough; your authority to speak; your safeguard in danger; your consolation in peril. *Lambs*—To the twelve he said, *as sheep*; this charge touches more nearly the children. The idea is not so much of peril among enemies as of purity among the depraved. Yet *spiritual dangers* are implied, against which innocency was to be their defence. . . . 4. *Purse*—The small bag used especially to carry money, which was also carried in the girdle. *Scrip*—A leather pouch used by shepherds and travellers to carry victuals; it was slung across the shoulder. The Arabs still carry such. The scholar's lunch-bag and the soldier's haversack will illustrate their need and use. *Shoes*—Sandals; soles of leather, cloth or wood, fastened under the foot like skates. The disciples are not forbidden to wear sandals, but to *carry an extra pair*, as was often done. Hence the barefooted monks may abandon this as a proof-text. *Salute no man*—The common salutations in Palestine in our Lord's time were not much more formal than our own; a kiss, an embrace, an uttered "salom"—Peace be with you! or all of these. These greetings were frequent and hearty, even to strangers, as is the custom in our own country in the rural parts. In the earlier days of Palestine salutations were more formal, and in our days are very elaborate. The single object of Jesus was to impress the disciples, and have others impressed by them, with the need of *haste*. If they stopped to make greetings by the way, they would be led into wasteful conversations. And then, the fact of passing, thus unprovided and unmindful of common courtesies, through the country, would impress all beholders with the importance and urgency of their business. This

3, 4. Of what is the *lamb* a symbol? In what were these disciples like *lambs among wolves*? How does *innocency* protect *one* from danger? What is a *scrip*? Were they to go barefoot? What was the reason of *no* orders? Why were they to omit salutations? What reason was there for such haste at this time?



5. And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house.

6. And if the Son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.

7. And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

8. And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you:

might also express the holy nature of their mission, as various classes of men among the Jews, BENDEL says, were exempt from salutations, especially religious men. . . . 5. *Peace to this house*—The common salutation, which, on entering a house, it would have been uncourteous to omit, since there was no occasion for so doing then, as there was during a journey. Jesus would guard them against applying the rule of the wayside to the home circle. . . . 6. *Son of Peace*—"Son," in Scripture, often implies almost any kind of descent or succession, as "Son of my floor," i. e., wheat; "Son of a bow," i. e., an arrow. So, here, is meant the fruits or evidences of peace, which, as in Matthew, would show who were the *worthy*. Such would have hearts in which peace rested, and the salutation would not be an empty courtesy, as it would be otherwise. . . . 7. *The same house*—Where peaceful fruits abound. *Worthy of his hire*—That is, his support. The people must learn to value spiritual services, and give the Lord's ministers temporal supplies. Yet only the labourer, not the idler, is worthy; nor is the minister the people's "hiring," but the Lord's workman. See Elijah to Naaman, and the punishment of Gehazi's greed, 2 Kings v. *Go not from house to house*—Seeking better fare or pleasanter quarters. . . . 8. *Eat such things as are set before you*—Partake heartily as due

5, 6. What was the usual Eastern salutation upon entering a house? Why should they salute there and not upon the road? Explain the phrase *Son of peace*. How does it come to mean the fruits or evidences of peace?

7. What sort of people would be likely to entertain these disciples? Would such be duty bound to do this? Why? What good reasons were there for the command, *Go not from house to house*?

8, 9. How were the seventy to repay this hospitality? Explain the

9. And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

10. But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say,

11. Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding, be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

12. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city.

to your Master and therefore to you; yet in courteous humility accept such as your host may have to give. There is also here a plain instruction not to be bound by the prevalent pharisaical notions as to clean and unclean food. . . . 9. *Heal the sick*—Their faith carried them even to the healing of the possessed, vs. 17. Even now the acceptance and sovereignty of the true spirit of the Gospel is the sanitary protection of cities; for love, temperance, purity and peace ensure health. *The kingdom of God*—The days of the merciful reign of Messiah Jesus. *Has come nigh*—And you have entered in to be blessed. . . . 10. *Go out into the streets*—For the sake of publicity; Jonah prophesied in the streets of Nineveh. The Lord's messengers must be heard! If not as savours of life, as savours of death. . . . 11. *Dust—we do wipe off against you*—An action signifying separation from, a testimony against. We cleanse ourselves of you, leaving you to bide in your chosen impurity. Ye are of the earth, earthy; therefore we give you over as "dust to dust," which is the judgment of the second death! *Yet be ye sure*—That your own hearts may condemn you, and the Almighty be clear when he judges. *Come nigh*—To offer you its blessings. Near, yet unentered; how this aggravates the guilt! . . . 12. *More tolerable*—For Sodom had but Lot's example; "that city," the voice

phrase *kingdom of God*. How had this come nigh them? Has God's kingdom come nigh you? In what way?

10, 11. What were they to do when rejected? What did this act, wiping off the dust, signify? How would the coming nigh of the kingdom work condemnation to these people? Has the Gospel been to you a savour of life or of death?

12 What had Sodom to teach her righteousness? What befel that

13. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

14. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you.

15. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell.

of the Messiah's messengers. The greater the advantages spurned, the greater is the sin and punishment. . . . 13, 14. *Chorazin*—Mentioned only here and Matt. xi. 21. JEROME describes it as on the shore of Lake Tiberias, two miles from Capernaum. DR. ROBINSON locates it at *Tell Hum*, Bethsaida at *et-Tabighah*, and Capernaum at *Khan Minyeh*. This only we know, that it was the scene of many and mighty works of Christ, and is named by him in words of denunciation alone. *Bethsaida*—Of Galilee; it was the native town of Andrew, Peter and Philip, John i. 44; xii. 21, and shared with Chorazin and Capernaum the merciful works of Jesus, and this pronounced woe. *Tyre and Sidon*—Heathen cities; bringing out by the contrast the deep guilt of the Galilean towns. *Sackcloth*—A rough garment of goat's hair, dark, of coarse texture, worn by mourners, usually on the outside, and was sprinkled with dust, dirt or ashes, to add to the sorry appearance; but sometimes worn next the skin. The expression is equivalent to: would have bitterly repented. The *great while ago* points to the stubbornness of the Galileans in holding out against Christ. . . . 15. *Exalted to heaven*—Having the highest privileges. *Thrust down to hell*—To the lowest degradation. The woe has been fulfilled to the letter. The exact site of Capernaum will probably never be known; geographers have long disputed concerning it; and

city? On what ground would it be more tolerable for Sodom than for the cities rejecting the Gospel?

13, 14. Where were Bethsaida, Chorazin? What advantages had they? Where were Tyre and Sidon? Had they heard the Gospel? What do these verses teach as to the relation between our opportunities and our punishments? What is sackcloth? What is meant by *sitting in sackcloth and ashes*?

15, 16. Where was Capernaum? In what had it been *exalted to heaven*?



16. He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.

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nothing but a heap of ruins, a lone palm tree and a fountain mark its supposed position. The very names and memory of this trio of woe-stricken neighboring towns have passed away from the local history of the land of Gennesareth, the fertile plain of which they were once the busy and populous marts. . . . 16. *Heareth you*—So as to heed. *Heareth me*—For it is Christ's word which his ambassadors bear; and the faithful are in living union with Christ. *Despiseth him that sent me*—For the heavenly voice speaks through the minds of men. The inspiration of the Christian prophecy is given through the Mediator, Christ Jesus. The mission of the seventy was doubtless a temporary one, but the dignity and authority of their office are shown by this verse to be of the highest degree.

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## ANALYSIS.

### I. The Workers and their Work.

*Facts.*—Jesus appointed seventy disciples, and sent them out, two and two, into the villages of Samaria, Judea and Perea, all along the line of his last journey. He reminds them of their work in the midst of a great harvest, with few labourers, and bids them as they work to pray for workers.

*Thoughts.*—Precede the more formal class-work of the Lord's day by social, house-to-house visiting during the week, and see if your own and your scholars' hearts are not better prepared for the Lord's presence. . . . District visiting, by teachers, two and two, is one of the most efficient methods to prepare the way of the Lord. . . . Even the temporary messenger of Christ must have his "call." Brother, has the Lord sent you? . . . What a

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What does *hell* mean here? How has this prophecy been fulfilled? How do men nowadays make themselves liable to these woes and judgments? How may they be escaped?

work lies before the Sunday-school teacher: **THE CHILDREN ALL FOR JESUS!** . . . It is true, especially of the young, that they are *ready for the harvest*. How open their hearts are; how readily are they won to Christ; how simply do they trust, and how freely confess the Lord! Yet, oh shame! we scruple to reap and bind them in the sheaf, and bring to the Lord's barn, for fear that they may not be ready, not ripe for the church! . . . The Lord would not have all his work fall into the hands of a few; you need help, ask for it. . . . There is another reaper in the field; O teacher, thrust in your sickle soon and fast!

"There is a reaper, whose name is Death,  
And, with his sickle keen,  
He reaps the bearded grain at a breath,  
And the flowers that grow between."

LONGFELLOW.

. . . Let each one reap diligently in his own part of the field, and the harvest will soon be in. . . . There never were more labourers in the Lord's harvest than now, yet the call for *more, more workers!* was never greater.

"There's a cry from Macedonia, Come and help us!  
The light of the Gospel bring; oh, come!"

. . . There never was greater activity among Christians, yet never such need of earnestness, vigour, perseverance. . . . Oh for God-sent labourers, such as come in answer to the fervent prayer—men and women consecrated wholly to God and his work! . . . "*Go out into the streets.*" Let the "store-box preachers" of the West take courage. *Street preaching is primitive and apostolic!*

## II. The Workers' Protection and Provision.

*Facts.*—The Master bids the seventy go in *his* name, in purity, poverty, haste, with the message of peace, sharing with the sons of peace, in humility and temperance, yet of right, the comforts and necessities of life. vss. 3-8.

*Thoughts.*—"Go your ways!" GO—inactivity is sin when the Master bids; **YOUR WAYS**—whatever they may be; wherever

they may lie, among trials, dangers, sufferings; to glory or shame, to life or death; for God has ordered them all. . . . The more closely God dwells within the heart, the farther forth will the heart's love and the hand's labour be sent in quest and in doing of good works. . . . Poor lamb, walking among the wolves, do you falter and tremble? "Behold the LAMB of God!" . . . The invisible Shepherd goes always before his flock in the paths whither he sends them. . . . Purity of heart, the spirit of Christ, is the soul's best defence against the howling jackals of the Christ-hating and the sin-loving world. . . . But oh how doubly defenceless is the lamb of the Master's flock who is shorn of his innocency! . . . The workers' provision is "daily bread;" read the prayer of Agur the son of Jakeh. Prov. xxx. 8, 9. . . . Keep in working trim—free-hearted and free-handed. That is the spirit of the Lord's requirement; neither annoyed for the lack nor burdened by the care of our possessions. . . . But caution! your little weight may be a greater burden than yon man's ponderous load! . . . "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of PEACE!" Rom. x. 15. . . . Teacher of babes, yours is the echo of the angel-song hymned over the Babe of Bethlehem—

"On earth, PEACE!"

. . . All Christian homes should be homes to the Master's workers. We should say of our heavenly Sovereign:

"My castle is my King's alone,  
From turret to foundation stone."

### III. The Workers' Reception—The Recompense.

*Facts.*—Jesus bids the seventy to accept freely and without complaining such hospitality as may be tendered them, and to give in return the blessings of healing to the sick, and to all the good news that the kingdom of God has come to them. vs. 8, 9.

*Thoughts.*—The noblest and sweetest recompense for kindness wrought to God's own, in God's name, is the gift of heavenly peace; therefore, let the householder first seek this. . . . Therefore let the labourer "FIRST SAY: PEACE!" . . . What mercy to have the kingdom of God brought to our very doors! This

mercy comes to every Sabbath-school scholar. . . . Dear child, the kingdom comes near that you may enter, and sit down with the sons of God. . . . The heart which keeps a welcome for God's workers has an open door and lodging-room for God himself. . . . Receive the visiting teacher, the missionary, the colporteur, the Bible-reader, always with politeness, with a word of Christian love and cheer. . . . Scholars, hear the message of your teacher; it is Christ who speaks through him. . . . Teacher, never forget that you are the messenger of the Lord of hosts.

#### IV. Rejection and Retribution.

*Facts.*—The seventy are instructed, when rejected by any city, to go out into the streets, and to declare that the Gospel has come to that city to a condemnation greater even than that of Sodom. Our Lord announces woe upon Chorazin and Bethsaida; predicts the desolation of Capernaum; and announces that they who hear his messengers hear him, and that they who refuse to hear, despise him and the Father who sent him. vss. 10-16.

*Thoughts.*—See NOTES on vss. 10-16. . . . No meditation upon these verses could be more suggestive than STANLEY'S statement of the facts concerning Capernaum: "It would seem as if the woe pronounced against Capernaum had been literally fulfilled; as if the doom of the cities of the southern sea had been visited upon those of the north; as if it had been more tolerable for 'the land of Sodom' in the day of its earthly judgment than for Capernaum. It has been indeed more tolerable in one sense; for the name, and perhaps even the remains, of Sodom are still found on the shores of the Dead Sea, whilst that of Capernaum has, on the Lake of Gennesareth, been utterly lost. And in pronouncing that woe it is possible that the comparison may have been suggested by the likeness, which I have noticed, between what must have been the appearance of the cities of the plain of Gennesareth and what must have been in early ages the aspect of the vale of Sidim. . . . To any thoughtful student of the Gospel history it would have seemed that of all the places there recorded, the scene of our Lord's permanent residence—of his home for the three most important years of his life—would have

been regarded as far more worthy of preservation than any other which could have witnessed so many of his works and words. To no other could his disciples have returned with such fond and familiar recollections, as that where they first became acquainted with him, and which had witnessed the greater part of their intercourse with him. Yet it is this which has passed away, without even a memorial or tradition to mark its place. The Christian Church seems hardly to have made an effort to seek or recover what ought to have been its historical sanctuaries on these wonderful shores. Compared with Bethlehem, Nazareth and Jerusalem, it may be almost said that Capernaum is an unknown name."—*Sinai and Palestine*.

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#### SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

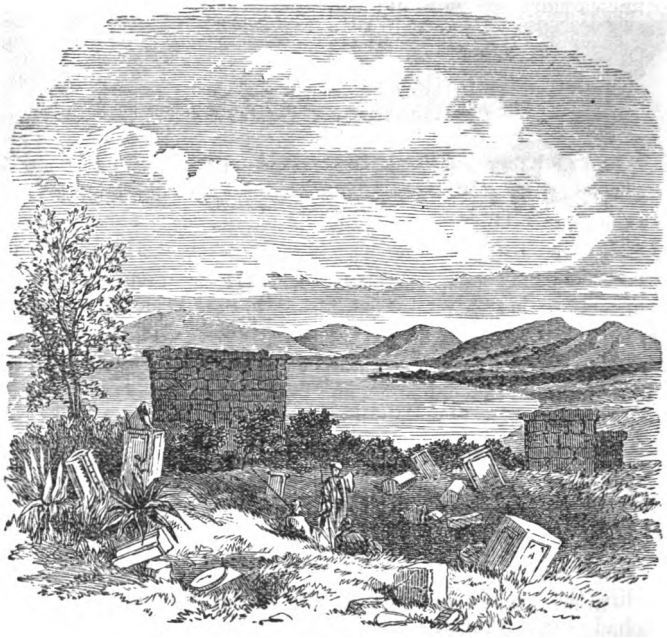
**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few." vs. 2. **THEMES.**—*For Thought*: The close relation between prayer to Jesus and working for Jesus. *For Prayer*: Lord, send forth labourers into the harvest, that thy kingdom may come on earth! *For Practical Life*: "What wilt thou have me to do?" . . . **CATECHISM.**—Q. 102. What do we pray for in the second petition? **A.** In the second petition, which is, *Thy kingdom come!* we pray that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed, and that the kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it, and kept in it, and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened.

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#### SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK.

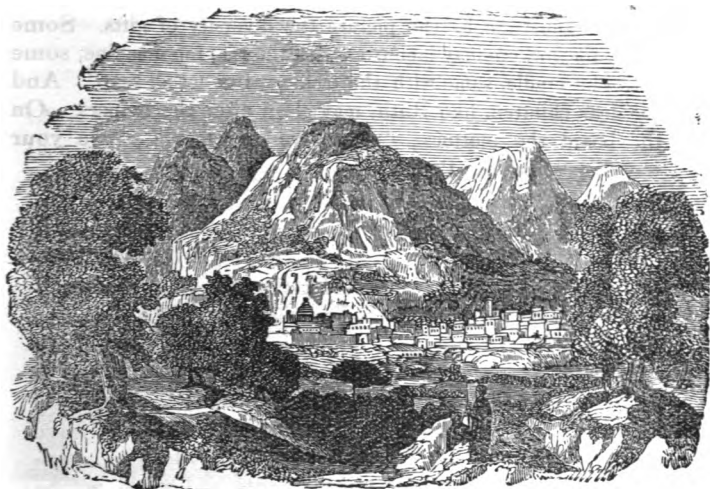
**BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS.**—Gen. xix. 12-29. The destruction of Sodom. Reward for honouring and caring for God's messengers. 2 Kings iv. 8-37, Elisha and the Shunammite woman. Doing good only for hire, Gehazi's doom. 2 Kings v. 20-27. Working early for the Father, Jesus in the temple at twelve years. Luke ii. 49.

**BLACKBOARD—PICTURE.**—A field of grain ; in foreground, sheaves, a cradle, a rake, sickle. A child gleaning may be added. Illustrate by the picture the diversity of gifts. Some of God's workers may labour as with the reaping machine, some with the cradle, some with the sickle. But let all reap! And the dear children, like Ruth, may glean after the reapers. On the board the mottoes: "PRAY ye therefore!" "Go your ways!" "First say PEACE!"



REMAINS OF CAPERNAUM, TELL HUM.

See pp. 114, 118.



**SHECHEM, OR NABLUS.**

### **LESSON XIII.**

### **THE TEN LEPERS.**

**Text: Luke xvii. 11-19.**

#### **HISTORICAL CONNECTION.**

The journey to Jerusalem, referred to in vs. 11, was doubtless the last journey of our Lord from Galilee. His back is toward "his own country." His ministry therein is closed. Henceforth the Holy City is the chief centre of interest in the life of Jesus Christ. "Once more before he takes leave of his public life, the Saviour will in part wander through the regions which had been the theatre of his earlier activity, and so by words and deeds show that he does not avoid his mighty enemies."—OOSTERZEE. Rather let us say, in accord with his usual compassion toward the people, having sent out the seventy to proclaim his coming, he follows them up, that the multitude may

have this last opportunity, before his ascension to his Father, to claim and receive healing for their bodies and help for their souls.

#### GEOGRAPHICAL REFERENCE.

A difficulty appears to many in the reading *through the midst* (*dia mesou*) of *Samaria and Galilee*, on account of the unnatural order of *Samaria* in the text; the natural order, since the holy company were travelling southward, being *through Galilee and Samaria*. BENGEL reads: *across the border of Samaria and Galilee*; ALFORD reads: *between Samaria and Galilee, i. e., on the frontiers of both*. This would make the scene of the incident to lie somewhere along the line where the vale of Esdraelon joins the hills of Samaria. But it is not unlikely that the phrase used in the original, *dia mesou Samareias, etc.*, was at that time a popular title of the Midway Route from Jerusalem to Galilee as distinguished from other routes, particularly the Jordan valley road. The expression would thus become invariable, like the names of our railway routes, and would not be changed in popular use to suit the direction of travel in special cases. As Samaria lay between Jerusalem and the North, it would naturally have the first position in the title.

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#### NOTES.

11. And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

12. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:

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12. *As he entered into a certain village*—That is, as he approached to enter, for lepers dwelt without the walls. *Ten lepers*—The only fellowship possible, for all were separated from the

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11. When did this incident occur? From what place did Jesus start to go to Jerusalem? Which country would he first pass through, Samaria or Galilee? What is meant by *through the midst*?

12. Did this incident occur inside the village? See Lev. xiii. 46. Why



13. And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master have mercy on us.

14. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go show

clean by the law. For the whole law concerning lepers, see Lev. xiii. and xiv. Leprosy was then, and is still, common in the East, and is nurtured by the warm, dry climate and the exposure of the skin to the sun and dust. It doubtless prevailed extensively among the Israelites in their Egyptian bondage, and was aggravated by their desert life during the wandering. The direct object of the ceremonial restrictions was sanitary; but also they were intended as symbolical of the fearful state and consequence of sin. *Which stood afar off*—So they were required to do, and to cry, “*Unclean, unclean!*” to ward off any who might unwittingly approach them. . . . 13. *They lifted up their voices*—They raised a cry; “voices” is singular in the original. They probably chanted this in concert after their manner of begging. *Master*—In the sense in which we say school-master—i. e., a teacher; referring to Christ’s prophetic office. They had probably come to this village after having heard one of the seventy forerunners. They had evidently never before met Jesus. And they probably would never have had another opportunity. Their *only chance* was well improved. *Have mercy on us!*—Theirs was indeed a pitiable state—their disease incurable, daily augmenting, mortal, contagious, loathsome in the highest degree, separating them from all the charms and comforts of life, and from the congregation of Israel! What a symbol of the fell curse of sin! . . . 14. *When he saw them*—The disfiguration of the leper’s disease was made the more sorry by the requirement,

were lepers kept outside city walls? How did the *ten* happen to be together? What had led them to come to this place to seek help of Jesus? Why did they stand *afar off*? See Lev. xiii. 45. What was the object of all these restrictions?

13. Had these lepers ever before met Jesus? What was it that they asked for in their cry, *Have mercy*? What were the features of their disease that made their condition so pitiful? In what respects does *leprosy* truly symbolize *sin*? Has the *sinner* equal need to call for mercy? Why?

14. What was the personal appearance of the leper? See Lev. xiii. 45. How would this sight affect our Lord Jesus? What did he say to them? Why did he say this? See Lev. xiv. 2. But were the men cleansed? Why

yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

15. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

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Lev. xiii. 45, "his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip." All these were mourning signs belonging to the extreme of grief. *Go show yourselves unto the priests*—This the law required in the case of supposed cleansing. The party was to be brought to the priest, who took him without the camp, viewed the person, and if he was truly healed the following sacrifice and ceremony were required: Two sparrows were taken, one of which was killed over running water in an earthen vessel. The other bird, with cedar and scarlet and hyssop, was dipped in the blood of the slain bird, after which the former leper was sprinkled seven times, formally pronounced clean, and the living sparrow loosed into the open field. For other interesting ceremonies required, see Lev. xiv. As the lepers were not yet healed, Christ's command was a severe test of their faith: they were to go to the priests, expecting to be clean by the time they came to them. The Jews went (probably) to Jerusalem; the Samaritan (whose law was the same) had, however, different priests, who dwelt in the neighbourhood of Mount Gerizim. *As they went they were cleansed*—They could feel it in the new, sweet thrill of returned health and vigour; they could see it in their renewed flesh, which "came again like unto the flesh of a child," as did Naaman's. 2 Kings v. 14. . . . 15. *One of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back*—He could have gone but a little way; Jesus seems as yet not to have got within the village. *With a loud voice*—

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then did Jesus send them to the priest as though they were clean already? What was the use of thus sending healed lepers to priests? What ceremonies were required on such occasions? See Lev. xiv. 3-8. When a person thinks that God has given him a clean heart, what benefit may he receive from advising with the pastor or teacher? Did the lepers go far before they were healed? Why think so? To what places were these men going? Where did the priests live? Did the Samaritan have the same priests as the Jews?

15. How did he know that he was cleansed? Did he feel differently? Did he appear changed? 2 Kings v. 14. How can we know that our hearts are cleansed from sin? Why did he turn back? Why did he cry

16. And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

17. And Jesus answering, said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?

18. There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

His leprous voice had been hoarse and feeble. *Glorified God*—Thus recognizing his cure as God's act. . . . 16. *And fell down on his face*—The most complete expression of humility and reverence. *Giving him thanks* (euchariston)—Note the quick passage from the word GOD to these pronouns referring to Jesus, with no intervening mention of him. Thanks were due to Jesus as the One through whom and by whom the divine power and mercy had been conveyed. *And he was a Samaritan*—A fact which made the gratitude more notable in the minds of Jews, inasmuch as they expected little good from such, and which also showed how faith in Christ breaks down all barriers of caste. Luke, who alone records this incident, wrote under the direction of Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, and would therefore most naturally bring out such a striking proof of the great truth, "All one in Christ." . . . 17. *Were there not ten cleansed?*—There were; Christ's divine omniscience perceived this. But there was ground for the question, for they gave him no outward proof of their healing. *Where are the nine?*—Since they are not here, where gratitude should have urged them also. . . . 18. *There are not found that returned to give glory to God*—A censure of the nine ingrates. Yet they were obeying the strict letter of Christ's command: "Go show yourselves unto the priests." A marked instance of the saying: "The letter killeth, but the

with a loud voice? Could he have done that before? Why should he glorify God? What had God to do with his cleansing? What should our mercies lead us to do?

16. What did he mean by falling upon his face? To whom did he give thanks? Why was this act more remarkable in a Samaritan? Why might this man have thought that the goodness of Jesus seemed greater in his case than in case of the nine Jews?

17, 18. To whom were these words spoken? Did Jesus seem to expect that all would return? Why had he right to expect this? Where were the nine? Did not Jesus send them to the priest? Were they not obey

19. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

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spirit giveth life." The true spirit of obedience was shown by the grateful Samaritan. *Save this stranger*—This foreigner. See 2 Kings xvii. 24-41. The very fact of his being a "foreigner," not a Jew, deepened in his heart the sense of the favour done. What had he a right to expect from one of that nation? Enmity, alienation, strict separation and non-intercourse existed between them. Yet Jesus had overlooked all this, and had healed him! . . . 19. *And he said unto him*—The remark (v. 18) had been made to the apostles, thus being a public acknowledgment of the grateful leper and a public censure of the ingrates. Jesus now adds the boon of spiritual healing to his physical cure. *Arise, go thy way*—To the priests; for while approving his thanksgiving, he would not have him needlessly stay any reasonable and urgent duty. *Thy faith*—The others had trusted Christ as a prophet of God, able to heal their leprosy. This man was led to a deeper insight of Christ's character as the Messiah of God, the Pardoner of sin and Renewer of life. He embraced Jesus by faith as his soul's Physician, upon the evidence given that he was the Healer of his body. *Hath made thee whole*—We must refer this, as above, to the new birth, as the others also had been made whole physically.

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#### ANALYSIS.

##### I. The Improved Opportunity.

*Facts.*—Jesus, during his last journey to Jerusalem by the Midway Route, through Samaria and Galilee, meets on the out-

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ing the letter of Christ's command? Wherein did they show lack of the true *spirit* of obedience? Why did the "foreigners" gratitude make the Jews' ingratitude seem the greater?

19. What did Jesus say to the grateful Samaritan? Did not the nine ingrates also have faith? What difference between the faith of the two parties? Whom did the Samaritan probably think Jesus to be? What made him think that he was THE MESSIAH? What sort of healing did Christ here declare? What greater blessing did this man have than the nine? Why were the nine in such haste to get to the priest? To what joys would the formal act of the priest restore them? Would their turning back to thank Jesus have delayed this? What then did they *gain*? But what did they *lose*? Did their ingratitude *pay*? Does it *ever* pay? Whom do *you* more resemble, the grateful Samaritan, or the ungrateful Jews?

skirts of a village ten lepers, who, having heard of his coming, stand afar off, and ask him to heal them.

*Thoughts.*—The teacher tells the glad tidings that Christ has come to save; but the sinner must go and wait where the voice of Jesus can reach him. . . . The teacher may tell; the sinner appeal; but Jesus only is able to heal. . . . Even one gospel call, if rightly improved, is sufficient to secure salvation; why need the soul wait for another, and yet others? . . . Dying sinner, Jesus of Nazareth passes by now; cry out to him for pardon! . . . It may be the first, but perhaps also it is *the last opportunity*. Do not presume; *it may be* no other call shall be given! . . . Do you feel unworthy to draw near to Jesus? Then stand afar off, and while crying, as the Law bids, “*Unclean, unclean!*” yet plead also as the Gospel permits, “*Jesus, Master, have mercy!*” . . . Come, with all your unclean comrades, and cry out together to the great Physician! . . . Though the vilest of the vile, outcasts of all men, yet, sinner, you may come! Come, then, singing:

“Just as I am, and waiting not  
To rid my soul of one dark blot,  
To thee whose blood can cleanse each spot,  
O Lamb of God, I come!”

. . . What cause the unclean lepers had to pray, “Jesus, have mercy!” Yet I have greater cause to cry, “Create in me a *clean heart*, O God!”

## II. The Cleansing.

*Facts.*—Jesus saw them; bade them go to the priests as though they were cleansed; as they are departing, they are cured.

*Thoughts.*—He who himself is the good Physician regards with favour wise sanitary laws. . . . So the penitent soul must come to the church, not to be healed, but for his own and others’ safety and comfort, to be pronounced healed. . . . To obey and not to question; to obey upon no other evidence than Jesus’ word; to obey concerning things that are not as though they were;—this is faith. . . . They turned toward Jerusalem *walking by FAITH, not by sight*, and they were cleansed!

### III. The Grateful Leper.

*Facts.*—One of the ten, a Samaritan, when he saw his cure, returned to Jesus, and with reverent and earnest mien and voice gave him thanks, glorifying God. Jesus recognizes his gratitude and spiritual faith, by saving his soul.

*Thoughts.*—Never restrain the generous impulse of a grateful heart; it is as safe a guide as “the sober, second thought,” when it sends the heart with thanks to Jesus. . . . The spirit of the Gospel in the heart is a better guide to duty than the letter of the Law in the head. . . . The puffed-up heart can never realize salvation by grace, but the contrite spirit sees and says: “By the grace of God I am what I am.” . . . The heart most wounded and crushed by the weight of its own sin will exhale to God the sweetest and most abundant fragrance of thanksgiving for the mercy of forgiveness; it was the despised Samaritan that returned to give thanks. . . . Dear Jesus, who hast healed my sorrows by thy word; who hast cleansed my soul by thy blood; who hast delivered me from guilt by thy passion; who hast covered my naked head and rent garments by thy spotless robe of righteousness, teach me to make my life one long, sweet eucharist to thee! . . . “O Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world, have mercy upon me!” . . . Impenitent soul, glorify God, the Giver of every good gift in thy enjoyment, by falling prostrate at the feet of Jesus. . . .

“Here it is I find my heaven,  
While upon the cross I gaze;  
Love I much? I’m much forgiven;  
I’m a miracle of grace!”

### IV. The Nine Ingrates.

*Facts.*—Nine of the healed lepers haste toward the priests, anxious to be delivered from their ceremonial uncleanness, and unmindful of Christ. Jesus exclaims against their ingratitude, and contrasts it with that of the grateful Samaritan.

*Thoughts.*—How eager to ask for mercy, how unready to acknowledge it! . . . How many there are who, in the eager pursuit of further blessings, forget to feel or give thanks for the

many already received! . . . See the blindness of ingratitude! For the coveted gain of a few moments of ceremonial cleanness, they lost the blessing of a clean heart for ever. . . . "Where are the nine?" Jesus knows the ingrates, and notes their ingratitude. . . . Before the bar of human judgment there is no vice of such aggravated meanness as ingratitude. How shall it be at the bar of God? Or, is the vice less hateful when wrought toward God? . . . "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child!" Yet, child of the heavenly Father, how often hast thou wounded thy Lord by thy unthankfulness! . . . What shall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits? Surely, the service of one short life is little enough; surely, we cannot refuse to acknowledge his goodness by an open profession of his name. . . . Lord, when I remember thy pains and thy sorrows, thine agony and thy bloody sweat, thy cross and thy passion, endured for me, I would fall at thy feet and weep that I have rendered thee so little tribute of grateful praise and service!

"But drops of grief can ne'er repay  
The debt of love I owe;  
Here, Lord, I give myself away,  
'Tis all that I can do."

On the real significance of the ceremonial requirements concerning leprosy TRENCH says: "All the notices in the Old Testament, as well as in other Jewish books, confirm the view that it was in no respect a *mere* sanitary regulation. The ordinances concerning leprosy had quite a different and a far deeper significance. It is clear that the same principle which made all that had to do with death, as mourning, a grave, a corpse, the occasions of a ceremonial uncleanness, inasmuch as all these were signs and consequences of sin, might in like manner, and with a perfect consistency, have made every sickness an occasion of uncleanness, each of these being also death beginning, partial death—echoes in the body of that terrible reality, *sin in the soul*. But instead of this, in a gracious sparing of man, and not pushing the principle to the uttermost, God took but one sickness, one of these visible outcomings of a tainted nature, in which to testify that evil was not from him, that evil could not dwell with him; he took but one with which to link this teaching, and

that it might serve in this region of man's life as **the substratum** for the training of his people into the recognition of a clinging impurity, which needed a Pure and a Purifier to overcome and expel, and which no method short of his taking of our flesh could drive out. And leprosy, which was indeed the sickness of sicknesses, was through these Levitical ordinances selected of God from the whole host of maladies and diseases which had broken in upon man's body; to the end that, bearing his testimony against it, he might bear against sin, as not from him, as grievous in his sight; and the sickness also as grievous not for itself, but because it was a visible manifestation, a direct consequence, of the inner disharmony of man's spirit, a commencement of the death which through disobedience to God's perfect will had found entrance into a nature made by God for immortality. And terrible indeed, as might be expected, was that disease around which this solemn teaching revolved. Leprosy was indeed nothing short of a living death, a poisoning of the springs, a corrupting of all the humours of life. Aaron exactly describes the appearance which the leprosy presented to the eyes of the beholders, when pleading for Miriam, he says: 'Let her not be as one dead!' The leprosy moreover left the man not in obedience to any outward means of healing which had been applied by men, but purely and merely through the good-will and mercy of God. The leper, thus fearfully bearing about in the body the outward and visible tokens of sin in the soul, was handled throughout as a sinner, as one whose sin had reached the highest manifestation, that is, as one dead in trespasses and sins. He was himself a dreadful parable of death. It is evident that Moses intended that he should be so contemplated by all the ordinances which he gave concerning him. The leper was to bear about the emblems of death, the rent garments, that is, mourning garments, he mourning for himself as one dead; the head bare, as they were wont to have it who were in communion with the dead, and the lip covered.

"In the restoration, too, of a leper, exactly the same instruments of cleansing were in use, the cedar wood, the hyssop and the scarlet, as were used for the cleansing of one defiled through a dead body, or aught pertaining to death, and which were never



in use upon any other occasion. And being the sign and token of sin, and of sin reaching into and culminating in death, it naturally brought about with it a total exclusion from the camp or city of God. God is not a God of the dead; he has no fellowship with death, for death is a correlative of sin; but only of the living. But the leper was as one dead, and as such was to be put out of the camp, or afterward out of the city. Even the sister of Moses might not be exempt from this law; and kings, Uzziah and Azariah themselves, must submit to it; men being thus taught that what here took place by a figure should take place in reality with every one who was found in the death of sin: he should be shut out of the true City of God."—PARABLES, Matt. viii. 1-4.

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#### SCHOLAR'S DIRECTORY.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"Were there not ten cleansed; but where are the nine?" **THEMES.**—*For Thought:* The awful nature and effects of sin as symbolized and shown by leprosy. *For Prayer:* Create in me a clean heart, O God! Jesus, Master, have mercy on us, and save us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost! *For Practical Life:* Shall I not show my gratitude to God for the gift of his Son by openly confessing him? . . . **CATECHISM.**—Q. 19. What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell? A. All mankind, by their fall, lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell hereafter. Q. 1. What is the chief end of man? A. Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him for ever.

*N. B.*—The condition of the lepers illustrates question No. 19; the act of the grateful Samaritan illustrates No. 1.

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#### SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK.

**BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS.**—2 Kings vii. The four lepers and the flight of the Syrians. . . **ILLUSTRATION OF INGRATITUDE:** The

conspiracy of Absalom against his father, 2 Samuel xv. 1-18. . . .  
**FABLE**—A shepherd, walking out one winter day, found a viper upon the ground, frozen stiff and lifeless. He placed it in his bosom, where it soon warmed into life, and repaid its benefactor by stinging him so that he died. . . . Is there a little Katie here? Would you like to know what your name—*Katherine*—means? It is the Greek word that means *to cleanse*; that is what Jesus did for the poor lepers. May he cleanse your heart!

**SUPERINTENDENT'S ADDRESS.**—*Where are the nine?* (1) Yonder, healed, hasting after the priests' verdict, which would restore them to friends and home.\* - Was this wrong in itself? (2) Absent from the Lord, and the grateful Samaritan's thanksgiving, and the open confession of Christ's power, and the Master's pardoning word. (3) *Where are they now?* Beware of ingratitude toward God!

\* The residences of the priests were appointed by law. Apparently any priest at any place could pronounce the cleansing and offer the required sacrifice.



JACOB'S WELL AND MT. GERIZIM.

## LESSON XIV.

### THE WORKERS' JOY—THE SAVIOUR'S JOY.

Luke x. 17-24.

#### HISTORICAL CONNECTION.

We must suppose a short interval during which the disciples had time to scatter abroad, do their work and return with their good tidings. The disciples referred to below may possibly be some of those who were sent to the nearest towns of Samaria, who would therefore soonest proclaim the coming of Christ, and might join him during his journey with the news of their success. Luke relates the return of the seventy not in its chronological order, but in connection with the sending out of the disciples, and thus presents in one view all that is recorded concerning this special embassy. Whether the reference is to *all* the seventy or to a *part* of them only, and whether the report of their success and the joy of Christ, as given below, was during the journey from Capernaum to Jerusalem or at its close, cannot be determined. DR. ROBINSON in his *Harmony* places the incident at Jerusalem during the feast of tabernacles to which Jesus had gone from Galilee (John vii. 2-10), "not openly, but, as it were, in secret." There seems, however, to be no objection to assigning the incident to the period of that journey, as above.

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#### NOTES.

17. And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.

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17. *With joy*—They had succeeded even beyond their hopes. Only one point in their labour and triumph is given, viz.: casting out demons. They had only a general commission to *heal the sick*, vs. 9; but their faith had been so strong, and the influence of Christ's name so great, that they had even assailed the

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17. Who were the seventy? From what did they return? Are all the seventy referred to here? Where was Jesus when they came to him?

18. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

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devils triumphantly. They seem to have wrought more than one cure, and it is likely that their frequent as well as their full success excited their joyful wonderment. *Subjected unto us in thy Name*—A proper distinction; their joy was therefore not a self-glorifying, but a true glorying in Jesus; they were glad because they were the mediums of power for the Lord, in whose Name they worked. And this gave additional ground for the joy of Jesus which follows. . . . 18. *I beheld*—In spirit; by virtue of my divine omnipresence, I followed you and saw your triumph. But ALFORD refers this to the original fall of Satan when he lost his place as an angel of light, not keeping his first estate; which fall however had been proceeding step by step, and shall do so till all things be put under the feet of Jesus who was made lower than the angels. *Satan*—The adversary of souls, the opposer of Christ's messengers, and the chief of the demons. *As lightning*—Swiftly; suddenly; with tumult; to return no more; his power for ever expended. The serpentine form of the lightning is not unlike that of the serpent, to which the devil is compared. *Fall from heaven*—A figurative reference to falling stars, as in Isaiah xiv. 12, where the fall of the king of Babylon is spoken of as the fall of Lucifer, or Morning Star. In Eph. ii. 2 Satan is spoken of as having the seat of his power in the air. In Rev. x. 7-9 John sees Michael and his angels casting out Satan from heaven. Ordinarily, the heaven is the seat or the symbol of God's kingdom; but there is no contradiction here, for Satan is a *usurper*, and as such is cast out of heaven, and also of earth. John xii. 31. The *personality* of the devil is shown by this passage; also his control of evil spirits; and his

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Had they been long gone? With what spirit did they return from their work? What fact added to their joy? Had they expected to be able to cast out demons? See vs. 9. What had enabled them to do this? In whose Name must all our spiritual victories be won?

18. To what did Christ refer when he said that he saw *Satan fall*, etc.? How could Jesus follow them and see their triumph? How does every Christian success affect the kingdom of Satan? Of whose kingdom is heaven usually spoken as the seat and symbol? How does Satan usurp that kingdom? Who are to be the agents for casting him out? In whose

19. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

20. Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

actual warfare with and subjection to the saints. . . . 19. *Power to tread on serpents and scorpions*—Serpents were the symbols of wisdom; here of the wise and wicked opponents of Christ. Scorpions symbolized malicious, secret wickedness. Ezek. ii. 6. These figures partially correspond to the *wise* and *prudent* of v. 21. The idea is that the wisdom of Greeks, the malice of Jews, the cruelty of Romans, and every other *power of the enemy*, should be overthrown by the power of Christ, given to and exercised by his disciples. See Pa. xci. 11–13, which Satan once quoted against Christ. *And nothing shall by any means hurt you*—Which implies, also, exemption from physical harm. See Mark xvi. 17, 18; which was illustrated by the incident recorded of Paul, at Melita. Acts xxviii. 5. It is still true that “man is immortal till his work is done.” . . . 20. *Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not*—Do not make the subjection of spirits to you the CHIEF GROUND of your joy. They are to rejoice *not so much* in their power over Satan through Christ’s Name, *as in* the placing of their names through Christ’s atonement in heaven; *not so much in* Satan’s fall from heaven through them, *as in* their rise to heaven through Christ. “For in case the believer makes the workings of God’s Spirit, through himself, his sole, or even leading, object of attention and joy, he is in danger of withdrawing his view from the *Source* of his higher life, and no sooner does he cease to draw from that fountain than life dries up, and self-in-

Name must this be done? How does the fall of *lightning* truly symbolize the final fall of Satan?

19. Of what were *serpents* the symbol? See Matt. x. 16. Of what *scorpions*? Ezek. ii. 6. Over whom then did Christ here give the disciples power? Is *the enemy* here? What power has he over us? Explain *nothing shall hurt you*, by Mark xvi. 18. Is this freedom given to all saints? Why was it granted to these first disciples? Give cases in which St. Peter and St. Paul were thus preserved.

20. Does this mean that they were not to rejoice at all? What is the only true and abiding ground of joy? Explain this figure: *written in*

21. In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them

dulgence, vanity, pride spring up in his soul."—OLSHAUSEN. *But rejoice*—Joy is suffered, even bidden, but the true and only abiding ground of joy is pointed out. *Because your names are written in heaven*—In the Book of Life, Rev. iii. 5; xiii. 8; Moses uses the same figure of a book in which God keeps the names of his saints. Ex. xxxii. 32, 33. The hand of God, not his own, has written it there; the grace of God, not his own merit, the will of God, not his own pleasure, prompted the record; therefore the sinner's joy over his enrolling upon God's book is awakened by and directed toward GOD ALONE. He rejoices not in what he has done, but what has been done to him. "The imagery is founded on the idea, common to both the Old and New Testaments, that heaven is a city, and that those who are entitled to its privileges of citizenship have their names enrolled in a book, or city register."—OWEN. . . . 21. *In that hour*—When the rejoicing disciples stood around him. **JESUS REJOICED**—Tradition has handed down a description of Jesus, in which it is said that he never smiled. Yet, though "the man of sorrows," he had here his hour of joy. He had bidden his disciples to rejoice over their election to life; he himself rejoices in view of it. Now is fulfilled for him, in part, the prophecy of Isaiah, liii. 11: "He shall see the travail of his soul and be satisfied." The word translated *rejoiced* is, in the original, *rejoiced exceedingly*. *In spirit*—It was a joy of the soul; spiritual, the most holy joy. But it found utterance in words. *I thank thee, O FATHER—I praise thee*—This prayer of thanksgiving is also found in Matt. xi. 25, 27. It is one of *five* public addresses to the Father recorded. John xi. 41; xii. 28; xvii. 1; and Luke

heaven, by Ex. xxxii. 32, 33, and Rev. iii. 5. Why should we rejoice at this? Have you ever so rejoiced?

21. Describe the circumstances of *that hour*; who were around Jesus; what were their feelings, and what had awakened these? What influence had these on Jesus? Why should he be glad in the salvation and success of his disciples? Does Jesus now rejoice over such things? Who heard this thanksgiving prayer of Jesus? What *things* are here referred to?

unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

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xxiii. 34. *Lord of heaven and earth*—This title brings out the mighty kingship of Jehovah in contrast with the little babes whom he honours. "The term FATHER precedes LORD, even as *love* absolute sovereignty."—LANGE. *Because thou hast hid*—Hast refused to reveal. *These things*—These spiritual truths and powers which have enabled the seventy to cast out devils, and which have approved their names as written in heaven; the saving gifts of the Gospel. *From the wise and prudent*—The serpents and scorpions; the worldly wise and the selfishly cunning; the scribes and Pharisees. While the heart is full of the false light of human wisdom; while it keeps up the shutters of the soul, saying: There is light enough within!—no matter how brightly the sun shines outside, the beauty of the world is hidden from the self-imprisoned soul. "Now ye say, we see; therefore your sin remaineth." John ix. 41. *And hath revealed them unto babes*—Unto the lowly of heart. The religion of Jesus is a revelation; its truths are wholly outside the reach of human power and wisdom; hence one must have his mind in the trusting, receptive state of a little child before he can be a partaker of the revelation. This passage is followed in Matt. xi. 28-30 by the familiar text, "*Come unto me, all ye that labour,*" etc. "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Though *babes* is used here figuratively, yet this passage affords the strongest encouragement to Christian labours among children, since they have naturally the state of mind most nearly approaching that into which the divine revelation most readily and hopefully falls. *Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight*—And surely it is good that the lowly, the sorrowing, the poor, to whom material comforts are denied, should have the consolations of

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Who were *the wise and prudent*? Were these men *really* wise? How did their fancied wisdom hinder their getting the true knowledge? John ix. 41. Who are meant by *babes*? Luke xviii. 17. See also Matt. xi. 28-30. Are learned and prudent people shut out of Christ's Church by these words? With what spirit must these come to Jesus? Will he then accept them? Can you show the goodness of God in making the terms of salva-

22. All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.

23. And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see.

heaven. Love is most distinguished when it descends into the lowest depths for the subjects whom it purposes to raise; and strength is best applied when it girds the weakest with protection. Therefore, is it not well that the divine love and strength are extended most fully to the lost and weak? . . . **22. All things**—Jesus turns to his disciples with these words. All things in heaven and on earth. Matt. xxviii. 18; John xiv. 9. *Are delivered unto me*—As the Mediator; the Prophet, through whom truth is to be revealed; the Priest, who shall atone by his blood; the King, who shall rule all things to the honour and safety of his Church, and the final deliverance of his own. *By the Father*—To whom the kingdom originally belonged and to whom it shall be restored. 1 Cor. xv. 28. *No man knoweth*—Spiritually discerns. *Who the Son is, but the Father*—Therefore, it is only God who can reveal Christ savingly to men; for no man in his natural state can see Jesus as the Son of God and the soul's Saviour. *And who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him*—For as the Spirit of God enables the carnal heart to know Jesus, so only through Jesus can the knowledge of God be had. God reveals himself to men as a Saviour only in the person of Jesus Christ. John xiv. 6. . . . **23. Privately**—For others had doubtless gathered around by this time. It was wise and kind to give these words of blessing to those for whom alone they were meant. *Blessed are the eyes*—

tion such as the lowly can always reach? Do these words let the children too into the love of God and the Church of Christ?

22. To whom were these words spoken? What does Jesus mean by *all things*? For what purpose is Jesus thus made our Mediator? Who reveals Jesus Christ to us as his Son? Who alone fully knows the Father God? Through whom then are we to obtain knowledge of God? How does Jesus reveal God as a Father to us?

23. Why were these words spoken privately? Why were the disciples blessed in seeing these things? What things are meant? v. 24. Does this blessing also come to us? How may this, which should be a blessing, become rather a curse to us?



24. For I tell you, That many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

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The eyes are only the outward organs of the seeing mind which controls them; therefore the blessing rests upon the soul. But the expression also implies that gracious providence by which their outward estate had been appointed to the welfare of their souls. . . . 24. *For I tell you that many prophets and kings, etc.*—"David united both these, viz., prophet and king; also Solomon. There may be an especial reference to the affecting last words of David, 2 Sam. xxiii. 1-5, which certainly are a prophecy of the Redeemer, and in which he says, vs. 5: 'This is all my salvation, and all my desire, though he make it not to grow.' See also Gen. xlix. 18."—ALFORD. "All the longing desire of the pious throughout the Old Testament centred in the Messiah. To behold him was the loftiest object of Old Testament hope. This blessing was granted to the disciples, and all their happiness and glory consisted in this, that they were illumined by the radiance of the sun of righteousness. The special grace thus vouchsafed is brought to their remembrance by Christ, not to exalt them above the Old Testament saints, but to lay them low before the Lord."—OLSHAUSEN.

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## ANALYSIS.

### I. The Disciples' Joy.

*Facts.*—The seventy begin to return full of joy, and report their success, especially over devils, to Jesus. He declares this to be an evidence of the coming fall of Satan; gives them a new commission, with added powers; but points them to the true ground of joy, their personal salvation.

*Thoughts.*—"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless return again with rejoicing, bring-

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24. Why had the old prophets and kings desired to live in the Messiah's time? Do we live in that time? What advantage is this to us? How should we use it?

ing his sheaves with him." . . . As we bring our sorrows and complaints to Jesus, so let us bring to him our joys. Has he not a right to share in them also? . . . It is well to tell our success in Christian work to Jesus in the way of joyful thanksgiving; but beware of recounting them to others, lest vanity be gendered and pride be nursed; and our joy be quenched in bitter tears. . . . How sweetly is shown the nature of our faith by the subject which excites our joy: the deliverance of men from the power of demons! . . . Alas! what must be the danger of souls whose deliverance awakens joy like this! For the Church rejoices, and the angels of heaven rejoice, and Jesus joys over the repentant and redeemed. . . . The joy of the seventy is crowned by new gifts, by which new triumphs may be won and deeper joys be gained. Would you have better gifts? Use faithfully those you have; "to him that hath shall be given." . . .

No force of earth or hell,  
 Though fiends with men unite,  
 Truth's champion can compel,  
 However pressed, to flight;  
 He stands unmoved upon the field,  
 He cannot fall, unless he yield.

Great words are these, and strong;  
 Yet, Lord, I look to thee,  
 To whom alone belong  
 Valour and victory.  
 With thee, my Captain, in the field,  
 I must prevail—I cannot yield!

MONTGOMERY.

"*I beheld Satan fall*"—There is no anxiety upon the heart of Jesus as to whether God or Satan shall ultimately prevail. To his eyes the triumph of truth and justice is never veiled, for, seated above the clouds and confusion of our little ball, he discerns the day of glory, when the wicked shall flee away, and righteousness be exalted among the nations. And what are the brief epochs of human history to Him with whom a thousand years are as a day? To the all-knowing mind of God the day of redemption *is present!* His enemies have *already* been vanquished, his friends crowned and enthroned co-heirs with his

anointed One! O weak-hearted worker, let thy faith behold the field, and the future, as with thy Saviour's eyes, and be patient, joyful and bold in the face of thy and thy Master's foes! . . . Lord Jesus, let me kiss the dear hand that hath written my name upon the Book of Life; and oh lead me always, that I may at last behold with my own eyes, and rejoice before thee in glory! . . . Prepare me, O God, for that day when the Book shall be opened. Till then I will rejoice with trembling in the hope that

"Then thou shalt own my worthless name  
Before my Saviour's face,  
And in the New Jerusalem  
Appoint my soul a place."

. . . Meanwhile I will sing:

"Happy day, happy day,  
When Jesus washed my sins away!"

. . . "'Rejoice that your names are written in heaven,' was the worthy answer of the dying Haller to the friends who congratulated him on the honour of a visit, in his last hours, from the Emperor Joseph II."—OOSTERZEE.

## II. The Saviour's Joy.

*Facts.*—Jesus, moved by sympathy in his disciples' joy, by the prospect of Satan's overthrow and the exaltation of the holy humble, rejoices and breaks forth in the eucharistic prayer, vs. 21.

*Thoughts.*—Behold the Saviour rejoicing that the truth is revealed to babes. How must the mighty army of Sabbath-school workers, bearing the Evangel to the children, move him to joy to-day! . . . "Teacher of babes" (Rom. ii. 20), rejoice in the dignity of your calling; the eternal Father himself reveals these things to babes! . . . What a comforting text is this to teachers of infant-schools! . . . As often as you stand by the open coffin of a wee life closed to earth, think of the spirit before the throne, to whom has already been revealed deeper mysteries and sweeter joys than any known by you. . . . Have you lost a little babe? Here is a model prayer for you.

## III. The One Mediator.

*Facts*—After the prayer, Jesus declares the whole work of

Revelation and Redemption to have been delivered to him as Mediator.

*Thoughts.*—As the Father has committed all things to the hands of Jesus, what have I to do but to commit myself to those hands? . . . Surely, Jesus “is able to keep that which I have committed unto him until that day.” . . . Teachers, your work is utterly hopeless, unless the Son, the great Teacher, reveal himself, both to you and to your scholars. Therefore, never forget his saying: “*Learn of me!*”

#### IV. The Blessing of the Gospel-Day.

*Facts.*—Jesus pronounces the disciples blessed, because of their Gospel privileges, and reminds them of the prophets and kings who longed for the Messiah, but “died without the sight.”

*Thoughts.*—What shall we render unto God for all these benefits?

“We'll crowd thy gates with thankful songs,  
High as the heavens our voices raise;  
And earth, with her ten thousand tongues,  
Shall fill thy courts with sounding praise.”

. . . Dear soul, are your eyes still closed against the light that pours in floods around you? Look, that thou, too, mayst see Christ's day and be glad!

#### The Significance of the Seventy's Commission.

The sending out of these seventy disciples to meet an especial emergency, and to do a special work, fixes a precedent which is of great value to the Church. As distinguished from the twelve apostles, the commissioning of the seventy was temporary, for we read no more of them or of their works. The dignity and authority of their office, although great indeed as those appointed to speak in the name of Christ, was yet subordinate to that of the twelve. The demand for such labours is continually appearing, and our Lord's act justifies the Church in summoning from the laity those who, although not clothed with the office of the settled minister, shall yet prepare the way of the Lord, declare the kingdom of heaven and summon men to its peace. We may

turn to this precedent with confidence to justify those phases of Christian work in our own day to which the laity have been called, and to which they have so zealously and efficiently responded. The great army of Sabbath-school teachers; the voluntary services of Young Men's Christian Associations; the Lay-preaching which seems to be almost a necessity in the exigencies of pioneer and city society; the self-denying toils of Christian women among the freedmen, in camps and hospitals, among the fallen of their own sex, in the missionary schools and the Zenana work among children and women of heathen lands,—all these have full justification and authority from the temporary mission of the seventy. And the Church and the ministry, instead of disparaging these works, should encourage and foster them; instead of looking upon these labourers with suspicion as encroaching upon the prerogatives of the clergy and the lawful bounds of their work, should rather welcome them as divinely-called helpers, and rejoice with them in their successes even as our blessed Lord rejoiced over his disciples. Any other course would seem to be urged by a mistaken zeal for the Law which quenches instead of regulates the holier zeal for the Lord. When the elders of Israel were prophesying before the tabernacle, tidings was brought to Moses that two men, Eldad and Medad, prophesied in the camp. "My lord Moses, forbid them!" said Joshua. "And Moses said unto him: Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them!" The spirit of the great Lawgiver may well animate the ministry of to-day, and his prayer never had greater need for its offering than now, and indeed never more abundant answering. Nor is it required that they who may be called to meet these special wants in the field of Christian effort should be clothed with a semi-clerical office, as is the case in the Roman Church. The freedom and simplicity of the obligations under which the seventy were placed are rather to be followed. No perpetual vows, no unnatural seclusion, no distinctive badge or uniform, but the spirit of Christian love, watchful for every opportunity and wise in adapting means to the benevolent end in view. And with this, that Christian liberty in toiling or resting, in varying or ceasing

methods of work, which always most abounds where the Spirit of the Lord directs.

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### SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—Rather REJOICE because your names are written in heaven. vs. 20. **THEMES.**—*For Thought:* The power of CHRIST'S NAME over evil and evil spirits. *For Prayer:* I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast offered the Saviour Jesus and hast opened heaven, even to the babes. Teach us all to know thee by faith that we all may rejoice in thee! *For Practical Life:* What good have I done in this world over which to rejoice here and hereafter? . . . **CATECHISM.**—Q. 37. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death? A. The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection.

*N. B.*—The answer gives the reasons why the disciple should rejoice that his name is written in heaven.

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### SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK.

**BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS**—To illustrate God's care over those who defend his truth, the cases of Daniel and the Hebrew children, Dan. vi. 3; and of Paul at Melita, Acts xxviii. . . . The joy of the saved sinner (by the above cases also), by the Jewish Purim, Esth. ix.

**BLACKBOARD.**—*Picture.*—In the centre of the board a fleecy mass of clouds, the lower part figured dark blue, with streaks of lightning flashing downward; on the upper part an open book resting, from beneath which rays of light (yellow) are beaming. Above, the words "*Rejoice*—your names are written in heaven." Below, across the red lines of lightning: "The spirits are subject." The main thought:—LIGHT or LIGHTNING? Joy for salvation through the Gospel, or destruction for impenitence.



EASTERN KHAN OR INN.

## LESSON XV.

### THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

Luke x. 25-37.

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#### NOTES.

25. And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

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25. *A lawyer*—A popular term for the scribes who were skilled in the interpretation of the Mosaic Law. *Stood up*—Came forward and stood before him; an attitude of respect. *Tempted him*—Tested, tried him as to his views of the following question,

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25. Who were the *lawyers*? The meaning of *tempted*? Why did the

26. He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest 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 neighbour as thyself.

which covers the whole of religious doctrine and duty. No bad purpose is alleged, but it is probable that the lawyer suspected Jesus of holding views in conflict with the Law, and wished to expose them by this question. His question was one most fit to be asked, but his temper was hardly in harmony with it. *Master—Teacher.* *To inherit*—To get by lot as the tribes got their inheritance; hence generally *to obtain*, but doubtless with the idea of divine aid. *Eternal life*—He was therefore a Pharisee, holding the doctrine of immortality. . . . 26. *What is written in the Law?*—He refers him to the source of religious faith and duty. *How readest thou?*—This question would bring out his own knowledge of duty, and give Jesus a clue to his state of mind, and show what form of an answer was most needed. . . . 27. *He said*—Quoting from Deut. vi. 5 and Lev. xix. 18, for Christ had asked not what he *thought of*, but what he *read out of* the Law. *Heart*—The principle in man which desires; *soul*—That which feels, the emotions; *strength*—The will, purposes; *mind*—The reflective faculty, thoughts, meditations. The command is in substance to love God with all the powers of every faculty of the soul. This is the germ of all religious life, the root of all religious works. *Thy neighbour as thyself*—In Matt. xxii. 39 Jesus says this *is like* the other, that is, of kindred obligation and importance; of the same character, just as the seed of the perfected plant is like the seed from which the plant grew. “As the love of God comprehends the commands of the first table, so the love of our neighbour comprehends those of the second table, but both are in reality perfectly

lawyer want to test Jesus by this question? Was the question a proper one? What is *eternal life*? Was this man a Pharisee or Sadducee?

26. Why did Jesus refer him to the Law?

27. Read the text from which he quoted. Deut. vi. 5. Which of these commands is *first* in importance? Matt. xxii. 37, 38. Why is this *first*? Is it right to love ourselves? Have we any fixed rule or measure of self-



28. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

29. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

one, since none can be conceived of without the other."—OLS-HAUSEN. *As thyself*—Without any fixed measure or rule; naturally, unconsciously, continually, as one loves and cares for himself. "Love of self needs not to be enjoined separately. He who loves God will love himself in a proper degree without selfishness. God loves me as he does thee, and thee as he does me; therefore, I ought to love thee, my neighbour, as myself; and thou me as thyself: for our love ought to correspond with God's love."—BENGEL. . . . 28. *This do and thou shalt live*—"For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the Law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them."—*St. Paul*, in Rom. x. 5, quoting Lev. xviii. 5. But who can perfectly obey the Law of God? It is impossible for unholy man; and so the lawyer and all around must have known. Jesus thus puts the man upon the way to learn his own inability to obtain eternal life, and to feel the need of some other and perfect righteousness to plead before God. This Christ himself wrought out for us; "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Rom. x. 4. As we cannot live by our own righteousness, we must live by Christ's, or eternally die. . . . 29. *To justify himself*—For as he knew the answer to the question so well, the bystanders would wonder why he had asked it at all. He therefore transfers the point of his inquiry from the *what must I do?* to *who is my neighbour?* As though he said: "Yes, I know what the Law teaches as the condition of life, but the difficulty lies in knowing who my neighbour is."

love? Do we ever cease to love ourselves? Can we love our neighbours as ourselves? Explain this command. Of what is this text the summary?

28. Can any man perfectly obey the Law of God? Why not? Who alone of men has obeyed that Law? How can this obedience be made ours? Rom. x. 4.

29. In what did the lawyer wish to justify himself? To whom does this law, *love thy neighbour as thyself*, seem to apply in Lev. xix. 18? To whom had Jesus seemed often to apply it? What did the lawyer want to settle by the question?

30. And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

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Which was a reasonable question, considering the circumstances. For the text quoted (Lev. xix. 18) reads, "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against *the children of thy people*, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Jesus had often before seemed to apply it to *all men*, and the lawyer's question was meant to settle that point. . . . 30. *Jesus answering*—He chose to answer by parable, knowing, doubtless, that a direct dogmatic reply would have arrayed against him the Jewish prejudices against Gentiles, without confounding their arguments or convincing their conscience. The plan was to have the lawyer not only answer his own question, but overthrow the prejudice which had prompted it. *A certain man*—A Jew. *From Jerusalem to Jericho*—Jericho is situated in the *Ghor*, or Jordan valley, at the foot of the mountain range or hills forming the central section of Palestine. It is five or six hours' journey (about sixteen miles) north-east. The phrase *went down* is most appropriate, as Jericho lies one thousand three hundred feet below the Mediterranean Sea level, and nearly four thousand feet lower than Jerusalem. The road between the two cities is simply a road from the top to the bottom of a long and exceedingly broken mountain. The track in places leads along the edges of precipices, under overhanging rocks, through regions wholly barren and uninhabited. This region has always been, and is still, the haunt of robbers, and is reckoned one of the most dangerous in Palestine. In 1820 an English traveller, Sir F. Henniker, purchased rather dearly a practical illustration of this part of the parable. He was attacked by the Arabs, stripped, and left severely wounded. "It was past mid-day, and burning hot," he writes; "I bled profusely; and two vultures, whose business it is to consume corpses, were hovering over me. I should

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30. Why did Jesus choose to answer by a parable? Of what nation was this traveller? Where is Jericho? What sort of a road is it from Jerusalem to Jericho? Who were these thieves, probably?



Pass from Jerusalem to Jericho.



31. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

32. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

scarcely have had strength to resist had they chosen to attack me." *Thieves*—Robbers, the wandering Bedouins; Ishmaelites. Then and now their "hand was against every man." The locality of this parable has led to the inference that Jesus had now got as far as Jericho on his journey. The incident itself may really have occurred. . . . 31. *By chance*—"By coincidence; by that wonderful falling in of one event with another, which often, indeed, seems to men but chance, yet is, indeed, of the fine weaving in, by God's providence, of the threads of different men's lives into one common woof. He brings the negative pole of one man's need into contact with the positive of another man's power of help—one man's emptiness into relation with another's fulness."—TRENCH. The phrase indicates the fact that journeying by that road was not frequent, there being a longer but much safer road bending southward, and through Bethlehem. *A certain priest*—A number of priests dwelt at Jericho, and this one we may suppose to be on his return from officiating in the temple in his regular course. Did he recall the word: "I will have mercy and not sacrifice?" . . . 32. *A Levite*—Whose calling was also to minister about the temple. *Came and looked on him*—A morbid curiosity, perhaps a twinge of pity; but he, too, walked by on the opposite side. Doubtless both men had, or formed, reasons which satisfied themselves. "What's the use? He'll die at any rate. And the robbers will attack me if I delay, and there will be two dead men instead of one!" But the true ground of their conduct is brought out by the reference to the Samaritan's motive: "*he*

31. What is *chance*? What sort of a "chance" was this? Who were the priests? Why may this one have been journeying between Jericho and Jerusalem? What was his reason for passing by the poor traveller? Why did this seem so much worse in a *priest*?

32. What was the business of a Levite? Why did the Levite pass the traveller? Was there any danger in stopping? Was not the man right in taking care of himself? Did the Levite have a kind heart? Did he love the God in whose service he ministered? J John iv. 8.

33. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion on him.

34. And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

*had compassion.*" The priest and Levite had not. . . . **33. A certain Samaritan**—The land of Samaria was of course originally occupied by Jews, the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. These were wholly removed by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, and subjects of his were introduced by a succeeding king. They were idolators, but received a knowledge of the true worship from a captive priest, sent them by the king of Assyria, as a preventive of destruction by lions. 2 Kings xvii. The worship of idols gradually ceased among them, and at the return of the Jews from captivity the colonists sought to fraternize with them, and join in the work of rebuilding the temple. The Jews refused to recognize them as Israelites, and thus the feud between the two people was begun. About B. C. 409, Manasseh, a priest, was expelled from Jerusalem by Nehemiah for an unlawful marriage, and by permission of the Persian king, Darius Nothus, built a temple upon Mount Gerizim. This, of course, widened and embittered yet more the feud; a mutual hatred, contempt and annoyance was the rule of conduct between Jews and Samaritans of Christ's day. The point which Jesus meant to bring out could, therefore, hardly have been put in stronger light than by arranging the parties as in this parable. . . . **34. Bound up his wounds**—Tearing his own garments, doubtless, as the man was naked. *Oil and wine*—Well-known and greatly-valued remedies in the East. Wine is better *poured on* than poured in a man. In the absence of water, wine may have been used to cleanse the wound. *On his own beast*—A mule likely. The engravings usually represent the priest and Levite as walking, but they were

33. Who were the Samaritans? What was the feeling between them and the Jews? How does this fact magnify the act of the Samaritan? Would the Samaritan have been justified in leaving the poor traveller because he was a Jew? Matt. v. 43, 44. What moved this man to his good act?

34. With what did he bind up the wounds? Why did he pour on oil?

35. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him : and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

36. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

37. And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

also doubtless mounted, and so equally able to give effective aid. *Brought him to an inn and took care of him*—The Eastern khans or inns gave little more accommodations than lodging, which would make this care more necessary. . . . **35. Two pence**—Two denarii, thirty cents. *When I come again I will repay*—Which seems to indicate that he was a frequent traveller; a merchant, or carrier, perhaps. The carefulness and fulness with which these details are given show the action to be a genuine act of love, and show a genuine love of the act, which prompts to begin and do and finish a compassionate deed in the most thorough way. . . . **36. Which now, etc.**—The lawyer is impaled upon the point of his own question. There was only one answer that could be given, and that answer compelled a Jewish lawyer to acknowledge a hated Samaritan to be more neighbourly in conduct, and more worthy of neighbourly regard, than the very ministers of the Jewish religion! No wonder men feared to ask Jesus questions. . . . **37. He that showed mercy**—The answer was wrested from him, but he would not take the despised name

Why wine? What kind of *beast* was his? How did he further show his compassion?

35. How much was *two pence*? Would that pay the bill? Was the Samaritan in the habit of travelling that way? What may his business have been?

36. Which do *you* think? Why?

37. Why did the lawyer not *name* the Samaritan? Whom did he condemn in thus commending him that *showed mercy*? How would the lawyer be pleased with *that*? What did Jesus mean by the command, *go thou and do likewise*? In what may this poor traveller's condition represent the *sinner*? Whom would the *thieves* represent? What the *wounds* and *nakedness*? What the neglect of the *priest and Levite*? Whom the good Samaritan? What the *binding* up the *wounds* and pouring in *oil and wine*? What by the *gift* and charge to the *innkeeper* at leaving?

“Samaritan” upon his lips. But in his round-about avoidance of it he confessed and uttered the very ground of the good Samaritan’s excellence. *Go thou and do likewise*—Show mercy to *all the needy*, regardless of caste or class.

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#### ANALYSIS.

### I. The Lawyer’s First Question—What Shall I do ?

#### THE LAW AND ETERNAL LIFE.

*Facts.*—A certain doctor of the law-divinity, in order to test our Lord’s view of the saving power of the Law, asked him : What shall I do to inherit eternal life ? Jesus referred him to the Law itself for an answer. The lawyer replied, quoting the sum of the commandments, Deut. vi. 5. Christ approved the answer.

*Thoughts.*—How many, like this lawyer, inquire concerning the most solemn matters of religion with no better purpose than to try the pastor, the teacher or the pious friend ! . . . Dear child, you come to the class Sabbath after Sabbath professedly to search the Scriptures for the Way of Life ; have you the true spirit of the anxious inquirer, or does this lawyer represent you ? . . . In questions of Religion let your rule always be : “ *What is written in the Law ?* ” The Word of God is the only and the sufficient guide. . . . Teacher, follow the Divine Teacher’s model, and answer your scholars’ questions by appeals to the Law and the Testimony. [*N. B.*—Do not pass the *Bible References* in these Lessons !] . . . Will not the Incarnate Word search us all with the query : “ *How readest thou ?* ” Let us by faithful reading of Scripture be ready with fitting response. . . . Lord, I cannot in my imperfection obey thy perfect Law. I daily sin in many points ; yet in breaking the least I offend in all. How can I give thee the perfect righteousness which thou dost require ? O Righteous Father, give me by faith the Robe of Righteousness, which thy Holy Son, my Saviour, has wrought out for sinners ! Lord Jesus, be thou to me Wisdom and Righteousness ! I plead thy merits ; I stand in thy righteousness ; I clothe and enfold myself in thy good works ; I receive by faith



thy complete Obedience; and in thee, O Christ, Obey the Law! Thus do I hope for Eternal Life in thy Name. Amen. . . . "This do and thou shalt live!" says the Law. But my poor heart says, *How can I do?* All my thoughts are unclean; all my righteousness as filthy rags. Lord, have mercy on me! I cannot do; I dare not die; I long for Life Eternal. O Lamb of God, I come to thee—to thee who hast done for me what I cannot do; to thee who hast in infinite fulness the merit which I lack. Holy Saviour, unite me to thee, and let me receive as the graft the Life and Beauty of the True Vine!

## II. The Lawyer's Second Question—Who is my Neighbour?

### THE LAW OF LOVE.

#### THE PARABLE.

##### 1. *The Traveller Despoiled.*

*Facts.*—The lawyer, having the common Jewish prejudice against foreigners, put the question: But who is my neighbour? Jesus answered by a parable: A Jewish traveller, on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho, was attacked by robbers, stripped, wounded and left half dead.

*Thoughts.*—When convicted of sin, do not try to justify yourself before God; for "How should man be just with God?" Rather confess yourself to have no health in you, and seek at once the justifying merit of Jesus Christ. . . . The fate and condition of the despoiled traveller forcibly illustrate the state of the sinner in his pilgrimage through the world; assaulted by Satan and the wicked, stripped of all most valuable to the soul, and only abandoned when no further spoil is to be had and damage to be done. God save us all from him who, "as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour!" 1 Peter v. 8.

##### 2. *The Traveller Deserted.*

*Facts.*—By chance, a priest and a Levite successively pass along the same road, see their wounded fellow-countryman, but hurry by without giving any relief.

*Thoughts.*—How often men leave the holy services of the merciful Father, and pass by unheeded and unhelped the suffering and the impenitent! What mockery such service must be to Him who loved the sinner and saved him at the cost of his own life! . . . The *first* opportunity of good comes to the clergy; may we all be first in using it for the weal of men! . . . Do I not need to fear and watch, like Paul, lest, “when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away?” Though I lead the service of God’s House, woe is me if I have not Charity! . . . Here is an illustration of what the priesthood can do for the sinner, unaided by the great High Priest. . . . The *second* opportunity of good is given to the office-bearers in God’s House; therefore they are the next in responsibility, and should be next in good works. . . . Teacher, like the Levite, you are brought before the sin-wounded, despoiled souls of your scholars. God forgive you if you come to the place of Sabbath meeting, look fairly into their little faces, and behold their bleeding hurts, yet pass by on the other side, giving no Balm of the great Physician for their healing! You do act the Levite, if you fail to teach Christ, the only remedy for sinners.

### 3. *The Traveller Delivered.*

*Facts.*—A Samaritan merchant or carrier then passes, sees the poor Jew, stops, dresses his wounds, puts him on his own mule, takes him to an inn, cares for him, and when departing leaves orders to have him cared for at his expense. Jesus, by a question, compels the Jewish lawyer to acknowledge that the hated Samaritan alone had done the part of a neighbour, and bids him show the same charitable and unsectarian spirit.

*Thoughts.*—The voice of humanity in man should ever silence the clamor of prejudice, passion, avarice and fear. Ask but this question: *Does this man need my help?* Then, in God’s name, and for Love’s sweet sake, give it, and give it to the utmost. . . . He only fulfils the Law of God who lives and acts in obedience to the Law of Love. Read 1 Cor. xiii. 1-8, and 1 John iii. 14-18. . . . Did the Good Samaritan by this act inherit eternal life? Nay, rather, he gave a proof of his inheritance, for doubtless he was one of the Samaritan followers of Christ.

. . . *But if not?* Then read John iv. 22-24, and see how Jesus condemns his *faith*, although approving his *works*. . . . The Good Samaritan illustrates the Love of Jesus to the sinner; but how infinitely greater his forbearance, compassion and salvation!

“He found me nigh to death,  
Famished and faint and lone;  
He bound me with the bands of love,  
He saved the wandering one!”

BONAR.

Teachers, yours is the work of the Good Samaritan to many a neglected child. Left by ministers and churches, too often, in our far Western wilds, and in our crowded cities, sorely wounded, and destitute of religious care; go thou to them, bind up their wounds, pour in the oil and wine of the blessed Evangel, and bring them in thine own arms to the fold of Christ! God give thee compassion, and furnish thee for thy good work with fulness of Charity! . . . “Jesus would teach us to be charitable toward those who are not orthodox. This seems to be the peculiar lesson of the good Samaritan. Not that we should be indifferent to the truth of religious opinions, or to the purity of religious worship, but that Christian sects should dwell more upon the points in which they agree, and less upon those in which they differ, and that we should never shrink from fraternizing with one of a kindly heart, because he happens to be a “Samaritan,” because he says Sibboleth instead of Shibbleth, because he does not belong to our particular corridor in the household of faith.” —HART. . . . “We shall not give up the interpretation of the fathers and other divines, who see in this poor traveller going from the heavenly to the accursed city *the race of man*, the *Adam who fell*; in the robbers and murderers, *him who was a murderer from the beginning*; in the treatment of the traveller, *the deep wounds and despoilment which we have inherited from the fall*; in the priest and Levite passing by, *the inefficiency of the Law and sacrifice to heal and clothe us*; in the good Samaritan, HIM of whom it was said: ‘*Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil*,’ who came to *bind up the broken-hearted*, to give them the *oil of joy for mourning*, who for our sakes became *poor* that we, through his poverty, might become rich, who

though now gone from us has *left with us precious gifts*, and charged his ministers to feed his lambs, promising them, when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, a crown of glory that fadeth not away."—ALFORD.

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### SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—Love is the fulfilling of the law. Rom. xiii. 10. **THEMES.**—*For Thought:* The sinfulness of religious intolerance and the beauty of charity as shown by their effects upon men's action. *For Prayer:* Lord Jesus, give us thy Spirit in our hearts, that we may go with the helping hand to all those who are despoiled and bruised by sin! *For Practical Life:* There are many poor sufferers around me whom I thoughtlessly "pass by" daily; am I not required to *seek* for these that I may relieve them? . . . **CATECHISM.**—Q. 42. What is the sum of the ten commandments? A. The sum of the ten commandments is, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbour as ourselves.

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### SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK.

**BLACKBOARD.**—*Picture.*—An open hand extending an open purse. Beneath, the motto: MY FATHER'S PURSE. Above, the words: HE THAT SHOWED MERCY.

For Review, the analysis of the Parable as a Letter Lesson:

THE TRAVELLER **D**ESPOILED.  
 DESERTED.  
 DELIVERED.

LESSON XVI.  
THE ONE THING NEEDFUL.

Luke x. 38-42.

GEOGRAPHICAL REFERENCE.

The connection of this incident with the parable of the good Samaritan is thought by some to confirm the inference that Jesus uttered that parable at or near Jericho, on his way to Jerusalem. It is perhaps more natural to suppose it to have been the *certain village* that he now entered, which we know to have been Bethany, the home of Lazarus, Mary and Martha. This was on the road to Jericho, near the point at which it begins its sudden descent toward the Jordan valley. It was on the eastern slope of Mount Olives, about one mile from the summit and two miles from Jerusalem. It would be a natural resting place after the weary ascent, if Jesus came from Jericho, and the charms of the hospitable home of Lazarus and his sisters would encourage a halt.

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NOTES.

38. Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

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38. *As they went*—"The whole of the events related in this section of this Gospel are allotted, as in the widest sense they belonged, to the last journey of our Lord from Galilee, which ended in the triumphal entry into Jerusalem."—ALFORD. *A certain village*—Bethany, a name signifying a *place* or *house of dates*. *A certain woman named Martha*—Jesus had doubtless been entertained in her house before, but Luke thus speaks because it is his first mention of her. The fact that Martha is here said to

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38. When did this incident occur? What village is referred to? Where was Bethany? Who was Martha? Who lived with her in the

39. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

40. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came

have received Jesus *into her house* has led some to suppose that she was married. But the popular notion seems more correct that Martha and Mary were maiden sisters, Martha being the elder and the housekeeper. Lazarus, the other member of the family, is not mentioned here, and may have been now absent. As Martha plainly is the one who extends the hospitality of the house, the language here is not inaccurate. The word Martha is the feminine form of an Aramaic word signifying *lord*, and would be equivalent to *mistress*, certainly quite appropriate to the character of this woman. . . . 39. *Mary*—*Maria*; a form of the Hebrew word *Miriam*, meaning literally *rebellious*. The Virgin Mary is called in the New Testament *Mariam*; while the other Marys are called as here. These two women appear again at the resurrection of their brother, and at the Supper in the house of Simon the leper. In both cases we can trace the same characteristics that appear here. *Which also sat at Jesus' feet*—A figurative expression; implying that Mary waited upon Jesus, and as a learner *heard his word*. So Paul says that he was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel. Acts xxii. 3. The custom of our Saviour to discourse of spiritual things at every fit occasion here appears. And Mary's welcome, that of a meek, attentive disciple, was most acceptable, and therefore most hospitable. . . . 40. *But Martha was cumbered*—Literally, was distracted; or, had her attention drawn off from, which implies that her mind was removed from the Master himself and was fixed upon the meal. *About much serving*—The original suggests the idea of one busily moving around in eager preparation. I have often heard the phrase "flying around" used in similar

house? Was Lazarus present at that time? What is the meaning of the names Martha and Mary?

39. Where else are these women spoken of? and what is told of them? Explain *sat at Jesus' feet*. Acts xxii. 3. What do you suppose Jesus was speaking of? Why did Mary want to hear him? Was Jesus pleased to have her hear him talk? Would Jesus love to have you learn from him?

40. What was Martha doing? Explain *cumbered*. What troubled her so much? Why did she want to make so much preparation? Was Jesus

to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

41. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

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cases of our American housewives. Martha's object was plainly to make a very great display of hospitality. *Dost thou not care?*—Is it a matter of no interest to thee? The language is not petulant perhaps, censuring Jesus because he *did not care*, but takes it for granted that Jesus *did* care, and would side with her in her opinion of Mary's duty; and hence the request, *bid her, therefore*, etc. *Hath left me*—The original permits either the meaning *hath allowed me*, which would imply that Mary had taken no part in the preparations, or *hath abandoned me*, which would imply that Mary had been helping, but had forsaken Martha. The last sense is preferable, as it gives us liberty to suppose that Mary had taken part in all necessary duties, but had declined to help Martha in her unnecessary preparations. But if we take the first sense, still Mary's conduct was true courtesy, for it would plainly have been inhospitable to leave Jesus alone, when all needed household duties could be done by one of the women. *Bid her, therefore*—Which implies the Lord's assent to her view of things; and also that her own bidding had been given and disregarded. . . . 41. *Martha, Martha*—The repetition of the name is a common mode of introducing or implying a warning or censure. *Thou art careful*—Cumbered with many cares. *And troubled about many things*—The reference is not only to the duties of that occasion, but to Martha's general habit; she was full of cares and perplexities concerning household affairs. Jesus does not deny her faith and friendship, neither does he undervalue her necessary labours of loving hospitality. It is that anxious thought, that worrying over meat and drink, which en-

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worthy of all this? Was it a right feeling on Martha's part? Had Mary been helping Martha? Was that proper? Why had Mary left her sister? Was that act proper? Was Martha's language respectful? What offence did she commit against Jesus? What offence against her sister? Did Martha expect Jesus to side with her?

41. Why did Jesus repeat the word *Martha*? What *many things* was Martha *careful* about? Meaning of *careful* here? Was this conduct usual in Martha? Was there any need for such trouble on this occasion?

42. But one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

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grossed her attention to the entire loss of all his own holy instructions, for which he reproves her. . . . 42. *But Mary hath chosen*—A recognition of her liberty in this choice, which neither Martha nor yet himself could constrain. Martha had also chosen her part of bustling activity in making a bountiful and showy repast. *That good part*—Not eternal life; for this would imply that Martha had no saving hope in Christ; nor would it be in accordance with the tenor of the incident. The two parts which the two sisters had chosen in their reception of Jesus are referred to. Martha chose to leave him sitting upon the divan, conversing with his disciples, while she prepared a sumptuous entertainment, and thus separated herself from Christ's words of wisdom. Mary chose to offer her Lord and his friends sufficient but plain fare, and thus have time to sit at Christ's feet and hear his discourse. These are the facts which showed the peculiar disposition and religious characteristics of each, and it is concerning these characteristics that Christ here speaks. He cautions Martha against neglecting communion with Christ, and growth in his grace and knowledge, in order to have time for ministering to bodily comforts. He justifies and commends Mary for preferring to receive Christ's words from his own mouth, before the duties imposed by gratifying the vanity of a thrifty and affectionate housewife. The principle which seems to underlie these words and which touches us all is this: While Christian devotion and Christian duty each has its own sphere, and each its special representatives in the church, the former must never be

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42. What *one thing* did Jesus refer to? What *part* had Mary chosen? Why was this a *good part*? Do the words of Jesus ever perish? What strength do they give to the soul? Could the soul be saved without hearing and believing the precious words of Christ? Does Jesus love to *give* us spiritual blessings? Does it please him to have us come and receive his gracious salvation? How can we best honour Jesus? Why? Why cannot *Christ's word* ever be taken away from us? How do they differ in this from earthly goods? What would you do if Jesus would come in person to your house as he did to Martha's? Why would it be an honour to entertain such a Guest? *Did* Jesus ever knock at the door of your heart? How does he do this? What does he say? Rev. iii. 20. How can we receive and entertain him? How does Matt. xxv. 40 teach us to do the



subordinated to the latter; for *receiving from Christ* is always the most real fact and ground of *imparting to Christ*. *Which shall not be taken away from her*—The words received from Jesus are an eternal portion. His truth is abiding, and it works everlasting life. To feast upon these words is therefore *the good part*. But all that awakens earthly anxiety and pride, like a feast of fat things, perishes in the using.

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ANALYSIS.

I. The Divine Guest.

*Facts*.—Jesus, in one of his journeys to or around Jerusalem, is entertained by Martha of Bethany.

*Thoughts*.—O thou divine Guest, who still by thy Spirit dost pass from village to village among men, enter into my house, and into my heart, and dwell there for ever! . . . What an honour and joy to entertain such a Guest! would you have such come upon your home? Behold the ambassadors of Christ, of whom it is written, "He that receiveth you, receiveth me!" Give them, in Christ's name, welcome and greeting. . . . Sweet office of love, to minister to Jesus! Do you covet Martha's hospitable part? Go bear the blessing to, or bring to the blessings of your home, the sick, the friendless, the disconsolate, the poor, and thou shalt have under thy roof-tree the divine Guest who said: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me!" . . . Would you refuse to admit Jesus were he at your door? Oh sad thought! it is of you he speaks: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with me." . . .

"Behold, a Stranger at the door,  
He gently knocks, has knocked before;  
Has waited long, is waiting still!  
You treat no other friend so ill."

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same? What ought you most to imitate in Martha's conduct as recorded here? What in Mary's?

. . . The home into which Jesus enters will be "sweet home," indeed; therefore, hasten to receive him into your house. Still, as at Bethany, he sanctions, sanctifies and sweetens home-life by his gracious presence, his holy counsels, and loving Spirit. . . . Dear children, your homes may be never so humble; the rich and the great may scorn to sit by your ingle-side, nay, you may have neither loaf nor lodging for the stranger, but the Divine Guest will enter your garret or your cabin, will sit by your side, and, though himself the King Eternal, will gladly dwell with *you*. Oh what mercy! Lord, Lord, come in!

## II. The Two Sisters.

*Facts.*—Mary, having helped in all really needful service, joins her divine Guest and his friends, and listens to his holy discourse. Martha, anxious to spread a festal entertainment, wholly busies herself with household preparations; and having failed to persuade Mary to share her plans and unneeded labours, complains to Jesus, asks him to bid Mary to her help.

*Thoughts.*—It is sweet to retire from ordinary cares and duties, to sit at the feet of Jesus, in the sanctuary, in the prayer-meeting, in the closet. Lord, make it my choice and my joy thus often "to steal a while away from every cumbering care!" . . . O Jesus, thou Sun of Righteousness, thou Source and Centre of all spiritual good and power, let the sweet, resistless strength of thy heavenly attraction draw me from the circles of worldly loves, to cleave fondly to thee! . . . Be thou, O Christ, the Magnet of my soul, and separate me from the dross of earth, that I may cling to thee!

"Draw me from all created good,  
From self, the world and sin,  
To the dear fountain of thy blood,  
And make me pure within.

"Oh lead me to thy mercy-seat,  
Attract me nearer still;  
Draw me, like Mary, to thy feet,  
To sit and learn thy will."

. . . The active duties of life, the Christian courtesies and charities are praiseworthy and are required; but the law still stands:

"*Seek first the kingdom of God!*" . . . Lord Jesus, give to all our dear youth the zeal of Martha, to receive thee and thine, and the prudence and piety of Mary as to the receiving! . . . The needless multiplying of cares not only tends to separate from Christ, but to gender alienation from Christ's people. . . . There are many Sabbath-school workers who have Martha's notions as to methods of receiving Christ in the persons of the children; they rush and fuss and work, with hands and heads full of many projects; overlook the necessities of spiritual communion with Christ, and too often give way to complaints of less *active* but far more *efficient* labourers. . . . Mary is a model scholar, and a model teacher—she *sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word*. . . . Woman's sublimest sphere—*at Jesus' feet*. And yet it is no narrow one, for the earth is his footstool; a woman's sweet devotion may compass the world with charities.

### III. The One Thing Needful.

*Facts.*—Jesus listens to Martha's complaint, but chides her for her many cares, commends Mary's choice, and declares but one thing needful.

*Thoughts.*—What foolish and vain and sinful complaints do we often bear to the mercy-seat! Yet our patient Saviour hears them, and gives them the due relief. And none the less relief, and none the less to be valued, because coming at times in chiding and chastisement. . . . Jesus is better pleased to *give* than to *receive*. He is the GIVER of every perfect gift. He came to give eternal life to men. Go to him and ask—ask in faith that there may be no barrier to his giving; ask all you will; and the more you ask, the better will he be pleased, for it is joy to him to give. And therefore it is true, as dear Bishop HEBER sings in his Christmas hymn:

"Vainly we offer each ample oblation,  
Vainly with gifts would his favour secure;  
*Richer by far is the heart's adoration,  
Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor!*"

. . . What sorrowful rebukes must lie upon the Saviour's heart, as he sees the reckless waste, the sinful extravagance, the worldly engrossment of professed Christians of our land and day! Lord,

shed into the hearts of all our American women the primitive simplicity and sweet piety of Mary of Bethany! . . . The eater and the meat alike shall be food for the worm, but the portion of the soul that chooses Jesus neither moth nor rust shall corrupt, and thieves cannot steal. "The world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of the Lord ABIDETH FOR EVER."

"Jesus, engrave it on my heart,  
That thou the One Thing Needful art;  
I could from all things parted be,  
But never, never, Lord, from thee.

"Needful is thy most precious blood;  
Needful is thy correcting rod;  
Needful is thine indulgent care;  
Needful thine all-prevailing prayer."

. . . Communion with God in prayer, and through the Scripture, is *absolutely needful* to the life and health of the soul; it is the Spirit's daily bread. Let no plea of business or pleasure or duty ever cheat thee of these. Meat strengthens for a season a perishing body, but the soul's bread, the precious word of Jesus, gives a strength which eternity cannot waste. . . . Teachers, whatever else you may fail to give your scholars, do not withhold the good part which Mary chose.

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#### SCHOLAR'S DIRECTORY.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—But one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her. vs. 42. **THEMES.**—*For Thought:* The preciousness of the words of Jesus Christ revealed to us in the Bible. *For Prayer:* Lord Jesus, draw me by thy holy Spirit to sit at thy feet, like Mary, to learn of thee! *For Practical Life:* Have I made business an excuse for keeping me from Christ, or from his Church, or from learning of him in the Sabbath-school? . . . **CATECHISM.**—Q. 90. How is the word to be read and heard, that it may become effectual to salvation? **A.** That the word may become effectual to salvation, we must attend thereunto with diligence, prepara-

tion and prayer; receive it with faith and love, lay it up in our hearts, and practice it in our lives. Q. 89 may also be committed as helping to explain why Mary's course should have been so warmly commended.

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#### SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK.

**BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS.**—Esau, who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. Gen. xxv. 27-34 and Heb. xii. 16.

Moses, who refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and chose the lot of his people. Heb. xi. 24.

The Pharisee's tithes and the publican's prayer. Luke xviii.

**BLACKBOARD.**—*Design.*—In the centre of the board a large figure 1, with the word "needful" written within. At the top, right-hand corner, the word JESUS, surrounded with a halo. At the bottom, left-hand corner, a broom leaning against a wall; a basket, showing provisions, a bowl and spoon, or other symbols of household labours.

**PLATFORM.**—The following, by Prof. John S. Hart, will give the suggestions of an address for the Superintendent, as well as helpful material for the class:

#### MARTHA AND MARY.

Martha was not a worldling, nor is she the type of a worldling. To think of her thus is to mistake the sacred narrative and to miss the lesson which it is intended to convey. If we read the story aright, she truly loved the Saviour and sought to do him honour. Her error lay in the mistaken method by which her love was shown.

We are not to understand our Lord as censuring Martha for attending to the rites of hospitality. He was their guest. Though the Lord of glory, he was also man, having human wants. He hungered and thirsted as other men, and it was the duty of the sisters to provide for him the necessary food. If at the last day it will be a matter of condemnation to any one that he has seen one of Christ's disciples ahungred or athirst and did not minister unto him (Matt. xxv. 44, 45), how much more

guilty would they be who should suffer Christ himself to go without food when he was hungry, and that too in their own house! Martha was right, therefore, in seeing that a suitable meal was prepared for their guest. Her mistake was that she set an undue importance upon the matter. Instead of merely supplying his wants, she must needs get up a great entertainment for him. She must have a needless variety of dishes, and show off perhaps the skill and resources of her art as a house-keeper. Instead of thinking mainly of what the wonderful guest might do for her, of the infinite store of blessing that hung upon his lips, she was wholly intent upon what she might do for him. Her heart was set upon doing something for Christ, rather than upon receiving something from him. While thus absorbed and fretted with the cares of how she might give her table a more comely appearance in the eyes of the Master, how she might place before him delicacies of the culinary art to tempt his appetite, she was losing the heavenly manna which he came to dispense, the angels' food that was needful for the nourishing of her own soul. More than this. Not only did she thus throw away this priceless opportunity of hearing the words of eternal life directly from the lips of Christ himself, but she was unreasonably vexed at Mary for not being as foolish as herself.

The Marthas have never been extinct in the Church. There are always disciples who are so much occupied with the cares of ministering to Christ's servants and of attending to the temporalities of religion as to neglect their own spiritual interests. How often does it happen, when a minister goes to some destitute neighbourhood to preach, and becomes for the time the guest of some pious family, the Martha of the household is so intent on caring for the good man's personal comfort as to lose for herself the opportunity of hearing the precious gospel from his lips! Of course there may be an extreme in the opposite direction. The servant of Christ may be neglected, and his comfort so little cared for that he cannot be as useful as he otherwise might be to those to whom he is sent. Sour bread, indigestible pastry, ill-cooked meats, unseasonable hours and unwarmed rooms may give him cold, indigestion, headache and fever, and thus unfit him for service of any kind. The mis'ress of the house

may even be a Xantippe instead of a Martha. There is a well-authenticated instance, known to not a few of the readers of this paper, of an eminent clergyman who, at the close of a long and exhausting night session of the Synod, invited a number of his fellow-ministers to his house to be refreshed. His wife, perverting into a cruel jest the request to have a "light" supper prepared, invited the ministers into the dining-room to a table set out with about fifty candles all ablaze. Such examples of perversity fortunately are rare. Ministers have more commonly to complain of the neglect of their message than of the neglect of themselves.

It is quite possible that there was some truth in Martha's complaint against her sister. Very possibly Mary may have been so absorbed with the "good part" which she had chosen, the religious privileges which she was enjoying, as to be really negligent of her household duties, and to throw upon Martha alone burdens which should have been shared equally by both the sisters. Had Mary, sitting at the Master's feet and drinking in the precious doctrine that fell from his lips, been puffed up thereby, and said to Jesus, "Speak to my sister Martha, that she stop her household cares and come and sit with me in this devout frame of mind," very possibly the rebuke may have fallen in the other direction.

When, a few years since, Mr. Guinness was holding in Philadelphia that long-continued series of daily meetings which attracted so much attention, we knew a lady who attended every one of those services, absenting herself for this purpose from home daily for a number of weeks, to the entire neglect of a family of young children and of a husband who was lying in bed helpless from wounds. She thought, doubtless, that she was copying Mary, that she was sitting at the Master's feet and had chosen that good part which should not be taken from her. She thought others were awfully irreligious who did not follow her example. We doubt whether the Saviour, had he visited in person that neglected and comfortless household, would have confirmed this woman's verdict either in regard to herself or her neighbours.

No woman can claim to be a Mary, no matter how great the

ecstasies of her piety, who by neglect of domestic duties makes home cheerless. No woman can escape the imputation of being a Martha who lets her desire to shine as a housekeeper interfere with the spiritual interests of herself and her household. Good housekeeping is indeed a great blessing; but Christ in the house is something infinitely greater.



**MODERN BETHANY.**





PRAYING IN STREET CORNERS.

## LESSON XVII.

### PRAYER—THE LORD'S PRAYER.

**Text: Matthew vi. 5-13. Parallel, Luke xi. 1-4.**

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#### HISTORICAL CONNECTION.

The first giving of the Lord's Prayer seems to have been in the Sermon on the Mount as recorded in Matt. vi. 5-13. But the same form in substance was repeated about the time of Christ's stay at Bethany, referred to in the last lesson. While therefore the form as given in Matthew is taken here as being the original one, the most complete in itself, and that prescribed for use in the Westminster symbols, the *connection* of the form

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When was the Lord's Prayer first given by Jesus Christ? Matt. v. 1; vi.

as given by Luke is followed. The order in which it here appears is the same as in Olshausen and in the Harmonies of Robinson and Strong. There is nothing unnatural in the fact that our Lord should *repeat* this model of prayer. The first time the disciples heard it was on the occasion of a public discourse, and it may readily have passed from their memories, as did so many other truths. Or they may have failed to get with sufficient distinctness the idea that it was to be accepted as a *model* of prayer. This is the *single object* of the repetition of the form as Luke gives it, and of course the impression made upon the disciples would be very much more decided than when hearing it in the midst of a sermon covering almost the whole ground of ordinary duty. This is on the supposition that the person who made the request had heard the Sermon on the Mount. He may have been absent, however, or have been a new disciple; and in that case Jesus appears to make his request the occasion for a general review of former teachings upon the essential duty of prayer. The occasion of the repetition, according to Luke, was this: Jesus, apparently surrounded by his disciples, was "praying in a certain place." It may have been some secluded spot near Bethany to which the divine Lord had retired, apart from the house where he was being entertained, and from the people who thronged to him for healing, instruction or gratification of their curiosity. Here, with the circle that made up his "family," he seems to have been engaged in social or family devotions. Something in the prayer awakened in the mind of one of them a sense of his own imperfections, and a desire after like tenderness and fluency and fitness on the part of himself and friends in their approaches to God. And so he comes to Jesus with the request: "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." Then followed this particular form of prayer which the Christian world unite in using under the name of "The Lord's Prayer."

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9. When the second time? Luke xi. 1. For what purpose was it then given? What led this disciple to ask: "Teach us to pray"?

## NOTES.

5. And when thou prayest thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

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5. *When thou prayest*—The duty of prayer is taken for granted. Man needs no divine command to pray. He prays instinctively. His God hath made him as truly a *praying being* as a *thinking being*. *Be not as the hypocrites*—Do not assume an outward form, of person or of words, to which your state of heart does not agree. Especially be not like them in the matters following. *For they love to pray*—Love does not qualify to *pray*, but what follows: They pray, *loving to stand in the synagogues*, etc.—a position which would greatly favour their motive, to be *seen of men*, but which would not in itself show hypocrisy, since it was the usual posture. The spirit of this prohibition requires of us a genuine love of prayer, a hearty hatred of sham devotion. Among the Jews the more common posture of prayer was standing, 1 Sam. i. 26; Luke xviii. 11; but in cases of especial solemnity and humiliation they kneeled, Dan. vi. 10: or prostrated themselves, Josh. vii. 6. The same general custom prevailed among primitive Christians; during the services of the Lord's Day they stood, in token of Christ's resurrection on the first day of the week, and of their being risen together with him from the death of sin. But penitents knelt. In the New Testament, during private and social prayer, the posture of Christians seems to have been kneeling, after the manner of Christ in Gethsemane. Thus Stephen kneeled down and prayed for his enemies, Acts vii. 60, but was uttering ejaculatory prayer for himself before; Peter kneeled in prayer over Dorcas, Acts ix.

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5. What does the phrase *when thou prayest* take for granted? Did the hypocrites love to *pray*? What was it that they loved? Why did they *stand* in prayer? What was the usual posture in public prayer among the Jews? See Sam. i. 26; Luke xviii. 11. What other postures prevailed? Josh. vii. 6; Dan. vi. 10; Acts ix. 40; xx. 36; xxi. 5. What posture prevailed in private or social prayer? What is the use of assuming any particular posture? What posture is the *best* for the soul? Why did the

6. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in

40; and Paul kneeled in prayer with the elders of Ephesus and with the Syrian Christians and their families. Acts xx. 36; xxi.

5. But no posture can preserve from hypocrisy, and the true posture is the one which makes our weak flesh the most helpful or the least hurtful to the soul in its spiritual worship of God.

*In synagogues*—Which were open for private prayer at stated times, as was also the Temple. Luke xviii. 10; Acts iii. 1.

*In the corners of the streets*—The regular hours of prayer were probably the third hour, the time of the morning sacrifice, Acts ii.

15; the hour at which the disciples were praying when the Pentecostal Effusion was received; the sixth, or noonday hour; and the ninth or hour of evening sacrifice. Acts iii. 1.

As we must suppose some regard for propriety on the part of these hypocrites, it is probably meant that they loved to be overtaken at the prayer-hours in public places, and would then and there offer their prayers, just as do Mohammedans now.

The corners or crossings of streets were most loved because most open to the public eye. *They have their reward*—The notice and praise of men, or, rather, the consciousness of being seen and the hope of being praised, which is often all which the hypocrite has, for frequently men are not so much deceived as the foolish formalist himself.

As their co-religionists did not regard the *spirit* of the prayers, and put the merit in the *fact* alone, the insincerity of the utterer weighed nothing against him. This hypocrisy was not so much *putting on of merit* as making a *merit of mere putting on*.

The fearful part of this saying of Christ is that which is implied: They have the notice of men, indeed, *but nothing more!* They are *not seen* of the Father who rewardeth openly.

Thus in our Lord's energetic, *Verily, I say*, we hear the mutterings of that coming wrath which shall break upon all rejectors of God. . . .

6. *When thou prayest*—Referring to private

hypocrites seek the corners of the streets? Did not the people *know* their hypocrisy? How did the people regard the *spirit* in which prayer was offered? Wherein did they think the merit alone to be? Of whose reward did these people fail? Were these hypocrites *sincere*? Did they think their praying meritorious? Wherein did their hypocrisy consist?

6. What was the *closet* (store-house, Luke xii. 24; secret chambers,

secret : and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

7. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

prayer. *Enter into thy closet*—This is a plain command to secret prayer. The word translated *closet* is rendered *store-house* Luke xii. 24, and *secret chambers* Matt. xxiv. 26. Luke xii. 3 the word is used in contrast with *house-tops*. *Store-room* or *cellar* is the best modern equivalent ; an uninhabited and, therefore, private part of the house. Wherever one can go to be alone with God in prayer is a "closet." Indeed all true prayer requires that the soul should first separate itself from all but God. *Shut thy door*—That not even a fear or thought of intrusion may disturb the mind. *Thy Father which is in secret*—For God is there, and none else is there. *Shall reward thee openly*—Shall give you the desired gift, which is the aim of right supplication. The world will see your reward, though they do not see your prayer, and may not know the connection between the two. . . . 7. *Vain repetitions*—Which naturally follow making a merit of prayer. So Romanists value the *number* of Pater Nosters, Ave Marias and Credos repeated. The Mohammedans now are exceedingly given to repeating over and over the name of God, Allah, as though there were some charm in the name, and in multiplying phrases expressing attributes of God. The Jews had this superstition, and Jesus warns against it. How readily the hypocrite, the formalist and the heathen meet upon the same platform ! *Heard for their much speaking*—Which implied at least *sincerity* upon their part, but even a sincere reliance upon their own prayers led them wholly away from the grace of God. Deep earnestness and agony in prayer sometimes prompt to repetitions, as was the case with Jesus in Gethsemane. But these are rather evidences of importunity, and thus are allow-

Matt. xxiv. 26)? Why shut the door? Who will hear and see there? Why? In what way will the Father reward openly?

7, 8. What is meant by vain repetitions? What led these people to make them? Does this prohibit praying often for one thing? What sort

8. Be not ye 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 which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

able. That against which Jesus here warns is reliance upon the number and length of prayers and the multitude of holy names and phrases contained in them. . . . 8. *Your Father knoweth what things you have need of*—Therefore one need not tell him over and over again, as one repeats to a child to make it understand. The design of prayer is not to instruct God. The fact that God *knows our need* is the very strongest encouragement to ask help. There is no need of proving our necessities, as we must do with human benefactors. *Before ye ask him*—Why then, should I ask? (1.) Because I feel my need of help, and need to feel my need of God to help. (2.) Because God bids me ask. (3.) Because he has conditioned his giving upon my asking. How gladly should I ask when, before I ask, all the way has been prepared for my petition in the heart of the good Giver! . . . 9-13. *After this manner, therefore, pray ye*—Whether or no Christ meant to give this prayer a fixed form has very little bearing upon the lawfulness, propriety and usefulness of a liturgical service. But that he did not intend it as a stated formula appears from these facts: (1.) The request of the disciples, which induced the Lord's Prayer, grew out of a prayer of Christ which was evidently extemporaneous, after his custom. It is fair to suppose that the purpose of both inquiry and answer contemplated similar conditions—viz.: Private or social and extemporaneous prayer. (2.) The words *After this manner*, compared with *When we pray, say* (Luke xi. 2), imply a general directory or pattern rather than a strict formula. (3.) The limitation Luke xi. 1, *As John taught his disciples*, when we consider the rigidly informal and unceremonious character of

of repetitions are prohibited? And what does *vain* mean? (8.) If God knows what we want, why need we ask? Why *does* the heavenly Father give his children blessings?

9. What is required in the command *after this manner pray*? How can we make this form useful as a model prayer? What other forms may be so used? How must we feel toward God in order to say "Father"? How

10. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

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John's ministry, seems to forbid the idea of liturgical form of prayer in the question of the disciple, and by inference also in Christ's answer. (4.) The prayers and services of Christians recorded in the New Testament give no indications of a liturgical use of this or any other prayer. (5.) And, which must be conclusive, the variations with which the evangelists record the prayer show that Christ's intention was simply to teach the disciples the general matter and spirit of prayer. As to the use of written prayers in public worship we have no command and no prohibition. Doubtless, Jesus, during his life, conformed to the services of the Synagogue, which were largely liturgical; as did also the apostles, as appears especially in the Acts. We do not read denunciations of this manner of worship, but we do read condemnation of *formalism*—i. e., a chaining one's soul to and relying upon *any form whatever* as meritorious before God for acceptance. There was as much formalism in the private and extemporaneous utterances of the Pharisees as in their public services, and in both cases it comes under reproof. Where the true spirit of prayer pervades the heart and finds utterance in the closet, the family and the social circle, one need have little fear that formalism will triumph in the public worship. Without doubt we are bound to study this prayer as a model for our own, and the passage encourages also to a like use of other Bible prayers (those in the Psalms are especially helpful) and of the prayers of pious people, as given in prayer-books and in many of our evangelical hymns. Thus used, they will often prove to our devotion what the trellis is to the flower, and will lift our spirits out of the defilement of earth into the sweeter air and purer light of heavenly communion. *Our Father*—I know that I have God for my Father, and I know that there are other

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must we feel toward our fellows in order to say "*Our Father*?" Meaning of *hallowed*? Why is this petition *first*? For what do we pray in it?

10. What is this kingdom of God? To whom should it come? What can we do to hasten the coming? What will follow when it does come? When will it come? How is God's will done in heaven?

11. Why ask God to *give us*? Why ask only for *this day*? The mean-

11. Give us this day our daily bread.
12. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

sons and daughters of the Almighty. The very beginning of the prayer implies and requires the spirit of adoption in the heart. *Which art in heaven*—In the heavens. Not the earthly and transitory father, but the Father eternal and ever-present. Thus, in this prayer, the soul at once places its feet upon the Rock of Ages, and leaps at once into the realm of the spiritual and heavenly, which is the true state of heart for prayer. *Hallowed be Thy Name*—Holy, holy, art thou, O Lord; may the un-sanctified be made holy, and the saints be made more holy, until heaven and earth are full of thy glory! This is a prayer for the spiritual worship of God by us and by all beings. The petition is first in importance, as it is first in order, for the chief aim of the holy creatures is to honour the Holy Creator. *Thy Kingdom*—The universal prevalence of Christianity, the time when Jesus, the anointed King, shall be held as Sovereign, and his word shall be the law of all hearts. *Come*—Within me, within all men, overthrowing Satan's kingdom. *Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven*—Joyfully, perfectly, as the angels and the redeemed do it. *Give us*—For we depend on thee alone. *This day*—For to-morrow is with thee; to-day only is ours. Why should I ask for what I may never need? *Our*—The gift of thy hand, but the honest fruit of ours. Should I pray for superfluities, and thus ask some other man's bread? *Daily*—Sufficient; "Give me neither riches nor poverty; feed me with food convenient for me."—Agur, in Prov. xxx. 8. *Bread*—Food for body and for soul alike. For "man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." There is a hunger of the soul after the living God which daily cries, "Give, give!" and only when filled with the righteousness of God in Christ will it be filled indeed. *Forgive*

ing of *daily* bread? Prov. xxx. 8. How shall this bread be made truly *ours*? And what does the *soul* get in this God-given bread? Matt. iv. 4.

12. What are *our debts*? Who are *our debtors*? After what manner does God forgive us? How does a forgiving spirit help us in praying for forgiveness?

13. Why should we wish to avoid temptations? *Can* we avoid them?



13. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

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*us our debts*—Our sins, which place us in the relation to God of debtors who have incurred obligations which we cannot meet, have been tried, have had judgment given against us, nay, have been “condemned already” to the debtors’ penalty and to the debtors’ prison-house of despair. Blessed be God, who hath redeemed us by the blood of his Son, and who thus gives us hope in this prayer! *As we forgive our debtors*—Not in the *same measure*—for who then could stand?—but after the *same manner*, only with that infinite grace which thou alone canst exercise! The fact that we from the heart have forgiven others, is an encouragement to ask God to forgive us. *Lead us not into temptation*—Suffer us not to be brought into trial as Abraham was tried, as our dear Lord was tried in the wilderness and in Gethsemane. For we are weak, O God, thou knowest; therefore, if it be possible, let the cup of bitter trials pass from us! But if it must be, if thy will is to try us as silver is tried, then do thou *Deliver us from evil*—From the yielding to temptation; from the devil; from sin. Fulfil to us thy gracious promise through the Psalmist: “The Lord shall preserve thee from evil: He shall preserve thy soul.” Ps. cxxi. 7.

Oh, lead me from the tempter’s way;  
Oh, save me from his power;  
Or give me grace to firmer stand  
In dread temptation’s hour!

The phrase *from evil* is in the original *From the evil one, i. e., the devil*. While we retain the rendering of the authorized version, there is much to urge and nothing to hinder the true translation in our Confession and Catechism. However, under the word *evil* is also included the author of evil. *For thine is the kingdom*—The best authorities judge this doxology to have

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How can we withstand them? Who is *the evil*? How does God deliver us from him? Why do we say *Amen*? Why is Jesus Christ called *The Amen*? Rev. iii. 14.

been added by the Church in after years, and thus to have crept into the text. But it is surely in the spirit of the prayer, and is a fit ending for one whose faith looks for the fulfilment of his offered petition. To the eye of faith the answer is assured; the kingdom *is come*; evil is banished; Jesus reigns King of nations and of saints! The power to subdue all things to Christ is with God, and to him alone shall be the glory. *Amen*—Certainly, truly. “This certainty is derived from the truth and faithfulness of God. Christ introduces his most solemn statements with this word, and with it believers close their prayers, in sign and testimony that all human faithfulness and human certitude spring from the faithfulness of God”—LANGE. This ending will not fail to recall to the believer the fact that the Holy Ghost has given to Jesus Christ, Rev. iii. 14, the name “AMEN”—“These things saith THE AMEN, THE FAITHFUL and TRUE.” Therefore we may close our petitions, as we are wont to do, humbly beseeching all in the name and for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, our Advocate before the eternal Father, our Amen, our Faithful and True, upon whose blessed mediation all our hopes of acceptance and favour depend.

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#### ANALYSIS.

##### I. The Spirit of Prayer—Alone with the Father God.

*Facts.*—Our Lord warns his disciples against praying in the spirit of those hypocrites who in his days loved to be found at the prayer-hours on the street corners, so that men might see them at prayer, and praise them as pious persons. He tells them rather to go apart where they may *feel alone with God* and pray to him as to a FATHER. vs. 5, 6.

*Thoughts.*—The spirit of adoption is the outer portal of every prayer; enter that, and all the store of thy Father’s house lies before thee. . . . The SPIRIT of prayer is the spirit of a son: *Pray to thy Father in secret.* The MANNER of prayer is the manner of a child: *Thy Father knoweth.* The MATTER of prayer is such as concerns the honour and glory of the Father’s house

and the welfare of his household. Therefore, O my Father, first of all make me, and make me to feel myself, thy child! . . . The word *Ab-ba*, like our *pa-pa*, is formed for infant lips. Our Father, may the tongues that so sweetly lisp *papa* in our ears learn also and as early to "call thee *Abba, Father!*" . . . God is indeed *in the heavens*, yet he is not a God afar off, but a God near at hand, and the faintest cry of the smallest child, nay, the silent wish of the heart, is heard by him. . . . *Thy Father in secret*: How many things there are which we would not have others know, but which we tell to our good parents that we may get their sympathy, counsel and aid! And so our souls have *secrets* which we bear (and may confidently bear) to God alone. . . . Even in our busiest hours we may cut off our thoughts from things around us, and for a moment be alone with God in silent, secret prayer.

## II. The Manner of Prayer—Simplicity, Brevity.

*Facts.*—Jesus further warns against useless and superstitious repeatings of the names and attributes of God and of set forms of prayer as though there were some charm in them, and reminds them that God needs not to be *instructed* as to their wants. vs. 7, 8.

*Thoughts.*—The chief ground upon which God blesses us is our need of him, not our cries to him. . . . *Your Father knoweth*: He is a Father and we children; he knows our wants and is very pitiful, therefore cannot I trust him and call upon him confidently? . . . The faintest sense of need of God, the slightest secret longing after God in Christ, is true prayer.

## III. The Matter of Prayer—The Lord's Model Prayer.

*Facts.*—Our Lord, having been engaged in prayer with his disciples at a certain place (near to Bethany probably), is asked by one of the disciples to teach them to pray. In answer Jesus gives as a model The LORD'S Prayer.

*Thoughts.*—The character of the prayers offered by teachers in Sabbath-schools should have more thought than many think it important to give. Children learn to pray by imitating the

prayers which they hear; it is therefore needful that those who lead their devotions should have considered how most helpfully to lead them. . . . It is true of children, as of us all, that "We know not what we should pray for as we ought." Rom. viii. 26; therefore, teachers, like the divine Teacher, should take pains to teach their disciples (scholars) also to pray. . . . But never forgetting that the Spirit helpeth our infirmities.

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### SCHOLAR'S DIRECTORY.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"Pray to thy FATHER which is in secret."—**vs. 6. THEMES.**—*For Thought:* Our need of being taught how to pray. See Rom. viii. 26. *For Devotion:* Lord Jesus, teach us to pray! O holy Spirit, help our infirmities! Most merciful Father, give us the spirit of adoption, whereby we may cry: *Abba, Father!* *For Practical Life:* Are my prayers vain repetitions, empty forms, or do I pray in the spirit of a needy child? Have I a secret place of prayer? . . . **CATECHISM.**—Q. 99. What rule hath God given for our direction in prayer? **A.** The whole word of God is of use to direct us in prayer, but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which Christ taught his disciples, commonly called *The Lord's Prayer*. Read also from Q. 100 to Q. 107.

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### SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK.

**BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS.**—*Examples of Bible Prayers.*—Abraham's prayer for Sodom, Gen. xviii. 23-33; Jacob's wrestling at the ford of Jabbok, Gen. xxxiii. 24-32; the prayer of Moses, Ex. xxxiii. 12-23; Solomon's prayer at the consecration of the Temple, 2 Chron. vi. 12-42; Asa's prayer, 2 Chron. xiv. 11.

**LESSON XVIII.**  
**THE BLIND BEGGAR CURED AT SILOAM.**

**John ix. 1-13.**

**HISTORICAL CONNECTION.**

During this period of our Lord's life, we find him spending the days at Jerusalem instructing the people in attendance upon the Feast of Tabernacles. His evenings he spends in the seclusion and sweet fellowship of the Bethany home. The teachings and incidents recorded John vii. and viii. belong to this period. The meeting with the blind man, recorded below, seems to have been after the attempt to stone Jesus excited by his claim to equality with the Father. John viii. 58, 59.

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**NOTES.**

1. And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.

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1. *As Jesus passed by*—The incident occurred in Jerusalem. The time is not certain; but if, as it seems, it immediately followed Christ's departure from the Temple to escape stoning by the Jews, John viii. 59, it was on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. John vii. 37. It would seem that Jesus first hid himself among the crowd, or in some of the many apartments of the Temple, during which time the excitement of the people had subsided, many of the most violent may have left, and some of the disciples had again gathered around their Lord. They now pass out of the Temple gate,\* and Jesus seems to discourse with the disciples and to stop and work the miracle with impunity. But we may even believe the miracle to have been wrought *immediately* after the attack of the enemies, for it is not necessary to suppose that much time was consumed; and we should only have another example of Christ's willingness to expose himself

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1. When did the incidents of this chapter occur? John vii. 37. What had happened just before? John viii. 58, 59. Where was the man sitting? Why there?

2. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

3. Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

for the sake of doing good. *He saw a man which was blind from his birth*—He was doubtless seated near the Temple gate, Acts iii. 2, begging alms of the worshippers. The approaches to the Temple were resorted to by the suffering not only because they were more thronged, but because passers by would naturally be more inclined to charity. . . . 2. *He was born blind*—They might easily have learned the fact from the man himself, to whom, in their visits to the Temple, they may have often given alms. *Who did sin, this man?*—Which seems a strange question, as the man could not sin before his birth. But the language may have been used not in a strict, but in a popular sense, equivalent to this: Did God foresee that this man would be such a sinner that he placed this punishment upon him at his very birth? Or the disciples may have known the doctrines taught by the Rabbins, that sins could be committed by the child in the womb. The other alternative—or *his parents*—is easily accounted for as an exaggerated view of Exodus xx. 5. This view appears in the proverb quoted Jeremiah xxxi. 29, “The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children’s teeth are set on edge.” The Jews believed all startling and mysterious and unusually severe sufferings to be divinely-ordained penalties for sin. These views are shown by the cases given, Luke xiii. 2, of the Galileans slain by Pilate, and the eighteen men killed by the tower at Siloam, which Jesus opposes. The disciples (for so the original shows) seem to have thought congenital blindness (a comparatively rare affliction) to be the necessary result of sin on the part of some one. . . . 3. *Neither hath this man sinned, nor his*

2. How did the disciples know that he was *born* blind? How did the Jews regard all special misfortunes and afflictions? See Luke xiii. 2. How did they interpret Ex. xx. 5 and Jer. xxxi. 29? What opinions did the disciples hold on this point?

3. In what sense only are inherited misfortunes “*punishments*?” In what sense only are human woes the “*punishment*” of Adam’s sin? When

4. I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

*parents*—Jesus denies that peculiar afflictions necessarily show moral guilt upon the part of the sufferer or his friends. Misfortunes are, indeed, often direct results of wilful violation of known laws, and in so far are truly *punishment*, i. e., deserved infliction of penalty for personal demerit. This is the popular meaning of *punishment*, and Christ denies any evidence of such in the man's blindness. The word *punishment* is also used to signify evils inflicted upon one person for the offence of another, on account of the liability to good or ill which is involved in social or federal relationship. Thus children are often *punished* with their parents and citizens with their rulers. In this sense all human woes are the *punishment* of Adam's sin. While denying neither of these general facts, Jesus does deny any special sin or special punishment in this case. Christ did well to oppose the opinions implied in the apostles' question. It was born of self-righteousness, which, forgetting that all good gifts are of God's grace, considered a fortunate state of body, mind or possessions a divine recognition of merit. It tended to cruelty, for it hardened the human heart against the most helpless and pitiable of our kind by setting them forth as accursed of God and marked because of sin. *But [he was born blind] that the works of God should be made manifest in him*—The design of God in permitting this case of affliction was to raise up another subject upon whom to show his great love to men in Christ. The power, glory and grace of God are most manifest in comforting, enlightening and saving the suffering and lost. . . . 4. *I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day*—The condition of the blind man seems to suggest these figures *day* and *night*. *Day* refers to opportunity,

are misfortunes truly punishments? Explain the difference between the theological and the popular sense of the word *punishment*. For what purpose did God permit this man's affliction? To what was it overruled? In what manner did his cure manifest the works of God?

4. What suggested these figures, *day* and *night*? To what do they refer? What danger was there in then stopping to help this man? Did any one speak of this and urge delay? What reasons do Christ's words give for immediate action?

5. As long as 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 he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.

*night* to loss of opportunity; but there is also a double meaning, by which the shortness of *life* and the swiftness of *death* are held up as arguments to present duty. In accounting for the *apparently* disconnected introduction of this passage we must not forget the *occasion*. Jesus was leaving the Temple, after an assault by the people, with more or less secrecy and haste. His attention having been called to the blind man, instead of being satisfied with discussing the theological peculiarities of his case he evidently proposes to heal him. He may have anticipated, or indeed have answered, a remonstrance expressed by the anxious looks or by the words of the disciples against delaying his flight to do this good work now. "Is there no danger? Cannot you wait a day or two?" Our Lord has two answers: (1.) This is my opportunity; I must work *now*, vs. 4; (2.) I as the Light of the world should give light *every moment* of my continuance in the world; therefore, *now* to this man whose eyes and soul are darkened. . . . 5. *Light of the world*—Jesus here recalls the simile used in the Temple, John viii. 12, but gives the natural sense to the word *light*, pointing out his relation to the man's physical as well as spiritual blindness. Christ as the Light, in the day of opportunity (vs. 4) makes manifest the works of God (vs. 3) in giving sight to the blind. . . . 6. *Made clay of the spittle and anointed the eyes*—Spittle was used by our Lord in healing the deaf stammerer, Mark vii. 33, and the blind man, Mark viii. 23; it was supposed by the ancients to have healing virtues, especially for diseases of the eye. The notion may easily have arisen from the fact that animals cleanse their wounds by licking, which, however, is only healing because the

5. In what sense was Jesus *the Light* to this man? In what sense is he the *Light of the world*?

6. What virtues did the ancients think *clay* and *spittle* to have? When before did Jesus use them? Mark vii. 33; viii. 23. What would it be a *sign* of to this man? How would it help his faith?



7. And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

8. The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?

9. Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.

tongue cleanses and the spittle moistens and cools inflammation. It was, at least, a popular sign of communicating healing virtue, and as Jesus laid the ointment upon the blind eyes it would reveal to the man's senses his purpose to heal them, thus strengthening faith. The ointment was, besides, the *medium* through which Christ chose to convey his healing power. . . .

7. *Go, wash!*—A further trial of faith; a matter of cleanliness; and an effectual way of preventing any superstition by preserving the clay as a relic or charm. *The pool of Siloam*—"As it sprang from under the Temple-hill it was a type of the spiritual stream which issues from the temple of God." Isa. vii. 3; Ezek. xlvii. 1. **OLSHAUSEN.** *Which is by interpretation, Sent*—The Evangelist gives the Greek interpretation (the one sent) of the Hebrew word, Siloam. Christ was **THE (Siloam) ONE SENT** with blessings from the bosom of the Father—the blind man was (Siloam) *one sent* blessed from the feet of Jesus—the pool of Siloam, the stream *sent forth* from under the Temple-hill to fertilize the king's gardens and to cleanse this man. This side interpretation of St. John's throws us upon the track of the above coincidences. *He went his way*—Led by friends, doubtless, washed from his eyes the clay, which had been the medium of his healing, but now hindered his sight, and came seeing. . . . **8, 9** The man was well known, having been long a public beggar. The reality of his blindness and the genuineness and greatness of

7. Why was he bidden, *Go wash*? Where was the pool of Siloam? Of what was it a type, and why? Isa. vii. 6; Ezek. xlvii. 1. What does the word mean? In what sense was Christ *the Siloam*? In what sense are you? What followed his obedience? How does this cure illustrate the *way to be saved*?

8, 9. How was the man so well known? What caused the doubt of his identity?

10. Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened?

11. He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.

12. Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not.

the miracle appear in the astonishment of these people. . . .  
**10-12.** They first *wonder*, then *inquire*. The man's answer is a model of conciseness and clearness. The question of the *neighbours*, judging from their after conduct, was prompted by a wish to arraign Jesus for Sabbath-breaking as well as by curiosity.

#### ANALYSIS.

##### I. The Meeting—Who Did Sin?

*Facts.*—Passing from the temple, after escaping the mob, Jesus saw a blind man; the disciples, supposing his blindness a mark of divine anger, ask, Who did sin, this man or his parents? Jesus corrects their mistake, and gives the true view of the man's misfortune.

*Thoughts.*—The pitying eye of Jesus rests upon every suffering child of Adam. Sweet thought, sure hope—Jesus sees our sorrow! . . . The dear Lord passes by us, but he does not pass us by. . . . Men may wrongly suspect or charge their fellows with sin, but He who knows the heart will vindicate the guiltless. . . . It is a natural trait in man to look upon the most unfortunate as the least worthy. The rich complacently sigh over the sins of the poor; the poor grieve over the guilt of the poorer. Beware of this folly of judging by outward appearance, and judge a righteous judgment! . . . God does not adjust the balance of divine rewards and punishments by the weights of worldly good

10-12. *Recite* the blind man's version of his cure. Why did the neighbours ask for Jesus? Do you think the man was glad or sorry to say: *I know no!*

or ill. Many a surfeited Dives will sink into torment; many a footsore and heartsore beggar will be an heir of glory; many bright eyes shall be dimmed in eternal darkness, and many sightless balls shall "see God." Let one think of this, and pity above all the *impenitent*. . . . What brightness it throws upon the clouds of human woe to interpret them in the light of divine love! The far height of God's mercy is best seen from the depth of man's misery. "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." "From seeming evil still educing good." . . . The long years of waiting in darkness ended for this man in the blessings of eyes opened to the natural light and soul illumed by the Sun of Righteousness. Lord, help me to walk patiently through the vale of tears, waiting for the unfolding of thy purposes of love!

## II. Working by Day—The Light.

*Facts.*—The apostles by their looks or words seem to have remonstrated against any delay at that critical time for the purpose of healing the blind man. Christ shows reason for immediate action. vs. 4, 5.

*Thoughts.*—It is true also in spiritual matters that

"There is a tide in the affairs of men,  
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune."

Dear soul, is it not high tide with you? Have not the waters of life rolled even to your feet, waiting to bear you out into the ocean of love and usefulness and eternal joy? . . . Youth is to most men the daytime of life. Teachers, work, work and pray with this thought in view! Save the children *now*, and they shall be saved indeed. . . . The sun, the centre of our system of religion, is CHRIST, the source of all revealed truth. With Christ obscured it is dusk; with Christ removed it is night; with Christ shining full into the soul it is day, glorious day. . . . Teacher, would you make plain the way of life to your class? *First of all* seek the illumination of the spirit which Christ sends. The wisdom of men may beautify the night, but it cannot make day; their fairest shining is at best but borrowed light. Go, therefore, thyself to the original Source.

### III. The Cure—The Cleansing in Siloam.

*Facts.*—Jesus, having spoken words calculated to awaken the hope and trust of the blind man, applies an ointment of clay and spittle to his eyes, and bids him go wash at Siloam. He obeys, and returns seeing.

*Thoughts.*—The fact that Christ is the light should awaken in every benighted soul the hope of salvation. . . . The *benefit* of the ordinances through which Jesus communicates his truth lies in this, that they awaken, strengthen and maintain that faith which accepts Christ. Their *efficiency* of themselves is nothing, but as commanded and blessed by the Lord, they are the means of salvation. . . . Would you be saved? Give, as did this man, instant, entire, implicit obedience to Christ's commands. God meets men in the path of duty. . . . O Lord Jesus, who art the One sent to open up a fountain for sin and uncleanness, give me desire and faith to come to thee day by day that I may wash and be clean! . . . O soul, what joyous news is this which the messengers sent of God bring to my ears?

“There is a fountain filled with blood  
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood  
Lose all their guilty stains.”

. . . Lord, I hear the message, I come to thee; Jesus, Fountain of holiness, let me wash me from my sins.

“Just as I am, and waiting not  
To rid my soul of one dark blot,  
To thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,  
O Lamb of God, I come!”

. . . And thou, too, O teacher, art “Siloam”—one sent forth. Let the streams of thy life, thy thoughts, thy teachings, flow from beneath Mount Zion, the Throne of Messiah, and they too shall go forth softly to water the King's gardens, yea, the nursery of the gardens, and shall make them bright with the beauty of the Lily of the valleys, and fraught with the sweetness of Sharon's fadeless Rose. . . . He went and washed and came seeing; but

were there not kind hands to lead him to the fount? And thine is the sweet office, teacher, to lead the child's soul to Christ. . . .

"Thou of life the Fountain art,  
Freely let me take of thee;  
Spring thou up within my heart,  
Rise to all eternity!"

#### IV. The Neighbours' Wonder.

*Facts.*—The neighbours and others, when they saw the change in the man, talked about it, and asked the manner of cure, which the man recited. vs. 8-12.

*Thoughts.*—They whose hearts are opened by grace are the same men, yet "new creatures;" and, being known in the *identity* of their persons and the *newness* of their characters, live monuments to the Redeemer's glory and recommend his grace to all.—SCOTT. . . . How many see and wonder at the deliverance of neighbours from spiritual blindness, but fail to see that they themselves are "wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked!" . . . Unconverted teacher, blind leader of the blind, may the Lord "anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see!" Rev. iii. 18.

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#### SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY. .

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—I am the light of the world. vs. 5. **THEMES.**  
—*For Thought*: How the trials of men do show and shall show forth the love of God. *For Prayer*: Lord, Lord, open thou mine eyes! *For Practical Life*: Christ says, "Go wash!" Obey, and thou shalt see God. . . . **CATECHISM.**—Q. 31. What is effectual calling? A. Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ as he is freely offered to us in the Gospel.

**BIBLE ILLUSTRATION.**—Naaman's cleansing in Jordan. 2 Kings v.

LESSON XIX.  
THE BEGGAR CAST OUT.

John ix. 13-34.

NOTES.

13. They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind

14. And it was the Sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

15. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

16. Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

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13, 14. *They brought to the Pharisees*—To the Sanhedrim, which was chiefly composed of Pharisees, hence popularly called as here. Their motive, as vs. 14 shows, was to furnish that court with evidence against Jesus, on the charge of breaking the Sabbath. The alleged offence lay in the fact that *Jesus made the clay*, thus manufacturing or compounding remedies, which was *work*, and therefore violation of the law according to the Rabbins. . . . 15, 16. *Then, again*—Additional to the questioning of the neighbours. The examination turns upon the manner rather than the fact of the healing—*how?* The *division* shows that a few just men and a few friends of Jesus were in the Council; among them probably Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea.

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13, 14. Who were these Pharisees? Why bring the *man* before the Sanhedrim? How does v. 14 explain the motive of the people?

15, 16. Did the Pharisees seem to doubt the *fact* of his healing? What do they ask about? In what way did they suppose Jesus to have broken the Sabbath? What caused the division? What good men may have been present in the Council? Luke xxiii. 50, 51; John iii. 1.

17. They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet.

18. But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight.

19. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see?

They were not, therefore, without full and true light. . . . 17 The question is now changed. *What sayest thou of him?*—They did not wish Jesus to appear as a prophet, and hoped that the beggar, through fear of them, might deny Christ's miraculous power, and thus give his influence against him. If he who was most interested, who best knew the circumstances of healing and was most bound to acknowledgment should deny that there was anything miraculous in it by denying Christ's prophetic power, it would have been a strong point for the foes of Jesus. This plan was foiled by the man's noble confession: *He is a prophet!* . . .

18, 19. The next step is to assail the facts of blindness and cure. The doubt seems to rest upon the fact of being *born* blind, which so exalted the character of the miracle. The parents are summoned and questioned as to three points: (1.) Is this your son? (2.) Was he born blind? (3.) How does he now see? These questions were not put in the interest of truth; the case was plainly prejudged; the Council were determined to convict Christ, and to destroy the good name of all who would in any wise forward his cause. They wished to show Jesus to be a sinner, a Sabbath-breaker; they could not do this without disproving his act a miracle, for that showed him to be no sinner, but a prophet. The surest way to do this was to impeach the truth of the man as to his being born blind. They could not frighten the man himself to testify as they wished; they hoped

17. Why did they ask the man's opinion of Jesus? Why did he think Christ a prophet? What would have been the effect had he declared Jesus to be no prophet?

18, 19. Why did not the Jews believe the man? Why call the parents? What questions did they put? What answers did they hope to get?

20. His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind :

21. But by what means he now seeth, we know not ; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not : he is of age ; ask him : he shall speak for himself.

22. These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews : for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.

to alarm his parents. . . . 20, 21. The first two questions are straightly answered, and so destroy the hopes of the unjust judges. The third they decline to answer, and refer to their son.

*We know not*—It is not to be inferred that they testified falsely ; they could only have meant that they were not *legally* competent to testify as to the means and agent of their son's cure, not having seen it. Yet the next verse implies that they knew through their son, and were thus *morally* certain. These parents were evidently unwilling to confess Christ in any degree. . . . 22. The reason for the parents' conduct is the fear of excommunication. *The Jews*—*i. e.*, the Council—*had agreed already that if any man did confess that Jesus was the Messiah he should be put out of the synagogue.* Each synagogue seems to have been independent as to local affairs, and was governed by a Council of the elders. One such Council at least was in every town, and had jurisdiction of all religious offences. These Councils are often spoken of in the New Testament ; they had no connection with each other, but were all subordinate to the Great Council, or Sanhedrim, at Jerusalem, before which these parties were now (apparently) arraigned. The decree of the Sanhedrim would of course control the action of the local Councils. The penalties inflicted by Councils were : (1.) *The curse*, by which the offender was for ever cut off, solemnly, with awful curses, from worship

20, 21, 22, 23. Had the man told his parents who had healed him ? Did they speak the truth at vs. 21 ? If they *did* know, how shall we understand these words ? Why did they refer the matter to their son ? Why did they dread being cast out of the synagogue ? What do you think of their conduct ?



23. Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him.

24. Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.

25. He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

and fellowship with all his nation, who dare not sell to him even needful food. (2.) The lesser excommunication, which cut off for thirty days from approach to the synagogue, friends and wife. (3.) Scourging; the last was often administered to the apostles. It is the *second* form of punishment which appears to be meant here by the original, which was indeed the step-stone to the greater curse. . . . 24. Nothing being gained from the parents, they recall the son, who had been separated during the examination. Perhaps the "*ask him*" of the parents may have encouraged to this. In this last examination, or rather inquisition, of the blind man, they seek to overawe him by their religious authority, and by the weight of their superior knowledge. They throw the *dictum* of the Church into the balance against truth, honesty and sense, but the scale does not turn. *Give the glory to God*—This expression has the force of an oath in Josh. vii. 10. They meant: "So far you have spoken falsely, for *we know* that this man is a sinner, one who displeases God, is not in his favour, and who therefore could do no miracle. Now give glory to God *by confessing* as much. You surely rob God of honour by giving Jesus the credit of your healing." Thus these judges put into the mouth of the witness the testimony they wish him to give, and try to compel it by regard for their wisdom and fear of their authority. They play upon his religious feelings, his sense of ignorance, his deference to authority and his fear. A testimony such as they would have extorted would have been a confession that Jesus and himself had agreed together to impose a false miracle upon the people. . . . 25. *Whether he be a sinner*

24, 25. Why again call the man? What did they mean by *give God the praise*? Josh. vii. 10. How did they try to overawe the man? Did the

26. Then said they to him again, What did I e to thee? how opened he thine eyes?

27. He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?

28. Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple: but we are Moses' disciples.

29. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.

*or no*—The attempt is met in a modest, dignified, decided manner: "I will not pronounce upon that point, nor presume to oppose my knowledge to yours, but I *will* declare the facts. *I was blind, now I see.*" . . . **26, 27**, The Council may have fancied some sign of yielding in this answer, and again examine as to the facts. But this continued doubt of his word leads him to take a bolder stand for Christ. In vs. 25 he is reserved, at vs. 27 he is bold, indignant, even scornful. The Pharisees so plainly revealed their character that honest indignation and hearty contempt drove from the man's mind all respect for their authority, and in like degree Jesus rose in his esteem. "I have told you once, and you would not listen. Why do you wish to hear again? You do not also wish to be his disciples, do you?" Here is a plain confession of his own discipleship. His sarcastic question cuts the Councillors to the quick and exposes their motives. . . . **28, 29**. *They revile him*—They, courtly Pharisees, lose their poise under the consciousness of their failure and their folly. *Thou art his disciple*—The disciple of Jesus, an unknown, insignificant person, under the charge and condemnation of the Sanhedrim! *Moses' disciples*—The great prophet and law-giver. *We know that God spake unto Moses*—The wisdom of his teach-

man deny the charge that Jesus was a sinner? How did his answer refute it?

**26, 27**. What encouraged the Council to this new question? How does their question, *how opened*, etc., contradict themselves? What effect does this new assault have upon the man? Was he angry? Why did he ask: will ye also be his disciples? What did his word *also* imply?

**28, 29**. How did the Pharisees understand the man's words? Of what were they guilty in this reviling? Why did they think it a glory to be

30. The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.

31. Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

32. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.

33. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

ings and the miracles wrought by him were the grounds of this knowledge. *As for this fellow, we do not know*—Yet Jesus gave the very same kind of evidence of his divine calling upon which they received Moses. . . . 30. *Herein is a marvellous thing*—“You will admit no miracle in the act of Jesus, but this at least is miraculous, that *you*, the High Council, know not whence is One who opens the eyes of the blind!” The language is strong irony. . . . 31. The beggar next defended the claim of Christ to be a prophet by the received truth that God would not give an impostor miraculous power to establish his false claims. The meaning of the word *sinner* as used throughout the passage is made plain by the contrast with *a worshipper of God*. *Doeth his will, him he heareth*—It is not meant that God does not listen to the sincere prayers of sinful men, but that he does not give power to do miracles to a wicked person. It is true that God hears no prayer born of an evil purpose. . . . 32. *Since the world began, etc.*—The Rabbins themselves taught that this would be one of the works peculiar to Messiah. See Isa. xxxv. 5; xlii. 7. . . . 33. *He could do nothing*—Nothing miraculous. The argument of this man shows an intellect of no mean order. It was unanswerable, and is to-day good reasoning in proof of the Gospel. Christ is proved to have wrought a miracle (v. 30), even one of the chiefest (v. 32); without God no such thing could be

Moses' disciples? Why a shame to be Christ's? How did they know that God spake to Moses? Did Christ Jesus give like proofs that God spake to him?

30, 31, 32, 33. How did the man show their inconsistency? What is the meaning of *sinner* here? What of *God heareth not sinners*? See vs. 33. Give the argument to show that Jesus was a prophet. What sort of a miracle did this show? What effect does religion have upon the intellect?

34. They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

done (vs. 33); but God would not so work to endorse an impostor, but only to approve a true prophet (vs. 31); thus does Jesus appear to be a Teacher sent of God, and his word is true, for is not God truth? When it is remembered that all the facts of this case were subject to a judicial inquiry, that the court took every fair and unfair measure to secure a case unfavourable to Jesus, that the testimony of the leading witness was corroborated by parents, by numbers of neighbours, also hostile to Jesus, and that the beggar remained consistent in his statements and sealed their truth by his sufferings,—we cannot withhold our own judgment from the truth of his conclusion, that Jesus is of God. . . . 34. *Thou wast altogether born in sin*—That is, born blind, with a mark of God's displeasure upon you. See last lesson. Thus in their angry railing they contradict and stultify themselves, and bear testimony that the man *was born blind*, even as he had said and sworn. For rulers to be worsted in argument by any one was mortifying enough, but by one of the common people, a beggar, too, and that in open court, was beyond endurance. *And they cast him out*—No comment need be made upon such a decision, by such a court, in the face of such testimony.

#### ANALYSIS.

##### I. The First Examination—The Division.

*Facts.*—The neighbours brought the beggar to the Council as a witness against Jesus, on the charge of Sabbath-breaking. The Council received the testimony, but a division arose as to its bearing upon the character of Jesus, some asserting that having broken a law of God he could not be a prophet; others, that since he had done a miracle he could not be a bad man. The witness

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Show that the beggar here was the better gentleman; the wiser reasoner. What are the effects of bigotry and prejudice upon manners and mind?

34. What did they mean by *born in sin*? How did these words condemn themselves? Why did they cast him out? What was the effect of this excommunication?

is asked for his opinion, and declares his belief that Christ is a prophet.

*Thoughts.*—The reasoning of the Pharisees was right: No man of God will wittingly break God's law; but their *premise* was wrong, and hence their *conclusion* was both folly and sin. In discussions concerning religion, *first be sure of your premises*. . . . Blind zeal and bigoted sectarianism have very often made an opponent's act of mercy, which is the fulfilling of the law, the ground of charge of breaking the law. . . . Providence often brings the humblest people into such positions that the name of Jesus is made, through them, of evil or of good report. . . . O Lord Jesus, though the learned dispute concerning thee and doubt concerning me, yet do I know, and will confess, that thou art a prophet, for thou hast opened mine eyes.

## II. The Parents' Testimony.

*Facts.*—The parents of the beggar are summoned, identify their son, swear to his blindness from birth, but decline to give any honour to Christ, and under fear of excommunication shift the matter wholly upon their son.

*Thoughts.*—Those whom God blesses are bound in that degree to stand for him, for their steadfastness does good or their denial works injury in the proportion that the mercy of God has made them prominent. . . . To withhold our expressions of faith in Jesus is to deny him. And our failure to speak a good word for him is only made worse by seeking to shift the duty and responsibility upon another. . . . Alas! how many dear children in our Sabbath-schools are even thus not only unaided in their good confession by parents, but are remanded by them to the cruel inquisition of the false and wicked! . . . "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up."

## III. The Beggar Recalled—The Noble Defence.

*Facts.*—The beggar is again brought before the Council, who seek to alarm him into giving some testimony against Jesus. But he "stands up for Jesus," firmly holds the truth in the face of threatening and reviling and at last is cast out of the synagogue. vs. 24-34.

*Thoughts.*—Confessing the truth does give glory to God, for it recognizes him as the Lover of truth, the Searcher of hearts, whose approval is most to be sought, whose disapproval most to be shunned. . . . Do not be influenced against religion by the lives or words of the great and wise; secular wisdom does not always fit one to decide well as to divine things. . . . Yet, as here, the gospel always tends to true wisdom, and can always be wisely defended. The blind man reasons with masterly logic, the minds of the teachers are perverted; the peasant is calm, sensible, clear, the scholars are confused and shallow. The beggar shows as much to advantage in manners as in mind; he has the bearing of a courtier, while the “noble ones” are passionate, prejudiced, bigoted, false, cruel and scurrilous. The lowliest Christian is often a better type of the true gentleman than many of high station. Be truly Christian and you will be truly gentle. . . . A smitten flint will give out sparks; so a sturdy nature will regard deceit and oppression with scorn. . . . Prejudice is judging persons or acts before evidence, and in spite of evidence. It is fatal to honest inquiry, and usually leads to sin. The prejudiced man will commonly be a bad man as to the subject of his prejudice. . . . The Pharisees, in resisting the claims of Christ and in refusing fellowship with his disciple, acted contrary to reason, justice and mercy. And yet, impenitent one, you are in the same condemnation; the cause of Jesus is daily on trial before you, and you reject him.

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#### SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—“If this man were not of God he could do nothing.” vs. 33. **THEMES.**—*For Thought:* The Christian's experience a proof of Christ's divine authority. *For Prayer:* Lord Jesus, grant that I may never deny thee. Help me, O Spirit of truth, to “stand up for Jesus!” *For Practical Life:* I will recall what Christ has done for me, that I may be bold to stand up for him. . . . **CATECHISM.**—Q. 24. How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet? A. Christ executeth the office of a prophet in revealing to us, by his word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation. Read also Qs. 76, 77, 78.

## LESSON XX.

### CHRIST COMFORTS THE BEGGAR.

John. ix. 35-41.

#### GEOGRAPHICAL REFERENCE.

##### THE POOL OF SILOAM.

**SITUATION.**—Siloam is situated in the mouth of the Tyropœon valley, at the foot of Mounts Zion and Moriah, near the south-east corner of Jerusalem. It is one of the few undisputed localities in the topography of the city.

**THE ISSUES.**—The water of the pool issues from under the hill Ophel, between Zion on the west and Moriah on the north. It is slightly brackish, sweetish, and not unpleasant until late in the summer. The water was more abundant in earlier days than now. Siloam is not a pool in the ordinary sense of the word, being neither a marsh-pool nor a natural gathering of water, but a regularly-built reservoir or tank. The water flows into this from a small basin or fountain a few feet higher up, and thence out of an opening in the bottom it "goes softly" through the king's gardens into the Kedron. When it is desired that the water should rise in the reservoir, this opening is closed with a few handfuls of weeds (formerly by a flood-gate), and the water then rises to the height of three or four feet. At this distance the walls widen out several feet, forming a rim, in the lower end of which is another opening, from which the water escapes.

**DESCRIPTION.**—The upper basin is a vault or chamber cut in the rocky cliff of Ophel, five or six feet broad, and about fifteen feet high. A few rude steps lead down on the inside of this vault to the water, which flows underneath these into the main reservoir or pool. The pool is oblong, eighteen feet broad at the upper end, fourteen and a half feet at the lower or eastern end, fifty-three feet long and nineteen feet deep, although the water never rises to a depth of more than four feet. It is thus the least of all the Jerusalem pools. Several columns are built into the side walls, part of a former chapel, or perhaps used to support a roof for the shelter of those who resorted to the spot,

which has always been sacred to Christian, Jew and Moslem. The pool is a ruin, the sides falling in, the stairs a fragment; the walls, of gray, crumbling lime-stone, are giving way, and their ruin adorned by little verdure, except that around the edges wild-flowers, and among other plants the caper tree, grow luxuriantly.

**PECULIARITIES.**—The first peculiarity is that the water enters the fountain from an underground channel one thousand seven hundred and fifty feet long, and large enough to admit the passage of a man, sometimes walking erect, which communicates with the fountain of the Virgin. Other similar branch-channels enter this main aqueduct, all cut in the solid rock. The ancient wall of the city probably included both these fountains, and the purpose may have been to prevent a supply of water from being cut off from the point near Siloam. Another peculiarity is the intermittent character of the pool, the water flowing and ceasing at irregular periods. The natives have a superstitious tradition to account for this irregularity, viz., that a great dragon lies under the fountain; when he is awake he stops the water, when he sleeps it flows. Thomson thinks there is a connection between the fountain and the wells, cisterns, etc., under the Temple area, now occupied by the mosques Omar and El Aksa, and that the irregular flow is caused by draining into the channel, from time to time, the water used in these mosques.

**ALLUSIONS TO.**—Neh. ii. 16; Isa. viii. 6 and John ix.

“Or if Sion’s hill  
Delight thee more, and Siola’s brook that flowest  
Fast by the oracle of God.”

MILTON’S *Paradise Lost*.

“By cool Siloam’s shady rill  
How fair the lily grows!  
How sweet the breath beneath the hill  
Of Sharon’s dewy rose!”

BISHOP HEBER.

**MEANING.**—“Which is by interpretation, SENT.” The Talmudists say that the pool was so called because it *sent forth* streams to water the king’s garden. The fountain is a figure of Christ, the ONE SENT for the cleansing, refreshing, enlightening



of the world. Luke iv. 18; John x. 36. It was to Siloam that the Levite was sent with the golden pitcher on "the last and great day of the feast" of Tabernacles, John vii. 37; it was from Siloam that he brought the water which was then poured over the sacrifice, in memory of the water from the rock of Rephidim; and it was probably to this Siloam water that the Lord pointed when he stood in the Temple on that day and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink."

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NOTES.

35. Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?

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35. *Jesus heard that they had cast him out*—A case of this kind would be common talk, and as Jesus had many disciples in the city, the news was soon brought to him. Indeed, friendly members of the Council may themselves have been the informants. *When he had found him*—For he evidently went instantly in search of him. *Dost thou believe on the Son of God?*—The question seems very abrupt; one wonders that the man received it so quietly. But he was now subdued in spirit; under disgrace, he hardly expected any attention from a Jew; but to be addressed in kind tones, such as Jesus doubtless used, soothed him and secured a respectful answer. The voice of Jesus would seem familiar and pleasant, and while trying to recall and place it, he would be disarmed of distrust of Christ's motive and anger at his abruptness. The term, *Son of God*, was evidently understood as the Jews took it. Chap. x. 33-36. This man had shown himself a person of keen, strong mind; he at once comprehended the force of the term, and, it may be, associated it with the Messiah. Christ knew that he already accepted himself as a prophet, but his

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35. How did Jesus hear this? What did our Lord immediately do? Why did he do this? How ought we to deal with those who suffer for the truth? What is meant by the term *Son of God*? See John x. 33-36. Why did Jesus ask this question?

36. He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?

37. And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.

38. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

question was the prelude to a higher faith. . . . 36. *Who is he, Lord?*—Not *what* is he? for that seems to be understood. “The lowliness and the yielding spirit of the man toward Jesus are in touching contrast with the defiant bearing he maintained toward the leaders of the people.”—THOLUCK. *That I might believe on him*—This should be the motive of every inquiry after Christ. Can we not trace here a reaching after some one on whom to rest implicitly; a crying out from his loneliness and deep sense of the weakness and perfidy of the sons of men for a SON OF GOD, on whom to stay his trust? Perhaps a thought of Jesus came upon him: “Do I believe? I do not know; I am sure that I long for some such a One in whom to trust. There is One, the prophet, who opened my eyes; if I could see him—But who is he, this Son of God, that I may at least believe in him?” . . . 37, 38. *Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee*—The thrilling effect of this announcement upon the man’s mind is brought out in the short, eager cry: LORD, *I believe!* and the instant prostration at Christ’s feet. That voice which had been floating through his soul like pleasant but far off music is at once placed; it is the same that said, *Go, wash!* The truth flashes upon him at once; he recalls former teachings; the circumstances of his cure; he sees it all; the prophet is THE PROPHET; his dear benefactor is the divine Mes-

36. Did the man recognize Jesus? In what tone was our Lord’s question probably put? Why would this seem kind and strange to this excommunicated man? Was the true meaning of *Son of God* understood by him? Why did he want to know *who* the Messiah was? What contrast appears in the spirit of the man here and before the Council? What produced this change? Suppose he had rebuffed his divine Questioner? How are we to receive those who seek us in the interests of our soul?

37, 38. What effect did this sudden announcement have? Did the man now recognize the voice? What caused him at once to believe that *Jesus* was the Son of God? What confession did he make? what did it mean? What did he believe? What sort of worship was this? Why did Jesus

39. And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.

siah; this questioning sweet-faced stranger is his LORD; he believes and worships. The reaction which this good tidings brings, this double joy of his Deliverer and his Redeemer at once discovered, is complete; the man is swept at once from the depth of despondency to the heights of holy, grateful faith and worship. This worship was divine homage; so the original shows, and other versions express it yet more clearly. Jesus here accepts, with no rebuke, what the apostles, Acts x. 25, 26, and the angels, Rev. xix. 10, refuse. Did he blaspheme or is he GOD? . . . 39. *And Jesus said*—These words were no doubt spoken to the disciples who may have accompanied Jesus, with reference to the Pharisees, some of whom had joined the circle during the above interview. One sees here how closely Christ was watched, although there is no attempt at secrecy in this case. The terms of this verse are suggested apparently by the foregoing scenes; *judgment* by the wicked judgment of the Council: the metaphors of *seeing* and *blind* by the present and former state of the new disciple. The Lord's meaning is: "I, too, am come into the world for judgment, to show decision between the seers of truth and the spiritually blind. But in my judgment they whom the world deem blind are rewarded as the children of light, and they who are thought to be far-seeing in their carnal wisdom are given over to outer darkness." *I am come that they which see might be made blind*—The passage is to be taken in the same sense as that in Christ's eucharistic prayer, Luke x. 21, "I thank thee that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent." The revelation of Jesus is designed for and adapted to *the lowly minded*, those who "see not;" who humbly confess their ignorance, their utter lack of spiritual wisdom. And by

receive it? Why did the apostles, Acts x. 25, 26, and angels, Rev. xix. 10, refuse such worship? What does this prove as to Jesus Christ?

39. To whom were these words spoken? Why were there Pharisees there? What recent events suggested these words *judgment, seeing, blind*? Who are meant by *they which see not*? What by *might see*? Why are those of lovely and teachable spirit who confess ignorance most likely to

40. And some of the Pharisees which were with him, heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also?

41. Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

this very fact it *leaves in blindness* the proud, self-satisfied soul that disclaims spiritual ignorance and relies on its own wisdom to search out the hidden things of eternity. And this could not be otherwise without destroying that which is the glory of our faith, its fitness for the great multitude of lowly and unlearned! The religion of Jesus is most honourable in that it "maketh wise the simple," but this blessed office lays upon it as an unalterable law, that "the wise" must first be made "simple" before they can be filled with its holy light. They who would enter Christ's kingdom *must become as little children*. And this necessity is born of Infinite Love, for if the condition had not been gauged by the stature of the child, how then would the innumerable multitude of children and childlike ever have fulfilled it and have entered the kingdom? So that this and kindred passages do not betoken severity and prejudice against the learned, but rather breathe forth the divine mercy to all. God would save the wise, the noble, the mighty also; yea, he is "not willing that any should perish;" but he will not cast out nor bar out all the unnumbered lowly simply to gratify the pride of human intellect. The high must stoop that lowly and high may together be exalted to heavenly places in CHRIST JESUS. . . . 40, 41. *Are we blind, also?*—Are we, the teachers, ignorant of the truth? Surely not. *If ye were blind*—If ye were ignorant, feeling yourselves shut up in spiritual darkness, as this man felt before I opened his eyes, *ye should have no sin*—you would willingly have been taught of me and not have sinned thus. *But now ye say, we see*—You boast that you understand the law and all spiritual matters well enough. *Therefore your sin remaineth*—You will

learn of Jesus? What kept the Pharisees from *seeing* the truth? In what spirit must we come to Christ? Why does Christ's religion leave the proud and self-righteous who boast in *their own* wisdom without salvation.

40, 41. Did the Pharisees understand Christ? *Were* they blind also? Why? If they *had* felt themselves *blind*, what would they have done?

not be instructed because you think you know it all, and thus your self-confident wisdom leads you to reject Christ, to scorn the evidence of miracles, the testimony of this plain man and his parents, to render unjust judgment and to abide in unbelief, the source of all sin. The Lord thus traces the whole conduct of the Pharisees to their guilty vanity of intellect. One cannot but recall the words of the wise preacher: "Seest thou a man *wise in his own conceit*? there is more hope of a fool than of him." Prov. xxvi. 12. In matters of eternal interest, of all matters, this maxim is most true.

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### ANALYSIS.

#### I. Christ Seeks the Cast Out.

*Facts.*—Jesus, hearing of the beggar's excommunication, seeks him, and asks: Dost thou believe on the Son of God?

*Thoughts.*—Happy is he who when persecuted, dejected, despairing, is approached by one who bears the good tidings! Do you know of any who are in sorrow or trial? They are oftentimes waiting and oftentimes ready for the Master; go to them and point to HIM. . . . The champion of God's truth may be cast out of men, but never of Christ. Therefore act not as pleasing men, but God who searcheth the heart. When one must be faithless to Christ in order to keep his standing in any society, sacred or secular, the least of his fear should be to be cast out. . . . O merciful Jesus, Friend of the friendless, help thou this day all who wander lonely, homeless, rejected of men! . . . It was a sweet and mighty boon to have the eyes opened upon the beauties of the earth; glory upon glory came ever new to his wondering vision. But, alas! while Nature opened up her beauties to him, the door of social comforts closed upon him. . . . Do not desert nor despise those who maintain the truth *because* they are unpopular, and never fear to stand by any one

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And from what would this have saved them? What caused their sin to *remain*? What sins had their reliance upon their own wisdom led them into? What does Solomon say of such people? Prov. xxvi. 12.

whom you know to be right, even though the world scorn and threaten. . . . If you rest your hopes on what you have done and suffered for Jesus, remember that the great, the first, question which he urges is: *Do you believe?* . . .

“The Shepherd sought his sheep,  
The Father sought his child,  
He followed me o'er vale and hill,  
O'er deserts waste and wild.”

## II. The Revelation.

*Facts.*—The beggar kindly receives the question, asks who the Son of God is, and intimates his willingness to believe on him. Jesus then reveals himself as the divine Son, whereupon the man confesses his faith and worships him.

*Thoughts.*—Affliction softens the heart, purges the mind and opens the way for religious instruction; persecution prepares for faith. . . . Do not turn harshly from those who would woo you to Christ; the Lord may be nearer than you think! Give to your teacher a ready ear, and to his Gospel an open heart, or it may be you shall drive off your Saviour himself. . . . If we would have sweet spiritual interviews with Jesus, we must be steadfast to his truth. . . . This is the spirit, dear children, with which you should listen to your teachers: “Who is Jesus, that I may believe on him?” . . . *Lord, I believe.* Help me, O Holy Spirit, to say it. . . . But if I may not speak the word, yet will I pray: “Help thou mine unbelief!” . . . The first impulse of genuine love and faith is to acknowledge Jesus Lord, to confess faith in him and to worship him. . . . How often have I seen him as I read the holy Book! how often has he talked with me through the minister and teacher! what mercies has he poured upon my pathway, and yet I have not believed! O Lord, forgive; and as thou hast shown me my fellows' weakness, my own unworthiness, thy great goodness, now show me **THYSELF!**

## III. Spiritual Blindness—The Pharisees Condemned.

*Facts.*—The Lord speaks of his judgment, contrasts it with that of the Council, declaring the principles on which it will be

administered. Some of the councillors, having come up, challenge his imputation by the question, *Are we blind?* which Jesus affirms, and traces their sin to that. Thus the condemned is acquitted and honoured, the judges are convicted and condemned.

*Thoughts.*—The decision of Christ's judgment-seat will right all the wrongs inflicted upon men. There the rich and the poor, the wise and the simple, shall meet together on perfect equality. The whole world may condemn, but if thou art in the right, thou mayest confidently and boldly though meekly rise, saying :

"Thy summons I defy,  
Appealing me to Him on high  
Who broke the sinner's chain.

SCOTT'S *Marmion*.

. . . Christ comes as the True Light which enlighteneth every man. If the soul in the midst of this shining do not have saving vision, the *fault is of the eye*, not of the light! . . . O soul, you cannot search out the path of eternal life by the dim lamp of human learning. If Christ do not enlighten it, you are lost! Look to him; your wisdom here is folly; your conceited light but a will-o'-the-wisp that will lure you into the blackness of darkness for ever!

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#### SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when HE had found him, HE said unto him, Dost thou believe in the Son of God?" vs. 35. **THEMES.**—*For Thought:* The care of Christ over those who are faithful to him. *For Prayer:* Lord Jesus, reveal thyself to me, that I may believe on thee! *For Practical Life:* "Are we blind also?" . . . **CATECHISM.**—Q. 30. How doth the spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ? **A.** The spirit applieth to us the redemption purchased by Christ by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.

**LESSON XXI.**  
**THE GOOD SHEPHERD—THE DOOR.**

**John x. 1-18.**

**HISTORICAL CONNECTION.**

The discourse concerning the good Shepherd is evidently connected with the remarks of chapter ix. 39, 40, by the word verily, as also appears at vs. 21, by the manner in which the cure of the blind man is referred to. The Pharisees are therefore the parties addressed, they being and claiming to be the rightful teachers or shepherds of the people.

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**NOTES.**

1. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, 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.

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**1-3.** The purpose of the Lord seems to be to describe a **TRUE UNDER-SHEPHERD**, or **TEACHER**, which he does in the form of a parable (vs. 6), or as the word used there signifies, an allegory or comparison. The discourse, being figurative, is to be received with the usual limitations, considering the main thought of the speaker, and not expecting a truth to be also hidden in all the accessories required to sustain the chief figure chosen as the symbol of that thought. *Sheepfold*—An enclosure made by low walls of stone, into which the flocks were led at night, as a pro-

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1. Where did this discourse occur? What led to it? Who are the parties addressed? vs. 6. What need had the Pharisees and Scribes of such a sermon? What is a sheepfold? Why does not the thief enter the door? What does the thief want with the sheep? vs. 10.

2, 3. What does the shepherd want? Why does the porter open to him?



4. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, 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.

tection from wild beasts and from thieves. As the flocks of Palestine furnished a chief article of food, lawless and hungry men would be tempted to climb over the walls and steal a lamb or kid, and make way with it if possible without disturbing the shepherd, who kept watch, as did the Bethlehem shepherds, before the door. This duty was at times, as it seems here, given over to a hired guard or "porter." Sometimes several flocks were united in one fold, and the shepherds kept watch in turn; the shepherd on watch would then be the porter, doorkeeper. Whether the word *porter* is intended to have a special significance has been disputed. Some apply it to the Holy Ghost; some to God the Father. The idea is that *the one appointed to guard the approach to the fold recognizes the right of the shepherd*, which would rather point to the Church or the true ministry. The true teacher is known and acknowledged by his brother teachers, the authorized guardians of the Church. The sheepfold of course represents the Church; the sheep, the children of God; the robber, the false prophets and teachers generally, and here the Pharisees in particular. *He calleth his own sheep by name*—Then, and still, the sheep had names, just as with us the horses and cattle. Each sheep knows its name, and will respond to it with a prompt and pleased obedience. . . .

4, 5. THOMSON in his "*Land and Book*," speaking of the flocks of Palestine, says: "The shepherd calls sharply from time to time, to remind the sheep of his presence; they know his voice and follow on. But if a stranger call they stop short, lift up their heads in alarm, and if it is repeated they turn and flee,

Who is represented by the *porter*? by the *shepherd*? What by the *fold*? by the *sheep*? by the *robber*? Why ought the porter to recognize and admit the shepherd? why not the thieves? How does the shepherd show his knowledge of the flock? What does he do with them?

4-6. How do the sheep show knowledge of the shepherd? Why do they follow? How do they act under strangers? Why? Point out seven signs

6. This parable spake Jesus unto them ; but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

7. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

because they know not the voice of a stranger." The Lord, in the foregoing verses, has given *seven* signs of the True Under-Shepherd, which, putting aside the allegory, are : (1.) He comes to his work openly, honestly, as of right, by appointment of the Chief Shepherd, in whose Name he comes. (2.) He is welcomed by the true friends and guardians of the faith. (3.) He is recognized by Christ's own sheep. (4.) He has personal, and intimate, and tender knowledge of all the flock. (5.) He does not drag them by violence to knowledge and duty, but gently leads them. (6.) He is an exemplar to the flock, going in the front, the place of danger, as well as of honour. (7.) He is followed with clinging confidence and love by true Christians. These signs were undoubtedly meant to test and convict the unworthy Pharisees, and may be used by all teachers to try their own commission with the view either to be warned and reformed or to be confirmed and comforted. . . . 6. *They understood not*—A mixed crowd had gathered around (vs. 19), some kindly, others ill-disposed, to him. They had some glimpses of the meaning of the allegory, but may have wondered at its application. "Who is the robber? who the shepherd? what the door?" . . . 7. The *door* of the fold is plainly the pivotal point of the figure, for the terms *thief* and *robber* describe one class of persons who enter the fold, and *shepherd* another, and they are first and chiefly distinguished by the mode of entrance. As the moral turns upon this: who is the true shepherd? and as this turns upon the question: how did he enter the fold? one readily sees why Christ should explain the meaning of *door*. "What

of the true under-shepherd or teacher given in these first five verses. Show that each of these things would convict the Jewish doctors and teachers of the law of neglect and sin.

7. Who represents the true pastor or teacher (shepherd)? And how does he reach the sheep? What does the door here signify? How is he the door of the sheep? What is the first and highest qualification of a God-sent pastor and teacher?

8. All that ever 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 out, and find pasture.

do you mean by the *door* of the fold? What right, authority, privilege, quality or possession is that by which one enters into the office of a true teacher and ruler of the Church?" So the Jews queried. And Christ answered, "I am the Door of the sheep." All they who are true pastors, teachers, shepherds, come through the only Mediator, called and qualified by Christ, and confessing him to be the Messiah. . . . 8. *All that ever came before me*—All claimed and so-called *doors*. The prophets are not of course meant; they indeed made no such claim. Even Moses had said to the plaint of Joshua concerning Eldad and Medad, Num. xi. 29: "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets!" And John Baptist continually confessed, "I am not the Christ." John i. 19-23. But the priests of Pharisaism stood at the door of the Temple warding off all who came to teach in the spirit and power of prophecy, who did not belong to themselves, or would not adhere to their dogmas and recognize their authority. This oligarchy set itself to be not only the porter of the door, but the very door itself, usurping that through them alone the teachers of the people must come. And thus they gave through their perverted doctrines and lives the *means of entrance* to thieves and robbers; nay, they were themselves the *thieves and robbers* referred to. *But the sheep did not hear them*—The Chosen Remnant rejected their proud impiety, and still looked and longed for the coming of the true Messiah-Shepherd. . . . 9. *I am the Door*—Jesus repeats the simile, in order to give it a wider application: I am the Door by which not only the shepherd comes to the sheep, but also the Door by which the sheep come to the fold. Only through Jesus can men enter

8. Did the prophets claim to be "doors" of the sheep? See Num. xi. 29; John i. 19-23. Who were the false "doors?" In what manner did they show this? How did they give *entrance* to and make entrance for *thieves and robbers*? And what did this sharing of the crime make them? Who are these *sheep* that *did not hear*?

9. What wider application does Jesus give to *the door*? Through whom

10. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

11. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep.

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into the gift of salvation, by which one is made a member of the fold of Christ; into the grace of perseverance, and into growth in divine life, by feeding upon the word. To apprehend the full force of this figure as applied to Christ, the peculiar associations of the door or gate in the Oriental mind should be recalled. How much this embraced is indicated even now by the official title of the Turkish government, the **SUBLIME PORTE** (gate). It is through Christ alone that the soul has access to the offices and blessings of the Church. They who claim (as the Romanists) that it is through the offices and blessings of the Church alone that men have access to Christ wholly reverse Christ's order, and subvert this text. . . . **10.** From the figure of a **DOOR** our Lord passes to that of a **SHEPHERD**. Having given the signs of a good under-shepherd in the Church, he holds himself forward as the good Shepherd, the Saviour of all sheep. The simile is brought out strongly by the contrast of two classes of false teachers, represented respectively by the thief and the hireling. The thief has no other purpose in coming than to gratify avarice and appetite, to do which he destroys the spiritual life of the flock. The good Shepherd comes to give and secure life not only, but all fulness beside. . . . **11.** Verses 11, 12, 13 show the contrast between the good Shepherd and the second class of false teachers, the hireling class—the timorous, selfish, unconsecrated, though not deliberately wicked pastor or teacher. *The good Shepherd giveth his life*—Habitually risks his life. And Jesus literally gave his life for his redeemed. The good

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and how must all enter the fold of God? What difference between the figure *door* as applied to pastors, and as applied to all Christians? What benefits to those who *enter in*?

10, 11. Whom does the thief represent? Give the contrast between this class and Christ. Why does Christ call himself the good Shepherd? Where did Christ give his life for the sheep?

12. But he that is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

13. The hireling fleeth, because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

14. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

15. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

shepherd has in view *first the good of the flock*. . . . 12. The hireling forgets the flock in looking after his own life. The ground of his action is that the sheep are not *his* sheep. The lack of this *personal identity* with the sheep is a fundamental error. *The wolf*—Wolves were more numerous and troublesome in Palestine in the Bible times than now, although they are still seen. By *wolf* is meant any evil requiring sacrifice and involving peril on the shepherd's part. *The wolf catcheth*—And devours some of them; the rest are scattered; flying, many of them, poor, dumb things! after the selfish hireling, who has neither heart nor will to help them. . . . 13, 14. Verse 13 repeats the state of feeling as between the hireling and sheep; it is marked by entire absence of unity of feeling and interest. Verse 14 declares the bond of loving sympathy and recognition which unites Christ and his children. *Am known of mine*—When the word and spirit of Christ touches the soul of the true sheep, there is an affinity which results in union. So only the steel, not the dross, flies and clings to the magnet. . . . 15. This verse draws a parallel between the sympathetic union of Christ and his sheep and that of the Father to the Son. Jesus, having thus pointed out the very seat and nature of the hireling-teacher's sin, shows the remedy. He who has an unselfish identity with the flock is

12, 13. What are the signs of the hireling? Why does he flee? What does the *wolf* represent? What harm does the wolf do?

14, 15. What attracts the sheep to the shepherd, the true Christian to Christ? What likeness between Christ's relation to his sheep and his relation to the Father, God?

16. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice: and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

17. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

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one with Christ, who is one with his sheep; and being one with Christ, he is also one with the Father through Christ. Thus the cord that binds the teacher and people together passes through the Mediator's hand into the hand of the eternal Father. And the golden threads of the cord are these: *sacrifice, even unto death*. "I lay down my life for my sheep." . . . 16. The spirit of holy self-denial is carried yet farther, even to the *other sheep, which are not of this fold*, the Gentiles. *Them also I must bring*—Not to the Jewish fold, but to the one flock of Christ. *One fold—Original, one flock*. "*One flock, one shepherd!*"—Sweet prophecy, toward whose fulfilment may God and all good men hasten the day! We may understand how this great thought of Christ's must have smitten at the spirit of caste in his Pharisee listeners. To love and fellowship men, because they are *men* and not *Jewish* men! To risk, yea, to give up, life to bring blessings to Israelites not only, but even to Gentiles! Is this to what this man Jesus would lead us? It was indeed to that. . . . 17. *Therefore doth my Father love me*—As has been shown in the healing of this blind man. *Because I lay down my life*—Not that this fact is the chief ground of God's love to the Son, for the Father eternally rejoices in the Son as his only begotten, full of grace and truth. But this fact does awaken love in the Father's bosom. The Pharisees were thus taught that God's approval came to the men of self-sacrifice. *That I might take it again*—As in the Resurrection, which gives to all men the needed and sustaining element of hope, even in sacrifice unto death, inasmuch as the life thus laid down shall be taken again in new glory. And this clause also guards against any misunderstanding of his remark concerning death, which

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16-18. Who are these *other sheep*? Whither will Christ bring them? How is this done, and why? How does the Father regard the self-sacrifice and love of Christ for his sheep? How had the Father shown this in

18. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

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chiefly proceeds from the point of Christ's human nature and its relations to the Father. . . . 18. This grand argument for entire self-abnegation upon the part of teachers and leaders, and entire consecration to the good of the people, which Jesus based upon his allegory of the shepherd and sheep, reaches its climax in this assertion of *voluntary* sacrifice. *No man taketh it from me*—Were I unwilling to *lay it down of myself*. It was unconstrained love that led him to take the nature of man, with its germs of death; as he was without sin, he owed no "wages of sin" to the Law of God and of Nature, and should he so will, straightway legions of angels would drive all violence from him. And yet he "gave himself a ransom for all!" *I have power*, etc.—Our Lord plainly asserts his Deity here; he claims, as The Resurrection and The Life, power over the issues of life and death. *This commandment*—To give and take his life, to die for our offences and rise again for our justification. He seals his discourse with the assertion of his high authority and holy office as a Prophet, uttering the voice and doing the will of the Father-God. And the Father commissions every true prophet to act in the same spirit, following "THE MAN CHRIST JESUS," who is set forth as God's ideal man, because wholly denying self to befriend and defend the weak, the needy and the lost.

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#### ANALYSIS.

##### I. The Marks of a True Under-shepherd or Teacher.

*Facts.*—Our Lord sets before the Scribes and Pharisees, who were the official religious teachers of the Jews, the marks of a true teacher. vss. 1-6.

*Thoughts.*—Let the Sabbath-school teacher study the seven

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the case of the blind beggar? When did Christ take his life again? By whose power? What does this show as to our Lord's Deity? What was the great mission ("commandment") of Jesus in coming to the world?

characteristics of the *model teacher* which Christ himself gives. See Notes on vss. 4-6.

## II. The Door of the Sheep.

*Facts.*—Jesus teaches (under the figure of the door) that it is through HIM that the shepherd (teacher) must come to the sheep, and through HIM that the sheep must come to the fold (the Church). vss. 7-9.

## III. The Good Shepherd.

*Facts.*—Jesus shows the character of false teachers under the figures of a *thief* and a hireling, and shows HIMSELF to be the GOOD SHEPHERD. vss. 10-18.

*Thoughts.*—In the Jewish economy the sheep was led to the altar a vicarious sacrifice for his master the shepherd. But the divine Master, our shepherd, reversing this order, lays down his life a vicarious sacrifice for his sheep.

## SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“The GOOD SHEPHERD giveth his life for the sheep.” vs. 11. THEMES.—*For Thought*: The love of Jesus Christ in the atonement. *For Prayer*: Dear Shepherd, lead us into the green pastures and by the still waters; deliver us from the roaring lion, the thief and the hireling. *For Practical Life*: The duty and pleasure of self-sacrifice. . . . CATECHISM.—Q. 25. How doth Christ execute the office of a priest? A. Christ executeth the office of a priest in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us.

BIBLE ILLUSTRATION.—The incident of the shepherd David and the lamb. 1 Sam. xvii. 34-54.





**TOMBS IN THE HILLSIDE—VIEW IN JEHOSEPHATH.**

## **LESSON XXII.**

### **THE DEATH OF LAZARUS.**

**John xi. 1-16.**

#### **HISTORICAL CONNECTION.**

After an interval of three months, during which Jesus seems to have remained for the most part in the vicinity of Jerusalem we find him at the feast of Dedication. John x. 22. It is the winter or rainy season, which prevents teaching in the streets and open courts, and drives the people to the shelter of Solomon's porch on the east side of the temple. Here "Jesus walked," instructing the multitude. A number of the leading Jews surround him and demand: "If thou be the Christ tell us plainly." Jesus takes up the parable of the Shepherd and the Door, which many of them had heard and which having been the cause of a serious and prolonged division among the Jews was

still well remembered. The discourse glides into another assertion of his oneness with the Father. The Jews again took up stones to stone him, but were disarmed by his eloquent remonstrance. Yet still he maintains his claim to the title *Son of God*. The violence of the mob is calmed only to make way for the violence of the Sanhedrim, who sought to take him. But he escaped out of their hand, and went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized. Here he abode, a centre of attraction and faith to great numbers. It is from this residence in Perea that he is recalled by the message of Martha and Mary.

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NOTES.

1. Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

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1. LAZARUS—Hebrew, ELEAZAR, "The help of God." We may infer from the manner in which Lazarus is mentioned that he was the youngest of this Bethany family. "Ecclesiastical history relates that Lazarus lived after the Lord's ascension as many years as had been his age at that time."—BENGEL. There are early traditions, which have support from the Gospel record, that Martha, Mary and Lazarus were the children of Simon the leper, whose real death, or the civil death which leprosy wrought, according to Jewish law, placed an abundant property in the hands of the three children. The family seem to have been honourable, wealthy and of the higher class. Their home was a favourite and frequent retreat for the Lord, and here, we may believe, with his disciples he held quiet discourse with men of the class of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. *Bethany*—On the eastern slope of Mount Olives, a mile beyond the summit, and about two miles from Jerusalem. It is near the beginning of the sudden descent of the mountain-road leading to Jericho. The modern representative of Bethany, El-Azariyeh, is a wretched

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1. What is the meaning of the word *Lazarus*? Where was Bethany? Why called *the town of Mary and Martha*?

2. (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)

3. Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

4. When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

hamlet of some twenty families. *The town of Mary and Martha*—The sweet piety of Mary and the kindly zeal of Martha have perpetuated the name of Bethany. And, indeed, the chief glory of any community is the godliness of its folk. The evangelist names the family in the order of their years beginning with the youngest; thus Mary precedes her elder sister Martha. Or the wider notoriety of Mary may have caused the precedence. . . .

2. *It was that Mary*, etc.—The reference is to a subsequent event, John xii. 3, by which Lazarus is associated with Mary, who evidently was better known to John's readers. Her piety was her own glory, as well as that of her family and her town.

*Was sick*—A sudden sickness, apparently; one of the sharp, malignant fevers of Palestine. . . . 3. *His sisters sent unto him*—For they knew his power to heal, and believed that his love would lead him to exert it. The message sent simply states the case: *he whom thou lovest is sick*. There is no urgent "come!" no extravagant appeal, nor mention of favours which may now be repaid. There is meek, confident, loving submission. "Lord, our loved one is sick; he is *thy* loved one. Do thy will! But—" The heart of Christ is trusted to read the yearning of the sisters' loves. Did the sisters wonder: "Will he come? Will he brave the danger, and bear the long mountain-journey? Will he come in season?" . . . 4. *Jesus said*—To the messenger. *This sickness is not unto death*—Doubtless they took this mes-

2. Why does St. John thus describe Mary? When did this anointing occur? John xii. 3. Why is it mentioned here? Tell what you know of this family. Where is Bethany?

3. Where was Jesus? Why did they send for him? Did they *ask* him to come? Why not?

4. To whom did Jesus say this? Did not Lazarus die? Explain then

5. Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

6. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

sage back, and gave it to the bereaved women in the chamber of death. It may have seemed like mockery to their grief. It may have awakened strange hopes, which their thoughts could hardly shape, of some impending deliverance. It was surely a very great trial of their faith. The mind of Christ outruns the messengers; they tell of Lazarus' illness; he speaks of his death. *But for the glory of God*—So, also, the misfortune of the Siloam beggar is explained, John ix. 3, but here the glory of God is more clearly expressed as one with the glorifying of the Son. We may trace this glory: (1.) In the spiritual development of the bereaved. If Lazarus was, as some suppose, the rich young ruler, Mark x. 21, this event may have weaned his heart from his possessions and won him for Christ. So, also, the spiritual life of Martha seems deepened, as her words about the resurrection show. (2.) The miracle attested the Deity of Christ. (3.) The raising of Lazarus was the beginning of the end. The first link of that chain of events which ended at the Cross touched the tomb of Lazarus, and Christ's own death-sentence was the echo of that summons to life spoken there. . . . 5. *Jesus loved*—This phrase is used in the Gospels of none but these three, the young ruler and the beloved disciple John. It is here placed in connection and contrast with his delay, and points us to some high motive for this seemingly strange act. . . . 6. *He abode two days still*—We may suppose that this delay, as in the case of the Syro-phœnician woman, was meant to test and strengthen faith. It also was important as assuring the reality of death and the genuineness of his miracle. There seems no ground to believe that the sisters had too long delayed sending for Christ; it

the words, *not unto death*. How did this sickness result in the *glory of God*?

5, 6. Of what other individuals is it recorded in the Gospel that *Jesus loved*? What difference between this love and that which Christ has for all his own? Why is this fact put side by side with this delay? What was the object of this delay? Where was Jesus abiding? See John x. 39-42.

7. Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judea again.

8. His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee: and goest thou thither again?

9. Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

is more likely that the disease was one of the prevailing rapid fevers which ran its course so quickly as to make it physically impossible for Jesus to reach Bethany before death ensued. His hastening could not therefore have changed the result. *In the same place where he was*—See John x. 39-42. Beth-ab'ara, in Perea, perhaps Beth-barah the ancient ford of Jordan; or, more likely, Beth-nimrah, on the east bank, nearly opposite Jericho. . . . 7. *Let us go into Judea again*—As Jesus gives no reason for his purpose, the remonstrance of the disciples was natural, perhaps expected, and turned into a needed lesson of faithfulness to duty and opportunity. . . . 8. *The Jews of late sought to stone thee*—See Historical Connection. The relations between Jesus and the disciples appear here, as elsewhere, to have that affectionate freedom which encouraged such friendly opposition. The expression "*goest thou?*" and the remark of Thomas, v. 16, indicate that the disciples may have thought that Christ purposed to go alone. The same objection is urged here which seems to be urged at John ix. 4, and the answer shapes itself after the same metaphor. . . . 9. *Are there not twelve hours in the day*—God fixes to each day its natural bound; it will compass that whoever and whatever oppose. *If any man walk in the day he stumbleth not*—He who walks out, trusting that the light of the world will burn through all the day, need not fear that nightfall will come untimely, and cause him to stumble in dark-

7, 8. Why did the disciples object? When did the stoning referred to happen?

9. Who fixes the natural bound of each day? What can hinder the day from running its full length? Why can we trust in the sun to keep on shining during the day-hours? How does this apply to *life*? Who has fixed its limit? Why cannot that limit be changed by man? What may this teach us as to risking our lives and health in doing duty?

10. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

11. These things said he : and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth ; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.

12. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.

13. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death : but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.

14. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

ness. So each life has its bound, and God who has fixed it will see it fulfilled. No man's sun shall go down while it is yet day ; the shades of death shall not fall around his stumbling steps until God ordains the sunset. Therefore I cannot be slain, until the Father's full time is come. . . . 10. *But if a man walk in the night*—There appears to be a change of the figure here, by which *night* is made the absence of Christ's presence and direction ; one stumbles in such a case, because the inner light, the only true guide, is wanting. "Christ conceives of himself in a twofold view ; first, as standing fraternally on a parallel with men, and fulfilling his appointed day's work ; secondly, in his higher dignity as the spiritual Illuminator of the world, as the Promoter of everything good and beautiful upon earth."—OLSHAUSEN. This verse is meant to remove the fear of the disciples as to danger to themselves, since with him they would be safe, and to warn them that separate from him their true Light even though in apparent safety, they would be in danger of stumbling upon ill. . . . 11-14. *Our friend*—Christ's friend was the friend of the disciples also. *Sleepeth*—So death is often spoken of in the Bible. See Deut. xxxi. 16 ; Acts vii. 60 ; 1 Cor. xi. 30 ; xv. 6 ; xviii. 20. This sweet view would doubtless afterward be indelibly impressed upon the minds of the disciples

10. Why may the presence of Christ be called the *daytime* of the soul ? What may Christ's absence then be called ? What follows when we walk through life without Christ ? What is it to *have no light* within the soul ?

11, 12, 13, 14. Why is death called a *sleep* ? What did the disciples think Jesus to mean ?

15. What made Jesus *glad* ? Did not the disciples already believe ?

15. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.

16. Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

by the events following. The disciples understood Jesus to speak not of ordinary sleep, but of the deep, long sleep ensuing the crisis of a severe fever, which showed the fever's abatement, and therefore they said: *he doeth well*. The explanation of John, vs. 13, as well as Christ's plain assertion, *Lazarus is dead*, must settle the fact of a real death in this case. . . . 15. *I am glad for your sakes*—The joys of Jesus are evolved from his deep love of and interest in his children. *That ye may believe*—With stronger, more intelligent faith. "The ways of Providence converge toward growth in faith on the part of Christians." *Nevertheless*—Although the trials of our friends are meant for their good and ours, yet let us do the friend's duty and go to their help. . . . 16. *Then said Thomas*—Brave, but unbelieving; constant, but unconvinced of his Lord's power to deliver. The same characteristic crops out here that showed so plainly in that memorable scene after the Resurrection of Christ. In both cases there appears a Sadducean impatience at, and doubt of, a resurrection. Though the spirit was not wholly worthy, the decision was right. Wherever Christ bids us or leads us, even though to death, there we must go. *Didymus*—The Greek for *twin*, the original meaning of the word *Thomas*.

## ANALYSIS.

### I. The Three Messages.

*Facts*.—Lazarus of Bethany, the brother of Mary and Martha, is seized with a violent sickness; the sisters send word of their

What then is meant? How does our faith now affect our Lord? How can our faith be strengthened?

16. Who was Thomas? The meaning of Didymus? Why is he sometimes called Doubting Thomas? Did he show any doubt here? What is praiseworthy in this utterance of his? What lesson does it teach us?

affliction to Jesus, who was in exile in Perea. Jesus sends back word that the sickness shall not be fatal.

*Thoughts.*—1. **THE DEATH MESSAGE**—Young, rich, honoured, of good family, yet the message came swiftly and surely, doing its work. “It is appointed unto ALL MEN once to die!” . . . Sisters, are your brothers unregenerate? Now, *now* give all your heart to the sweet work of their salvation. It *may be too late* if you send for the man of God, or call upon the divine aid, when sickness has seized your friend. . . . 2. **THE MESSAGE OF SORROW**—Go and tell Jesus! In sickness, in sorrow, in every affliction, make known your wants to God. . . . When the foot-fall of death is laid upon the threshold of our home, what refuge has the bereaved heart but JESUS? . . . Happy they who, when human love and human skill have failed, can turn with the assurance of friends to the divine Friend. Lord, for my loved ones’ sakes, make me a friend of Jesus! . . . Sorrowing heart, here is a model prayer; trustful, patient, tender, yet potent with the mightiest plea that suppliants can speak: Help, O thou whose name is Love, for thou lovest me and lovest mine! . . . 3. **THE MESSAGE OF ASSURANCE**—All is well! for all is to thy will and for my weal. . . . “For the glory of God”—*Ad Majoram Dei Gloriam!* What iniquities have been wrought under this misappropriated motto of the Jesuits! Sweet words, spoken by the gentle Jesus to console heart-broken sisters, have been the shelter of inquisitors for unnumbered cruelties. God save us all from perverting the Holy Writ! . . . O Father, from my bed of pain, weary, suffering, dispirited, I lift my heart to thee for patience to glorify thy Son by showing his power to console even me. If the pains of my poor body may honour thee, I will call them dear for thy sake, and gladly will I suffer in behalf of Christ.

“So by my woes to be  
Nearer, my God, to thee,  
Nearer to thee.”

## II. The Trial of Faith.

*Facts.*—1. The sisters were tried by the seeming failure of Christ’s assurance 2. The disciples were tried by the test of



their courage and faith in the call to follow Christ into Judea, and to expect the reanimation of Lazarus.

*Thoughts.*—Do you sigh when the winter comes? Yet out of its death-sleep the beauty and bloom of summer shall emerge. It is hard to look upon the faces of our loved dead and feel that they *only sleep*, yet so it is. Death never yet destroyed a soul. . . . “Spring, once come upon the earth, is never banished again until it has reaped a victory. All checks, and haltings, and struggles, and storms cannot alter the inevitable year. So it is in human affairs. There are cold and dark December days. But be patient; they, too, have a June waiting for them. To the earlier openings which come among men in darkness and trouble there are retrocessions, there are promises suddenly blighted, but every spring has its March, and March never killed a spring. Men that have early hopes beginning may have them checked and driven back, but this is not a sign that summer has not come to them or *begun to come*.”—HENRY WARD BEECHER.

### III. The Coming Friend.

*Facts.*—The road is rough, the way is long, the Jews have threatened death, but Christ will come! The disciples remonstrate, but Christ will come! He comes at the call of friends to save a friend; and though the timorous and the doubting hold him back, though death lurk in every mountain-pass and devils dispute every step, yet *he will come*.

*Thoughts.*—The sisters weep over their dead brother; their message, they think, is vain. But Christ is on the way to their help. . . . Jesus, who hastened at the sisters' plea to resuscitate a dead body, will not tarry when sisters' hearts are praying and waiting for the new life to touch a brother's soul.

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### SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep.” vs. 11. THEMES.—*For Thought*: The connection between sin and death. *For Prayer*:

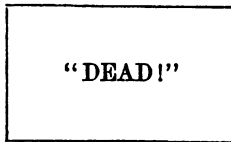
Lord God Almighty, prepare me to meet thee in judgment. Help me to be ready lest the hour of death come upon me like a thief in the night. *For Practical Life:* What folly in me to put off repentance when death may come so soon and do its work so swiftly! . . . CATECHISM.—Q. 19. What is the misery of that estate whereunto man fell? A. All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever.

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SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK.

BLACKBOARD.—In the centre of the board write in large letters the simple word "Dead." Let this face the scholars as they enter. The passages printed at the top and bottom can be added afterward.

*"He whom Thou Lovest is sick."*



*"For the glory of GOD."*

## LESSON XXIII.

### JESUS THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE.

John xi. 17-32.

#### NOTES.

17. Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.

18. Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off.

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17. *He had lain four days in the grave*—This information was received before he reached the town. See v. 30. The distance between Bethany and the fords of Jordan, near which Christ was tarrying, was more than twenty miles over the rough, precipitous descent to the Jordan valley. The messenger of the sisters would spend about a day coming, and Jesus about the same; the two days of tarrying added make four days. This seems to require the supposition that Lazarus died soon after the messenger's departure, and was buried very soon, which was quite in accord with the Jewish customs. Any one touching a dead body was ceremonially unclean for seven days; the exaggerated dread of legal impurity prevailing among the Pharisaic class, to which the family of Lazarus belonged, would account for what might seem to us indecent haste. Our Lord was buried upon the day of his death, as also was Stephen, Ananias and Sapphira. . . .

18. *Bethany was nigh*—So that city friends could readily come to join the usual Jewish mourning ceremonies. *Furlongs*—Stadia; the stadium was six hundred and six and three-quarters English feet, so that fifteen stadia would be a mile and three-quarters. *Was*—“As John probably wrote after the destruction of Jerusalem, it

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17. How far is it from Bethany to where Jesus was staying? How long would the messenger have been on that road? How long did Jesus tarry after getting the message? How long did it take him to go? How many days would that be? When had Lazarus died then? Was it usual to bury on the day of death? Give examples. [Jesus, Stephen, Ananias and Sapphira.]

18, 19. How far was Bethany from Jerusalem? Why is the distance

19. And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

20. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house.

21. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

22. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.

is more natural to explain the past tense by his regarding Jerusalem and its neighbourhood as laid waste at the time when he published his gospel."—ALFORD. . . . 19. *Many came to comfort, etc.*—The hired wailing-women kept up the mourning continually, and as each party of friends arrived the cries were renewed. The ceremonies were prolonged for many days, according to the station of the family and individual. See Gen. i. 30; Num. xx. 29; Deut. xxxiv. 8. Thus Jesus, on his arrival, found mourners present in the house. . . . 20. The news of Christ's arrival was naturally first told to Martha, who went and met him, leaving Mary sitting, doubtless, in the usual posture of sorrow, Job ii. 13; Isa. iii. 26, surrounded by the wailing-women and the friends from Jerusalem. . . . 21. *Lord, if thou hadst been here*—This is not so much a complaint at the Lord's delay as an expression of that faith in his power which had prompted her to send for him. It breathes that feeling of which many of us have been conscious, which comes again and again at the thought that if *this* had been or if *that* had been, our loved ones might have been saved. . . . 22. *But I know that even now*—Remember that the fact of her brother's death must have confronted the message which Jesus had sent her: *This sickness is not unto death.* A doubt of the Master's prophetic skill may have flashed

given here? What was the Jewish custom as to mourning visits? How many days were these visits paid? [Seven or more.]

20. Why did Martha first hear of Christ's coming? What was Mary doing? What was a usual posture of mourners? See Job ii. 13; Isa. iii. 26.

21. Is this a complaint at Christ's delay? Of what is it an expression? What like feeling do people often have when they think of their friends' death?

22. To what does this *even now* refer? Had Martha any seeming

23. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

24. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

25. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

upon her, but she forces it back with this noble, earnest utterance: *I know that even now*; notwithstanding the unfulfilled promise, my faith in thee as a man of God, a prophet whom God hears, is unshaken. If we consider simply the apparent unreadiness of Martha's mind for such a work as the reanimation of Lazarus, as shown especially at vs. 39, we should judge that the above expresses all the thought that was in her mind. But the remark of Jesus, vs. 23, would indicate that he saw in her heart a *hope*, at least, that the divine power of her Master could reach into the grave of her brother. If the narrative should seem to any one to show contradiction in Martha's mind, it would only show the faithfulness of John's record to the workings of a state of heart to which many who have known the conflicting hopes and fears of grief can fully testify. . . . 23, 24. *I know that he shall rise again*—The Lord's assurance that her brother shall rise Martha understands according to the faith of the Pharisees concerning the final resurrection. Her noble confession shows how plainly the Jews understood, and how fully they confessed, the doctrine of the resurrection. . . . 25. *I am the resurrection*—Jesus points Martha to himself as the source and the guarantee of her faith. Her thoughts run to *the last day*; he recalls them to the present and to himself. It is by the power of Christ that the resurrection is achieved. We must be *in Christ* to be partakers of the resurrection. It is thus that thoughts upon this subject blend with the doctrine of faith, by which the believer is united to Christ. *And the life*—That is, the source of life; the

grounds to doubt the prophetic power and knowledge of Jesus? How must she have viewed the *message* which Jesus had sent back? What did her words, *whatsoever thou wilt ask*, etc., imply?

23, 24. How did Martha understand Christ's words? To what time did her thoughts run?

25, 26. To what and whom does Jesus recall her thoughts? What does Jesus mean by calling himself *The Resurrection*? What by *The Life*?

26. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

27. She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

28. And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.

29. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him.

reference is to spiritual life. The Lord means to teach that it is by him and in him that the body rises in the image of Christ, and the soul lives by faith in Christ; and that it is this rising of the soul from the death of sin which ensures the rising of the body from death and the corruption of the grave. *He that believeth in ME*—Even as thy brother believed. This seems to be implied. . . . **26. Whosoever liveth**—Any living man who believes in me shall never die. His *body* shall not die, it shall sleep; though it decay, the germ of life eternal is in it, and it shall rise a glorious spiritual body. His *soul* shall never die, for by faith he is one with Christ, and Christ is deathless. *Believest thou this?*—He develops her faith, he instructs her ignorance, he supports her weakness, but he calls for her assent and confession. . . . **27. Yea, Lord, etc.**—She assents to the leading question put to her. But as though wishing to define or qualify her answer, she adds her belief in Jesus as the expected Messiah, Son of God. A comparison of her confession with that of Peter, John vi. 69, which is held forth as the rock-confession of the Church, will show on the part of Martha a very deep conception of the truth as it is in Jesus. . . . **28, 29. Called Mary her sister secretly**—That is, without informing the parties who, with

How does our faith in Jesus make us partakers of this? What seems to be implied here as to the faith of Lazarus? In what sense is it true that the believer *shall never die*? "*Believest thou this?*"

27. To what did Martha say, *Yea*? What further confession did she add? What did she mean by this? What does this show as to Martha's *Christian faith*? How does her confession compare with St. Peter's? John vi. 69.

28, 29. Why did Martha call Mary *secretly*? Where was Mary? Who had asked for Mary? How shou'd *we* respond to all the calls of Christ?

30. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him.

31. The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there.

32. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

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Mary, were conducting the mourning ceremonies within the house. *The Master is come, and calleth for thee*—The request of our Lord is not recorded, but must be supposed as following Martha's confession. *She arose*—From the posture of grief which was common among mourners. . . . 30, 31. The place of burial among the Jews was outside the town limits; the custom of visiting the graves of friends was so universal that the friends thought Mary's hasty departure a sudden impulse of grief which drove her to her brother's tomb. These verses explain naturally the appearance of the Jews at the grave at the time of the miracle. The motive of the friends in following Mary seems to have been kind, and not simply thoughtless intrusion upon grief. . . . 32. The sight of Jesus affects Mary just as it did Martha; she thinks of what *might have been* had her Master been near before her brother's death. Her words are the same as those of Martha, showing the kinship of sorrowing hearts and common faith which had led them to send for Christ.

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#### ANALYSIS.

##### I. The Master and Martha.

*Facts.*—Jesus arrived outside of Bethany; Martha hearing of his coming went out to meet him, and saluted him with words

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30, 31. Where did Jesus remain? How did the Jews understand Mary's sudden movement? What led them to this view? Why did they follow Mary? Did they know Jesus had come?

32. Show the likeness between the actions, feelings, hopes and faith of these two sisters. Point out the difference in their actions and their utterance.

mingling regret at his absence with confidence in his character and power as Messiah.

*Thoughts.*—The unanswered prayers which go up to Jesus from Christian hearts for the saving of precious lives oftentimes shake confidence in the goodness of God. Lord, teach us from the faith and resignation of Martha to trust thee with equal confidence, whether thou dost or dost not give to our prayers the lives of our beloved! . . . *If thou hadst been here:* The presence of Jesus is the security of the Christian home against every harm. . . . *Even now:* Christ's hour of help is never past. . . . *Whatever thou wilt ask:* The ground of the believer's confidence in Christ is that HIM the Father heareth always. . . . *God will give thee:* Every gift of grace which comes to us comes as a gift to Christ—to him, not to us; for his sake, not for ours. O thou Giver of every good gift, for thy Son's sake hear me and keep me!

## II. Christ the Resurrection.

*Facts.*—Jesus comforts Martha with the truth that HE is the resurrection and the life. She confesses him to be the Messiah. vss. 23-37.

*Thoughts.*—To every one who mourns the loss of friends comes this same sweet consolation: *Thy brother shall rise again.* . . . O Lord Jesus, unite us all to thee, that we, being made partakers of thy life, may have part in the first resurrection! . . . Do we believe in Jesus? Then may we sing:

“We're one in Christ our Head,  
In him we grow and thrive,  
Nor will he leave us with the dead  
While he remains alive.”

. . . Sweet mystery! “Our bodies, being united to Christ, do rest in the grave until the resurrection.” . . . Each coming winter warns of the death of the body and the dreariness of the grave, and each opening summer invites to pleasant thoughts of the resurrection. . . . Sweet flowers! Springing out of the chill of winter, the uncleanness of the soil and the pollution of decay, they cover the earth with their matchless beauty and fill the air with their fragrance Fair emblems of the resurrection! And



therefore we place them in the clasped fingers of the dead, and lay them on their coffins and plant them upon their graves, and come in the bright summer days to twine them about their tombs. . . . But let us never forget that our Rose of Sharon passed through the dark, cold winter of death, that the spring-time of the resurrection morn might be bright with the beauty of our resurrection bodies. . . . And if there be to them who are in Christ a resurrection of glory, they who are out of Christ shall rise "to shame and everlasting contempt."

### III. The Master and Mary.

*Facts.*—Mary now hears of Christ's arrival, hastens to meet him (followed by the Jews), falls at his feet and expresses confidence in his power to have cured her brother.

*Thoughts.*—The sympathy of friends in our hour of bereavement is very sweet; but when the divine Friend draws near, how poor their consolations seem! . . . Turning from every human source of comfort, come, O sorrowing one, fall at the feet of Jesus, and there unburden thy griefs and give utterance to thy faith!

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## SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in ME, though he were dead, yet shall he live." vs. 25.  
**THEMES.**—*For Thought:* The resurrection of the body. *For Prayer:* LORD JESUS, may I be united to THEE by faith that I may have part in the first resurrection! *For Practical Life:* This body which is to be so honoured and glorified at last should surely now be kept free from the defilement of sin. . . .  
**CATECHISM.**—Q. 37. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death? A. The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory, and their bodies being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves until the resurrection.

## LESSON XXIV.

### LAZARUS RAISED FROM THE DEAD.

John xi. 33-46.

#### NOTES.

33. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,

34. And said, Where have ye laid him? They say unto him, Lord, come and see.

35. Jesus wept.

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**33, 34.** *When Jesus saw her weeping*—The weeping of Mary and her attendants is referred to as exciting the emotion of Jesus. *He groaned in the spirit*—ALFORD gives this the sense: He struggled with or rebuked his spirit, endeavouring to choke down his emotion, so that he might speak. The Greek seems to justify this view. But even this implies the sentiment which the English version so plainly expresses—that the human nature of Jesus was profoundly moved by sympathy with the sorrowing company around him. . . . **35.** *Jesus wept*—As he went toward the grave. Why should he have wept, when he knew that he was about to raise Lazarus, and thus furnish full consolation to Mary and Martha? If the passage be considered simply from the standpoint of Christ's human nature, the objection ceases to have force; for even when the mind is set upon relieving sufferings which have awakened profound sympathy, it is not inconsistent with that purpose, nor contrary to our experience, that tears should be excited. Indeed, the elation and agitation wrought by anticipating the revulsion of feeling on the part

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33. What caused Mary to weep? What the Jews? How did this affect Jesus? What caused this emotion?

34, 35. Where were they going when *Jesus wept*? What caused his tears? Did he know he was to raise Lazarus? Why then should he have wept? How are people affected when they think of unexpected joys which await dear friends? What comfort does this incident give to all who sorrow?

36. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him !

37. And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died ?

38. Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

of the sorrowing, takes through sympathy the direction of a kindred revulsion of feeling, and exhibits its usual effects, namely, tears. Judging, therefore, the human heart of Jesus by our own human hearts, we readily understand why he wept. His tears were mingled tears of sympathizing sorrow for present woe and joy for anticipated joy. . . . 36. *Behold how he loved him*—The Lord's grief testified to all of his deep love ; the spectators were doubtless in error as to the occasion of his tears, which they took to be the death of Lazarus, but the moving cause was indeed *love*, a perfect human affection, which was the foundation of his sympathy with the sisters. Verse 36 was probably uttered by those more friendly to Jesus ; vs. 37 by hostile persons. . . . 37. *And*—Greek, in the sense of *but*, implying a contrast of the spirit of the two utterances. *Could not this man*—Spoken sarcastically ; they throw discredit upon the statement that a miracle was wrought in the case of the blind man by the failure to work a miracle in behalf of Lazarus. They reasoned that he would have saved him if he could have saved him. So Christ was taunted upon the cross : "Thou that saved others, save thyself !" The thought of a remedy at this stage does not even occur to them. . . . 38. *Again groaning in himself*—"After indulgence of tears of grief, nothing is more natural than the signs of inward perturbation, expressed in groans, sobs and long-drawn sighs."—OWEN. ALFORD as before takes the

36. What did these Jews think had caused the tears of Jesus ? Did *love* have anything to do with his tears ?

37. What did others say ? Who is "the blind" referred to ? What motive had they in making this remark ? Which did they think the greater miracle, to heal the blind or cure the sick ? What did they argue from Christ's failure to heal Lazarus ? Did they have any thought that Christ could raise up Lazarus ?

38. How are people usually affected after an outburst of tears ? Was Jesus so affected ? What is a cave ? How were the caves of Palestine

39. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.

40. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?

sense of struggling against his emotion, a self-restraint required by what followed. *It was a cave*—A family vault—a natural cave, fitted by artificial means for a sepulchre. The limestone hills of Palestine abound in these caves. The cave of Machpelah is an instance of their use as burial places. The recesses for the bodies pierced horizontally three sides of the vault. In these the dead were usually laid, uncoffined. In the fourth side was the entrance, which was not walled up, but was protected against jackals and dogs by a movable stone slab. . . . 39. *Take ye away the stone*—The Lord would have human hands do all that human power can do. The remonstrance of Martha is characteristic; an exposure of the decomposing body offended her sense of propriety; she was not willing to have her poor brother's corpse seen by the company in its state of decay. It is probable that there was sufficient reason to justify Martha's words—*Lord, it smelleth now* (original)—beside the one assigned. But even had there been no offensive odor near the grave, we must surely suppose decomposition under the circumstances: violent sickness, sudden death and nearly four days' confinement in a close vault. . . . 40. *Said I not unto thee*—A gentle rebuke, reminding her of past assurances, and turning her mind from the evidence of sense to the exercise of faith. Martha feared that Christ's command would bring to her sight only a body of death; Jesus bade her *believe*, and so she should see not death, but life; not the shame and utmost weakness of mortals, but the *glory of*

sometimes used? What cave did Abraham use for a burial-place? How were these caves fitted up? In what manner were the bodies placed in these vaults? Were the bodies confined? What was the use of the stone?

39, 40. Why did Martha object to the removing of the stone? Show that Lazarus could have been dead four days since the message was sent to Jesus. What do you suppose our Lord intended by these words? What effect did they probably have upon Martha's faith? What do *heard* and *nearest* mean?

41. Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

42. And I know that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

43. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

*God. . . . 41. I thank thee that thou hast heard me*—Referring to prayers offered in Perea before starting, or during the journey to Bethany. . . . *42. Thou hearest me always*—The general statement of the same truth: the eternal and effectual mediation of our great High Priest. *But because of the people*—This is a thanksgiving prayer, which may properly have reference in part to the effect upon the hearers. *That they may believe*—Answered prayer is an argument for the being, providence and love of God. “In the *filial relation* of the Lord Jesus to the Father, all power is given to him—the Son can do nothing of himself—and during his humiliation on earth, these acts of power were done by him not by that glory of his own which he had laid aside, but by the mighty working of the Father *in him*, and in answer to his prayer.”—ALFORD. . . . *43. Lazarus, come forth*—The animating power seems to have gone forth with the voice of Jesus. John v. 28, 29. “It is the Lord’s descending *with a shout*, 1 Thess. iv. 16, which is followed by the resurrection of the dead in Christ. Nor probably is the *last trump* of 1 Cor. xv. 52 anything else but this voice of God, which shall sound through all the kingdom of death.”—TRENCH. THOLUCK thinks that the moment of awakening was earlier, and that the call only affected the coming forth of him who had already been

41, 42. What sweet hope do we have from the fact that the Father always hears Jesus our Mediator? How does answered prayer strengthen faith? How does our thankfulness for mercies affect those who hear our thanksgivings?

43, 44. Had Lazarus been awakened before this? Why did Jesus cry with a *loud voice*? What caused the dead body to come to life? What does this prove as to Christ’s nature and power? What were these grave-clothes? What the napkin? How does this fact about the napkin prove

44. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

45. Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.

46. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.

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restored to life, as indicated vs. 41. . . . 44. *Graveclothes*—The bandages used in applying the spices and sweet ointments with which the wealthier Jews anointed their dead. In the Egyptian mummies the trappings enclose each limb separately; among the Jews they were not so elaborate, but if put on in the same manner, they would have left the limbs partly free. Thus Lazarus was enabled to rise out of the recess and leave the vault without help. The statement that the napkin was bound about the face certainly precludes any doubt as to the actual death of the man. *Loose him*—The consternation, the mingled feelings of fear and joy, which the appearing of the dead awakened, paralyzed the spectators so that they withheld the needed help. The voice of Jesus arouses them to their duty. . . . 45, 46. The evangelist passes in silence the scene which must have followed—the joy of the sisters, the congratulations of friends, the eager questions as to the secrets of those four days, and, we may believe, their grateful adorations of the Lord. Tradition has been busy to fill the blank with imaginations such as the following: The first question which Lazarus asked Jesus after he was come back from the grave was, whether he should have to die again; and learning that it must needs be so, he never smiled any more. The effects of the miracle upon the spectators are, however, given; we see the mercies of God and the means of grace mark-

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that Lazarus was really dead? What became of the coffin? How could he rise when his feet and hands were bound? How do you imagine Lazarus acted after his release? How his sisters? How the people?

45, 46. What effect did the raising of Lazarus have upon the Jews present? What is meant by *believed on him*? Why did this act cause them to believe? Who were these *Pharisees* to whom others went? Why did they do this? Why were not they too persuaded of Christ's true character? Show that the same two classes of persons are now to be found among those who hear the words of Jesus. To which class do you belong?

ing out the same two classes into which the world has ever been divided over the name and truth of Jesus—the one received the truth, and the truth made them free; the other “would not be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”

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## ANALYSIS.

### I. The Tears of Jesus.

*Facts.*—Jesus, moved by sympathy with the sorrow about him, weeps as he goes toward the grave. The company utter some friendly, others unfriendly, comments upon his grief. vs. 33–37.

*Thoughts.*—Sweet thought! “We have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities.” . . . *Jesus wept!*—And the same heart whose deep sympathy evoked those tears yearns to-day and ever over the sorrowing, everywhere. . . . If the tears of Jesus could restrain men to say, *Behold how he loved!* how much more should men believe and wonder at Christ’s love in view of the Passion of the Cross! . . . If the heart of Christ was stirred over the woes of that little circle, how deep beyond fathom must be the yearnings of sympathy which move that heart over the sorrows of this great, sad world! . . . O Lord Jesus, who didst mingle thy tears with those of Mary and Martha, teach me to “weep with them that weep!” . . . He who tasted the bitterness of tears upon earth is He who shall wipe all tears from our eyes in heaven. . . . And even the tears of Jesus excite the scoffers’ sneers.

### II. Christ at the Grave-side.

*Facts.*—Jesus orders the stone from the door of the vault. Martha objects; Jesus encourages her faith, and offers an audible prayer of thanksgiving and supplication. vs. 38–42.

*Thoughts.*—How often Jesus stands at the grave with the bereaved, promising consolation which the sorrowing heart rejects, even as Martha opposed the word of Christ! . . . And to such comes the gentle rebuke of the blessed Lord, saying, *If thou wouldst believe!* Yes, it is faith’s hand alone that can take from

Jesus the healing balm. . . . When Christ opens up the grave where our sorrows lie, it is only to send into it his own sweet solaces. Then, O my soul, open thou thy wounds, that the good Physician may pour in the oil of joy! . . . There is but one sure source of comfort in view of a loved one's death—unflinching trust in Jesus. . . . Lord, help me to stand by the short mounds of my little babes, over which the spring verdure is creeping and the spring blossoms are opening, and utter my Saviour's eucharist: *Father, I thank thee!* I do thank thee, Lord, for the sweetness which their brief lives breathed upon my soul; for the comfort which thou didst send to my anguish; for the better knowledge of the power of my faith to soothe the hours of grief; for the hope that in the resurrection I shall see thy glory in the reawakening of mine and of me.

### III. The Voice of God.

*Facts.*—At the voice of Jesus, Lazarus comes forth in his graveclothes, which are unbound at Christ's command.

*Thoughts.*—O Christ, with the heart of man and the power of God, perfect in thy humanity and perfect in thy divinity, we adore thee as God, blessed for ever! . . . "The hour is coming when all that are in their graves shall hear his voice." Lord, prepare me to lie down in the grave in the good hope of that hour. . . . The voice of Christ alone can give the life of regeneration to the soul dead in sin. But the kindly offices of ministers and teachers and friends may loose the soul from the encumbrances of human tradition and prejudice and ignorance which so often enwrap it. Teacher, trust and look to "Jesus only" to awaken new life in your scholars' souls; do thou diligently prune and train that life into spiritual beauty. . . . Sweet Rose of Sharon! thy fragrance purifies even the putrefaction of the grave. . . . And after the days of waiting in grief came that hour of joy.

"Yet so it is: for duly there  
The bitter herbs of earth are set,  
Till, tempered by the Saviour's prayer,  
And with the Saviour's life-blood wet,



They turn to sweetness, and drop holy calm,  
Soft as imprisoned martyr's deathbed calm."

KEBLE'S *Christian Year*.

#### IV. The Effects of the Miracle upon the Spectators.

*Facts*.—Some of the Jews believed in Christ, others hastened to the rulers to report against him. vs. 45, 46.

"Oh shame, beyond the bitterest thought  
That evil spirit ever framed,  
That sinners know what Jesus wrought,  
Yet feel their haughty hearts untamed."

KEBLE.

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#### SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

**GOLDEN TEXT**.—"Said I not unto thee that if thou wouldst believe thou shouldst see the glory of God?" v. 40. **THEMES**.—*For Thought*: The divine human nature of Jesus Christ. Or, the glory of the resurrection life. *For Prayer*: O Christ, with the heart of man and the voice of God, perfect in thy humanity and perfect in thy divinity, we adore **THEE** as **GOD**, blessed for ever! *For Practical Life*: Has my knowledge of Christ's saving power led me to belief or unbelief? . . . **CATECHISM**.—Q. 21, or Q. 38. [Suggested by the change in the condition of Lazarus.] What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection? **A**. At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.

## LESSON XXV.

### ENTERING THE STRAIT GATE.

Luke xiii. 22-30.

#### HISTORICAL CONNECTION.

The resurrection of Lazarus so impressed the community that the great Council was hastily convened in order to take measures that might prevent the entire populace from believing on Jesus. This meeting is known as the Council of Caiaphas, who was at that time high priest, and whose advice that Jesus should be slain in order to save the nation was accepted, and the death of the Nazarene decreed. Jesus hearing of this withdrew from Jerusalem to Ephraim, a village lying "near to" or on the borders of the wilderness on the west of the Dead Sea and the Valley of Jordan. The place was about eighteen English miles N. N. E. of Jerusalem and five English miles N. E. of Bethel. It occupied a lofty site that commanded a view of the adjacent desert, the Jordan valley and the highlands of Perea beyond. From this point our Lord seems to have made various excursions into the surrounding regions for the purpose of instructing the people. The healing of the "woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years," Luke xiii. 10-21, was during one of these journeys. So, also, was the incident given in the following lesson, as well as several others of those which follow, all peculiar to Luke's Gospel, and embodying some of the most remarkable and delightful of our Lord's instructions. That Jesus was now travelling in Perea, leisurely journeying toward Jerusalem to the Last Passover, appears from the reference to King Herod, vs. 31-33, to whose dominions this section of Perea belonged. The winter or rainy season was probably over, and the time for the Passover, which occurred in the spring, was near. It is quite natural that Jesus in going to Jerusalem should have taken the round-about road from Ephraim through Perea, and by the Jericho road, as he had taught in those regions and had friends and disciples there.

## NOTES.

22. And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem.

23. Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them,

**22, 23.** *He went through the cities and villages*—According to vs. 31, this journey was through the dominions of Herod, doubtless Perea, in which Jesus had been staying before the raising of Lazarus. *Teaching and journeying*—A happy combination; it would be well if Christian ministers and men in their travels would not so generally fail to be, in quiet ways, teachers also. *Then said one*—There is nothing to show that the motives of the questioner were anything but sincere, and we should therefore adjudge him to be an honest inquirer. *Are there few that be saved?*—Is the number of those now being saved small? The question seems to have been called out by the foregoing parables, as though the inquirer reasoned thus: If the kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which finally leavens the *whole lump*, or like the mustard seed, which becomes a great tree, then is it true, as is usually said, that the saved are *few*? Or thus, these parables promise salvation in the *future* for very many, but how is it *now*? are few being saved? The substance of this question has been a matter of theological controversy in nearly every age of the Church. *And he said unto them*—The lesson should be studied by the Sunday-school teacher as a model of our Lord's conversational teachings. The rare tact with which the question is fairly answered, and yet diverted from the abstract and theo-

22. What effect did the raising of Lazarus have upon the community? What upon the rulers? See John xi. 47, 48. What did the Council decree? John xi. 53. What did Jesus now do? Where is Ephraim? Did Jesus keep close within Ephraim? See Luke xiii. 31-33. Why did he make preaching tours into Perea? Where did the incident given in this lesson happen? Trace the probable route of Jesus on the map. Why was Jesus now going up to Jerusalem? What lesson may Christians when upon their journeys learn from this custom of our Lord?

23. What was this person's motive in pushing this question? What had probably suggested it? [The parables vs. 18-21.] How would these suggest such a question?

24. Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

logical to the practical and personal, is a gift for which all may supplicate, and in which all may imitate the great Teacher. . . .

24. *Strive (agonize)*—A term borrowed from the combatants in the Olympian games. Strain every nerve; first, to reach the gate; second, to pass through it. *To enter in*—To the kingdom, the state of salvation. The soul is naturally outside the kingdom; entrance is something *to be achieved*, not something to which one is born, or which happens to or is thrust upon one. *The strait gate*—The narrow, “straitened” gate. The more public gateways of Eastern towns were of goodly size, and often built with much show of architecture. But private and secret gates were quite narrow. “I have seen these strait gates and narrow ways ‘with here and there a traveller.’ They are in retired corners, and must be sought for, and are opened only to those who knock; and when the sun goes down and the night comes on they are shut and locked.”—THOMSON’S *Land and Book*. At Matt. vii. 13 the same figure is used, but the contrast is brought out by the “wide gate” and “broad way.” The strait gate through which the soul enters the kingdom is “repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.” *For I say unto you*—My authoritative answer to your question is as follows: *Many will seek to enter in*—In reading put the emphasis upon the words *strait gate*, and supply, after *enter*, the words *the kingdom*; many will seek to enter [the kingdom by other ways than the strait gate]. *And shall not be able*—Because there is but one way of entrance. So ALFORD and others explain this verse. But v. 25 seems to show a reference to time rather than to place. The sense would then be seek to *enter in*;

24. Why did not Jesus give a direct answer to the question? Why did he make his answer *personal*? What influence could knowledge which the man sought have had upon *his own* salvation? What is the *sure way* for us *all* to be saved? What is the force of the word *strive*? What duty does this teach us? Is salvation easy for us to attain? Why? What does *strait* mean? What is meant by the *gate*? What is the *gate* through which we enter the kingdom of God? See Acts xx. 21; John x. 9. Why is this called a *strait* or narrow gate? What makes it *strait*? What is the *wide gate*? How does Jesus answer this question? Matt. vii. 13, 14.

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, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence you are:

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now, while the gate is open and persons can enter, do not dally, do not tarry, but press through. For the time will come when many shall seek with all their strength to enter, but shall not be able, because the door is shut. The text is thus an urgent command to immediate faith in Christ and a warning of the fatal consequences of delay. . . . 25. *When once the Master*—The figure is somewhat changed; the Lord details the scenes of the judgment, the time at which the fact asserted in vs. 24 shall come to light, under the parable of a householder awaiting the arrival of family and guests to a feast, or to the night-shelter and rest of his home. The Master of the house is Christ himself. *And hath shut to the door*—This is the office of Christ alone; as only he can admit to, so only he can bar out from the kingdom, the souls of men. Rev. iii. 7. The passage fully shows that there is a point at which the period of probation ends: the door of opportunity is shut against the sinner, and salvation is impossible. To many, doubtless, this period comes during life; to all it comes at death. *Ye begin*, etc.—While the door was open there was utter indifference, but when it was closed the squandered privilege was sought to be regained. How true the picture to the ways of many who waste life and its opportunities, and when the door of death swings upon its hinges to shut them out from these, send for the minister and show interest in their salvation! “Observe the striking climax: first, standing some time without, then knocking, then calling, finally reminding of former acquaintance.”—OESTERZEE. *Lord, Lord, open unto us!*—Touching prayer, but vain! And if these agonizing appeals be vain, what hope have they who fondly trust to reach the ear of Christ

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Is this true of all the race or only of adults? Why shall these *many* not be able to enter the gate? How many ways are there into the kingdom of heaven? Is that way open to us now? What ought we *now* to do?

25. Who is meant by the *Master of the house*? Explain the *figures* here used. What is meant by the shutting of the door? Who alone can shut the door of heaven against us? Rev. iii. 7. Who are those who *stand with-*

26. Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.

27. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence you are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

in behalf of their beloved dead? *He shall answer*—But not in the old-time words of loving welcome: Come unto me. *I know you not, whence you are*—Ye are strangers to me, not members of my family, not entitled to claim my hospitality. These words “describe the severance, in point of nature, between the Lord and these pretended members of the household, their living in the old natural state, their unregenerate condition.”—OLSHAUSEN. . . . 26. *We have eaten and drunk in thy presence*—This plea is that of those who have had the most intimate external relations with Christ and his Church; they have had the *place*, the *name* and the social *privileges* without the holy relation and mutual love of friends of Jesus. Like the Pharisees, they depended upon their *outward relations alone*; they had not been reconciled to God and made friends through Christ, and thus had no place in God’s kingdom. *Thou hast taught in our streets*—They plead their knowledge of Christ’s truth as received even from his own lips. So, many will plead their orthodoxy, their Bible knowledge, their understanding of the scheme of salvation, as a ground of final acceptance. So, many do now plead; let such learn now the value of their trust when tested by the last judgment. . . . 27. *But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not*—This emphatic repetition, in the very face of such pleas, strips off the rags of human righteousness and leaves the soul naked of excuse. Nay, such arguments were only proofs of their guilt and justification of their doom. With the most distinguished privileges for knowing Jesus, they had yet remained spiritually ignorant of him; with the full light of Christ’s teach-

out knocking at the door? What reason does the Master give for not letting them in? What is meant by *I know you not*? Will Jesus know his own little lambs when they come to the door? See John x. 14.

26, 27. What does this figure, “eaten and drunk in thy presence,” imply? Show that *we* have enjoyed such privileges. How has Jesus “taught in our streets?” Have *you* ever heard him? Is our simple knowledge of the Bible truth, of the catechism, etc., enough to save us? What

28. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.

29. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.

ings shining upon mind and conscience, they had failed to do their duty. Out of their own mouths the Lord judges them. *Depart from me*—This doom simply confirms the sinner's choice: he who elects separation from Christ shall be left for ever separate; he who scorns his friendship shall be for ever cut off from the number of his friends. *All ye workers of iniquity*—Yet the sins specified are only *neglect* and *procrastination* and *self-righteousness*. Only? Alas! he who refuses the life of God through faith in Christ has committed the damning sin. "He that believeth not is condemned already, *because he has not believed.*" John iii. 18. That is enough; "Except a man be *born again*, he cannot see the kingdom of God." . . . 28. *There shall be weeping, etc.*—The special reference is to the Jews, and therefore the patriarchs and prophets are brought forward as representatives of the righteous and accepted. But the contrast contained in *you, yourselves*, refers to the reliance of the Jews upon their natural descent from the patriarchs as a true claim to the kingdom. Yet they were *thrust out*; neither patriarchal nor apostolic succession goes for aught before Him who is no respecter of persons. The Jews put such full trust in their relation to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that it must have had peculiar bitterness to them to be told that they were to be separated for ever from these worthies. . . . 29, 30. *And they shall come*—Not

more are we to have? What is a "saving knowledge" of Jesus Christ? What had these "workers of iniquity" been guilty of? [Neglect, procrastination, self-righteousness.]

28. How did the Jews regard their descent from Abraham and the other patriarchs? How would they regard being separated for ever from there? On what grounds did the patriarchs inherit the kingdom? See Heb. xi. 13. Can we depend upon our godly friends and surroundings for salvation? Why not?

29. Of whom will the kingdom of God be made up? How shall they all enter in? What should this teach us concerning other Christian denominations? What concerning other nations and races?

30. And, behold, there are last which shall be first; and there are first which shall be last.

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only Jews, but Gentiles; not Judea only, but the four corners of the earth, shall pour out their peoples to swell the number of them who shall be saved. But all must come through the one strait gate. *There are last which shall be first*—Referring in particular to the Gentiles as contrasted with the Jews. But it is a truth universally applicable; many who are last to receive, and who receive least of God's gracious influences, are first to accept salvation and highest in the attainments of Christian life. Here is encouragement for those who have fewest of the means of grace, and warning for those who have most.

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#### ANALYSIS.

##### I. Striving at the Gate.

*Facts.*—Jesus while journeying through Perea is asked: Are there few that be saved? He replies by bidding the questioner himself to strive after salvation, lest he be among those who fail to obtain it.

*Thoughts.*—The Lord urges the soul to turn from speculation upon the theories of salvation to striving after a personal interest in Christ himself. . . . The saving of the soul is a work which demands the utmost effort on the part of all. . . . *Now* is the only safe time; they who neglect or put off salvation may lose their souls. . . . "Looking upon Evangelist very carefully, Christian said: 'Whither must I fly?' Then said Evangelist, pointing with his finger over a very wide field, 'Do you see yonder WICKET GATE?' Matt. vii. 13, 14. The man said, 'No.' Then said the other, 'Do you see yonder shining light?'

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30. In what sense were the Jews *first*? In what the Gentiles *last*? Why did the Jews with their great privileges fail of heaven? Show that the same thing is true among us to-day. What will follow if we depend for final salvation upon *our* privileges? What will these privileges do for us if we fail to use them for the saving of our souls? Luke x. 13-16.



Ps. cxix. 105 ; 2 Pet. i. 19. He said, 'I think I do.' Then said Evangelist, 'Keep that light in your eye, and go up directly thereto, so shalt thou see the gate; at which when thou knockest it shall be told thee what thou shalt do.' So I saw in my dream that the man began to run. Now he had not run far from his own door when his wife and children, perceiving it, began to cry after him to return; but the man put his fingers in his ears and ran on crying, 'Life! life! eternal life!'—BUNYAN'S *Pilgrim's Progress*.

## II. Standing without the Gate.

*Facts.*—Jesus describes the fruitless efforts of those who are without the kingdom to enter when the door is once shut; their vain claims to a place within, and their hopeless sorrow, thus thrust out from the good.

*Thoughts.*—The Spirit of God will not always strive with man: one day, to every soul, the *door will be shut*. . . . The doom declared is doom for ever sealed; when once thrust out the soul is separate for ever from God. . . . The soul will be judged not by what it has seemed to be, but by what it is. Nothing but a *vital union with Christ* will avail for salvation. . . . The soul shall be sent from Christ because it voluntarily separated itself from Christ. *Unbelief is damning sin*.

## III. The Great Gathering within the Gate.

*Facts.*—Jesus describes the gathering of the saints from all quarters of the earth into the kingdom.

*Thoughts.*—"There are last which shall be first;" the humblest souls if faithful may have the highest place; those who have had the fewest opportunities the greatest honours. Therefore look lovingly upon the lowliest of God's saints. . . . If we consider that the souls of infants dying in infancy are chosen unto life through the redemption that is in Christ, we may answer the question: *Are there few that be saved?* with a joyful, thankful, NAY! It is a great multitude that no man can number. The majority of the human family shall be there at the gathering of the nations.

## SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"Strive to enter in at the strait gate." vs. 24.  
**THEMES.**—*For Thought:* The importance of immediate, earnest effort after salvation. *For Prayer:* Lord Jesus, incline my heart to receive THEE now, that THOU mayest give me a place in thy kingdom at last! *For Practical Life:* As to *opportunities*, I have been "first;" where do I stand as to *improvement*? Where *shall* I stand as to eternal blessings? . . . **CATECHISM.**—Q. 85. What doth God require of us that we may escape his wrath and curse due to us for sin? A. To escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin, God requireth of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption.



POOL OF SILOAM.

See p. 199.

LESSON XXVI.  
CHOOSING THE LOWEST ROOMS.

Luke xiv. 1-14.

NOTES.

1. And it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath day, that they watched him.

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1. *It came to pass*—Jesus was still journeying leisurely through Perea toward Jerusalem. *Chief of the Pharisees*—One chief in influence; and it may be a ruler in the synagogue, or even a member of the Sanhedrim. *To eat bread*—By invitation, vs. 12; and there were other invited guests, vs. 7. It was not lawful to light a fire upon the Sabbath, and the food for the day was prepared the day before. The meal was therefore probably not one of great formality. The incident shows that the Jews at that time were not averse to Sabbath entertainments. Our Lord, as a stranger, was dependent upon the hospitality of others, and in this case consented to sit with the hostile Pharisees with the same regard for their good which led him to eat with publicans. It was his habit to accept such invitations that he might mingle freely with all classes of the people. *They watched him*—The Pharisees, the host and his guests. They were on the lookout for some word or act upon which they might accuse or condemn him. It was base conduct thus to cover treachery under the guise of hospitality. This fact alone relieves Jesus from any seeming breach of courtesy in his subsequent reproofs of host and fellow-guests. . . . 2. *A certain man which had the dropsy*—The common view of expositors is that the man was purposely introduced as an occasion for offence on the part of Christ. The

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1. Where was Jesus still journeying? What is meant by a *chief* Pharisee? Did Jesus go without invitation? v. 12. How did our Lord usually get his meals when travelling? What was he "watched" for? What had this watching to do with his invitation? What think you of such a use of hospitality?

2. What is the dropsy? Why was the man there? Show how he could

2. And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy.

3. And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?

4. And they held their peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go;

narrative, especially at vs. 4, implies that this person was inside the house. *Before him*—For the probable location of Christ at the meal, and the relative position of the sick man, see on vs. 7. . . . 3, 4. *Jesus answering*—He knew their scheme to entrap him. *Unto the lawyers and Pharisees*—For the diseased man had no part in their purpose, but came with honest wish to receive help from Jesus, which the Pharisees encouraged without showing their own design. Any other view would suppose a healing without that foregoing desire and faith which Jesus habitually required, and, indeed, in the face of positive unbelief and hostility of aggravated meanness. Common charity—in the absence of any statement—requires that we acquit this man of the guilt of giving himself to a conspiracy to destroy a benefactor by the very act of beneficence which made him a sound and happy man. *Is it lawful?*—An adroit question, for if they should answer *yes*, they condemned themselves and approved Christ; if *no*, they again were open to the charge of rejecting MERCY, the weightier matter of the Law, and if, as they chose to do, they should *hold their peace*, they gave tacit sanction, and lost the advantage of having opposed or discouraged Jesus. So Christ confounds his adversaries. *He took him*—Laid hold upon him; as usual (though not always) in cases of healing, his body was made to touch the diseased person. *Healed him*—The fact that he had been an unwitting tool in the hands of the Pharisees does not shut him out from Christ's pity. *Let him go*—He had come at the bidding of the Pharisees, but goes at the bidding of

be before Jesus while at the table. Did the man have any share in the plan to entrap Jesus? Why?

3, 4. Why did Jesus put this question to the lawyers and Pharisees? Why would they not say *no*? Why not say *yes*? How did their silence prevent them from making an ill use of Christ's act of healing? Did this man have *faith* in Christ's power to heal him?

5. And answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath day?

6. And they could not answer him again to these things.

7. And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden,

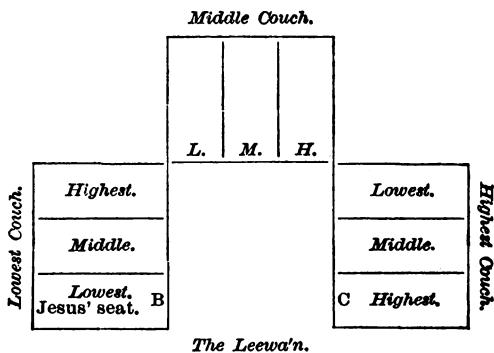
Jesus. The true Master is seen and obeyed. The difference between the motives, the plans and the conduct of tricking ecclesiastics and genuine followers of Christ, toward the unfortunate, is finely illustrated here. In the hands of one they are but tools for working out personal and often unholy aims; in the hands of the other they are the objects of genuine love, and the recipients of substantial and permanent weal. . . . 5, 6. *Which of you*—A personal application. *Will not straightway pull him out*—An argument from the less to the greater. How much better is a man than an ox! How much greater benefit to deliver a man from a fatal disease than an ass from a dangerous fall! *They could not answer*—But sullenly refuse to approve. Surely, the lawyers fell into the very pit which they had digged for the Lord. . . . 7. *To those which were bidden*—He had been invited ostensibly because he was a great Teacher; it was, therefore, no breach of decorum in him to take his own and his recognized character. *When he marked*—They malignantly watched to betray him: Jesus marked them with kindly desire to better their lives. *How they chose out the chief rooms*—This choice was not only exercised among themselves, but probably with reference to Christ, who it may be was purposely placed in the lowest seat. The Greek word *emprosthen, before him*, v. 2, seems, in connection with the common table customs of that period, to imply as much. The following diagram brings out this point, and illustrates the custom as to chief rooms. The

5, 6. Why did our Lord speak this parable? Why would such an act toward a dumb beast be *right* upon the Sabbath? Which is of the most value, an *ox* or a *man*? Did these people seem to think so? Show the difference between the Pharisees' treatment of the man and Christ's. What was the reason they could make no answer to our Lord's question?

7. For what reason had Jesus been invited? Was he *expected* to teach his peculiar views? Was it proper for him to instruct and reprove them? What is meant by choosing the chief rooms? Explain the Jews' arrange

when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them,

frequent if not common eating-room was the raised part of the ground-floor, which the Egyptians called *leewa'n*. The Roman *triclinium*, or three-couch table, was used, the opening being toward the (*durka''ah*) depressed part of the floor, from which the servants entered, leaving their shoes before stepping upon the *daïs*. Up to this line, also, strangers and casual callers, neighbours, beggars and others might come. It was at this point, just opposite and in sight of Jesus, that the dropsical man was stationed, at A; Jesus being in the lowest seat, at B, reclining on his left arm, would thus have this man just before him; any other location would not answer the supposition (and it is only conjecture) so well as this. And this is in agreement with the character and office-work of Christ, as well as with his relations to the Pharisees:



*The Beggar. A The Durka''ah.*

The places of honour can easily be seen from this diagram.

ment of seats at table. Show the highest seat; the lowest. Where was Jesus probably seated? What seat ought he have been in? Why? Do you think that he crowded for a high seat? Would the Pharisees scruple to crowd above him? Make a drawing of the three-couched tables in use, and show where Jesus probably sat; where the beggar stood.

8. When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him;

9. And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room.

10. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee.

Also, that Jesus reclining upon the left arm, on the lowest seat of the lowest or least honourable couch, would be face to face, and in easy reach of the dropsical man, who looked on from the lower floor. Had Jesus been in the highest seat, C, just opposite, he would also have been near the edge of the *leewa'n*, but would have reclined with his face away from the position in which custom would have put the sick person. It would have been quite in accord with prevailing etiquette had Jesus called the man upon the *daïs*, and having healed him, "let him go" back to the *durka'ah*. . . . 8, 9. *To a wedding*—A courteous diversion from their present conduct. *Choose not*—Modern manners puts the whole work of seating guests upon the host. That some liberty was left to guests among the Jews appears from v. 10, but the host afterward adjusted positions. *The highest room*—The first couch or the highest unoccupied couch. *More honourable*—In station. *Thou begin with shame*—"To be last is not disgraceful, except to the ambitious. He who is once bidden to give place is put far away."—BENGEL. *The lowest room*—Not lower, but the very lowest, for all others are full. . . . 10, 11. *Go and sit down in the lowest room*—Not from mock humility, which is the meanest of all manifestations of

8, 9. Why did Jesus say a *wedding* instead of a *dinner*? What reason for avoiding the highest seat? How does this apply to our daily social and business life? Why would this person have to take "the *lowest room*?"

10. What reason is given for going of choice into the lowest room at first? Is it right to do this *just for the sake of being sent higher*? How can we carry out this rule in the home circle? in school? in society? in the church? Why should children especially learn this rule of action? What do people think of the children who are always claiming the *best*

11. For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

12. Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee.

13. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor and maimed, the lame, the blind :

pride. It is not taught here that the *desire to have worship* is a proper and sufficient motive for such conduct, but that one's *habit* should be to prefer the humblest rather than the highest station, and at least wholly to refrain from asserting for one's self a place above others. It is, however, taught that the preservation of one's self-respect and of the good opinion of others is a duty. And in order to this it is shown to be most prudent to withhold one's self from thrusting forward into positions where one's dignity is in danger of being wounded. So far as the parable bears upon spiritual things, the advice to take the lowest place is based upon the fitness of things: the lowest, the very lowest, belongs to the sinner rightfully. *Whosoever exalteth himself*—This is the general principle which should guide our conduct toward our neighbours, and most certainly toward God. It is the Lord's promise of heavenly promotion to the voluntarily lowly. . . . **12, 13.** *To him that bade him*—The invited Teacher uses his divine discretion in giving suitable and timely instruction. The motives which moved the host to gather this company were not commendable. The poor dropsical man was asked to be present as a decoy; Jesus, that he might be ensnared; the

place, and the best share in everything? How do they break this rule? What do people think of those who are ready to give up, to take any useful part in the work, to oblige others even at expense of their own comfort?

11. What is it to exalt one's self? What to be abased? What to humble one's self? What place should we all take before God? How does the Almighty look upon spiritual pride? Why should we humble ourselves before the Lord?

12, 13. Why do our homes belong to Jesus? For what end are we to use our hospitality? How may it be used to feed and gratify our pride? Why have the poor also a right to our hospitality? Does this advice pre-



14. And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

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others, it may be, to be sharers in the plan and its triumph. Thus the host was open at this point to the instruction and rebuke of Jesus. *Call not thy friends*—The *principle* of this charge is, that hospitality is not to be made a mere matter of selfish bargain and sale, nor a means of ministering to pride. It is to spring from a benevolent heart, is to be exercised unselfishly, and its chief objects are to be those who are most in need of human sympathy and care. The rule is of course not to be held to literally, so as to prevent all social interchanges among friends and kinsmen, but the *principle* involved is binding; the ability to extend the graces of hospitality brings obligations to a far wider circle than the narrow one of relatives and personal friends. . . . 14. *Thou shalt be blessed, for they cannot recompense thee*—That is noble benevolence which bestows not with selfish reference to a return in kind, but which rises toward the standpoint of divine beneficence, which gives out of pure love, needing not and asking not repayment. *Yet thou shalt be recompensed*, nevertheless! And the recompense is in this: that the hand of God himself, not your poor beneficiaries', shall repay, and his recompense shall be great above that of men, as he is great above man. *At the resurrection of the just*—The first resurrection of which the dead saints shall be partakers. See Rev. xx. 4-6; 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17; 1 Cor. xv. 23, 24.

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#### ANALYSIS.

#### I. Sabbath Day Work.

*Facts.*—Jesus on a Sabbath eats bread with one of the chief

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vent social interchanges between kinsmen and friends? What is the *principle* here taught? How can we apply this principle to our Sunday-school homes? What shall we think of those scholars who look unkindly on the poor or ill clad in their class?

14. What is it to be *blessed*? The meaning of recompense? Why is it more blessed to give than to receive? When our social favours are given just to get a return in kind, who shall recompense us? But when given from pure love and compassion, who shall recompense us? Who are the *just*? Where shall the resurrection of the just be?

Pharisees, and during the meal cures a man afflicted with the dropsy. The guests object, and Jesus defends his act as one of mercy. vs. 1-6.

*Thoughts.*—Watchful eyes are fixed upon the Christian who walks in the social ways of the wicked; malicious hands spread nets for his feet, and bad hearts wait to rejoice in his fall. Let him take with him to such scenes—if he needs must be there—the holy Presence whose eyes are in every place beholding the evil and the good, and all will be well. . . . See what depths of meanness, what violation of all the amenities of life, is wrought in the heart by hatred to Christ. . . . Let the poor and the suffering beware of those in high places who seek to array them in opposition to Jesus, their only efficient Helper and Friend. See NOTES at vs. 4. . . . The lawful works of the Sabbath are those which unburden the human body of pain and draw the heart nearer to the Saviour of all. . . . “The merciful man is merciful to his beast.” The Master approves and encourages kindness done to his dumb creatures. How many children thoughtlessly offend in this thing! . . . And the Pharisees are not the only rulers who have thought far more of saving horses and cattle and other property than of saving the bodies and souls of men. Let it be the glory of our nation that MEN are of greater worth in our eyes than any material good. . . . The discriminating love of Jesus delivers the poor man from his pain, and thus, with the very instrument meant to confuse him, confounds and silences his foes. When bad men mislead their unfortunate fellows, and set them to oppose us or our faith, let us like the dear Master repel their attack by *doing good* to their misguided tools.

## II. Modesty—Choosing Chief Rooms.

*Facts.*—Jesus reproves the guests for their struggles after the most honourable seats by a parable which teaches modesty and humility.

*Thoughts.*—He who, though equal with God, took the lowest places for us, marks all our selfish jostlings over others after higher places for ourselves. And does he not put forth this parable to us? . . . If one would be happy, let him be content to be

humble. The sorest aches are those which come from scrambling after highest seats. And then, the falls! "Take my yoke upon you and learn of ME, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Matt. xi. 29. . . . We have often, and perhaps justly, been charged with excess of national boasting, and with undue ambition for national aggrandizement. As a maxim of wisest state-craft we may also place this saying of our Lord: *Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased. . . . Exalteth himself*; but when the Lord lifteth up a man, still let him walk humbly, remembering that *promotion cometh from the Lord. . . . O soul, would you be raised to heavenly places in Christ Jesus? Then must thou sit in the dust, and, confessing thy utter unworth, hold fast to thy Saviour's hand. . . . "A great man never goes to heaven because he is great. He must go, as the meanest of his fellow-sinners go, with face toward Calvary."*—*The Gates Ajar*.

### III. Christian Hospitality.

*Facts.*—Jesus teaches the duty and privilege of extending to the poor and the unfortunate the comforts and graces of our own homes and social spheres.

*Thoughts.*—See NOTES.

## SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." vs. 11.  
 THEMES.—*For Thought*: The pleasing contrast between thoughtful modesty and social pride. *For Prayer*: Lord Jesus, help me to take thy yoke and learn of thee who art meek and of lowly spirit! *For Practical Life*: If I would reach a high position among my fellows, I must be content to sit and serve in the lowest room. . . . CATECHISM.—Q. 81. What is forbidden in the tenth commandment? A. The tenth commandment forbiddeth all discontentment with our own estate, envying or grieving at the good of our neighbour, and all inordinate motions and affections to anything that is his.

## MAPS OF THE JOURNEYINGS OF OUR LORD DURING THE LAST YEAR.

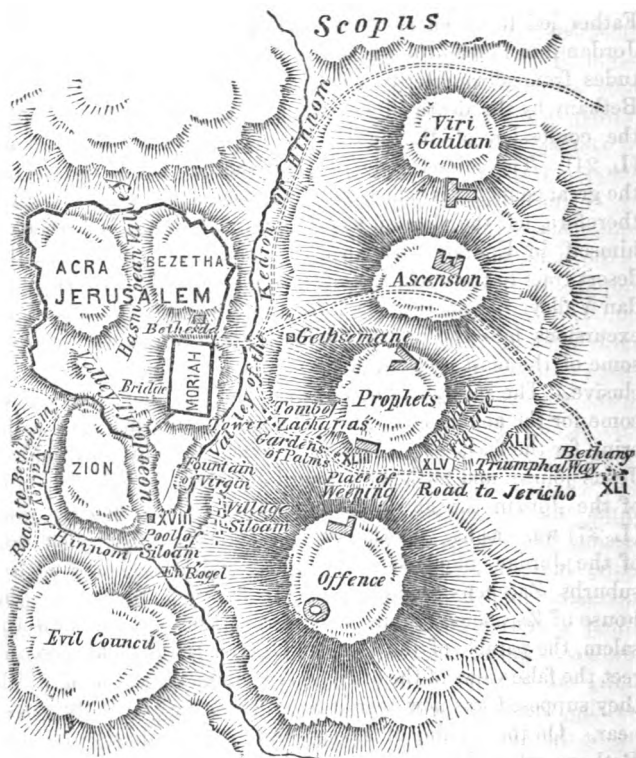
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The accompanying map is intended to assist the teacher in tracing the footsteps of Jesus and his disciples during that portion of the last year's ministry that is embraced in the Lessons of this volume. It will be seen at a glance that during this period the travels of the Master covered a wider extent of territory than during any other period of his life. Indeed, for the first and only time in his ministry, we follow Him outside the boundaries of his "own country."

The teacher will find it greatly to his own advantage not only, but also to the advantage of his pupils, to cultivate the habit of associating the history with the geography. A very little study and drill upon this map will enable him to lead his class in review through the lessons of the entire year, or any part of the year, recalling at each point the facts and teachings with which it is associated. A brief outline of such a review is given below. It will be understood that the numerals in the map refer to the corresponding numbers of lessons.

After the discourse in the synagogue [Appendix A] at Capernaum (John vi.), Jesus left the city, and turning to the north-west, climbed the hills of northern Galilee. In the solitudes of the border He sought the desired seclusion in a friendly hut. [Appendix B.] In this region was wrought the cure (L. 1) of the daughter of the Syro-phœnician woman. Passing around the bases of Mts. Lebanon and Hermon, through the Decapolis, He bivouacked upon the eastern hills of Lake Tiberias opposite Capernaum. Here (L. 2) He cured the deaf stammerer and (L. 3) fed the four thousand. Crossing the lake for supplies (?) in the region of Magdala and Dalmanutha (L. 4), He was met by the wrathful rulers, who demanded a sign from heaven. Recrossing, He rebuked His disciples (L. 4) for lack of faith. The

incident with the sign-seekers having indicated the still hostile disposition of his countrymen, He abode for a number of days in the dominion of Philip. Passing along the fertile Jordan valley, and across the rich table-land of the Jaulan, a week was spent in the beautiful region of Cæsarea Philippi. Here occurred the Rock-confession of Peter (L. 5), his rebuke (L. 6), the Transfiguration (L. 7), and the cure (L. 8) of the lunatic boy. Again the holy company put their faces toward Galilee. Crossing the Jordan below Lake Merom (?), they traversed secretly a portion of Galilee, and arriving in Capernaum, lodged at the house of Peter. Here the collectors of the temple dues found them, and (L. 9) the miracle of the Fish and Coin was wrought. At the same place were spoken the sweet words concerning the Greatest in the Kingdom (L. 10), growing out of the wayside argument, and also the parable (L. 11) of the Unforgiving Debtor. Thence, too (L. 12), the Seventy were sent out; not long afterward our Lord followed them, his face being toward Jerusalem and the Cross. In this journey, while passing through Samaria, the cure of the Ten Lepers (L. 13) probably occurred, as also the Saviour's Joy (L. 14) over the return of the Seventy—a lesson full of interest and significance to the *lay-workers* of the Sabbath-school and Church. The parable of the Good Samaritan (L. 15), I think, was also spoken in Samaria, or, at least, shortly after passing into Judea, during this journey. The question of the scribe that called it forth may readily have been suggested by the successful mission of the Seventy to the Samaritans, against which a Jewish doctor would very naturally protest. Others, however, suppose that our Lord, instead of taking the midway route, crossed the Jordan, and entered Jerusalem by way of Jericho, thus locating the parable upon the road over which He was at the time passing. However that may be, we next see the Master at the Bethany home of Mary and Martha (L. 15) discoursing of the One Thing Needful. Here the Lord's Prayer (L. 17) was again given. He had arrived at Jerusalem in time (September?) for the feast of Tabernacles. At this time occurred the incidents and teachings recorded John vii. 8, and the cure (John ix.) of the blind beggar at Siloam (L. 18), his casting out (L. 19) and conversion (L. 20). The parable of the Good



JERUSALEM AND VICINITY.

Shepherd (L. 21) followed. It was now the winter or rainy season (December), and we find our Lord at the Feast of Dedication (John x. 22, 23) teaching the people in Solomon's Porch. The strong claim which He put forth as to his Oneness with the Father led to an effort to arrest Him, at which He fled beyond Jordan into Perea (John x. 40), where He was visited by multitudes from all quarters. From this point He was recalled to Bethany by the death of Lazarus (L. 22), whom, after evoking the confession of Martha (L. 23), He raised from the dead (L. 24). This miracle only deepened the hostility of the rulers; the great council was called, and Jesus condemned to death. He, therefore, left the pleasant associations of Bethany, and secluded himself in Ephraim [Taiyibeh], a village near Bethel, in the desert tract to the north-east of Jerusalem, overlooking the Jordan Valley. From this place He appears to have made various excursions into the opposite hills of Perea, where were spoken some of the most precious of his words. See Lessons 25-36 inclusive. The spring had now opened, and the time (March) had come for the annual Passover. The paschal pilgrims were gathering for the feast. One of these caravans, from his own Galilee, Jesus joined, and pushed on toward Jerusalem. Near the fords of the Jordan the ambitious request of Salome and her sons (L. 37) was made. At the gate of Jericho, on the other side of the Jordan, blind Bartimeus was cured (L. 38), and in the suburbs Zaccheus the publican (L. 39) was called. In the house of Zaccheus, or during the ascent from Jericho to Jerusalem, the parable of the Ten Pounds (L. 40) was spoken, to correct the false views of the disciples concerning the kingdom, which they supposed was now near at hand, since the Holy City was so near. On the evening of Friday, March 19 (?), Jesus arrived at Bethany, where He quietly spent the Sabbath. After sundown of that day (the *following* day according to Jewish count) occurred the feast at Bethany (L. 41) and the anointing by Mary. The remaining incidents all occurred in JERUSALEM AND ITS VICINITY, and may be easily located upon the second map which accompanies this summary. See also the table of chronology on p. 421.



JOURNEYS OF OUR LORD DURING THE LAST YEAR OF HIS MINISTRY.



## LESSON XXVII.

### THE PARABLE OF THE WEDDING GARMENT, OR OF THE MARRIAGE OF THE KING'S SON.

*Matt. xxii. 14 ; Luke xiv. 15-24.*

The parable which our Lord uttered to his fellow-guests in the house of the chief Pharisee on choosing the lowest rooms (Less. 26) was followed by the remarkable words to his host concerning the duty of hospitality to the poor and unfortunate. And thence the conversation grew into the parable of the Great Supper, which, "in the fundamental idea that the kingdom of heaven is a festive meal," is similar to that which is given below. The comparison of the kingdom of heaven to a feast was one familiar to the Jews. Our Lord used it on several occasions. See Matt. viii. 11. The marriage feast was especially appropriate as a symbol, as being one of the most joyful and important of the festal celebrations of the Orientals. Besides, the very idea of marriage happily suggests the sweet, holy and enduring relations between Christ and the Church—an idea that is carried forward into the enjoyments of Paradise at "the Marriage Supper of the Lamb." Rev. xix. 9. See also Eph. v. 23-27. This parable is inserted here out of its order, instead of and in the order of the similar one in Luke, for the sake of the incident of the guest without the wedding garment. It was given during our Lord's last week at Jerusalem. The main difference between the two parables seems to be in the degrees of resistance to the invitations of the king. The invitation to the Great Supper is received with indifference and refused with some show of courtesy. Those bidden to the marriage of the king's son treated the invitation with entire contempt, and maltreated and slew the messengers. This difference marks the latter parable as belonging to the last days of our Lord's life, when the hostility of the Jews had reached

its climax. The better title of the parable is : The Marriage of the King's Son.

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NOTES.

1. And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, 2. The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, 3. And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding : and they would not come.

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1, 2. *The kingdom of heaven is like*—In its manner of dealing with the neglectful, the rebellious and the presumptuous. The reference is directly to the Pharisees, but a fixed principle of the Divine administration is developed. *Made a marriage for his son*—Original, *a marriage feast* ; the bridegroom conducted the bride and the procession of guests and friends to his own or his father's house, where a feast was prepared. The festivities sometimes continued seven and even fourteen days. Judg. xiv. 12. The King represents the Eternal Father : the Son, Jesus Christ ; the marriage, the spiritual relations existing between Christ, and his Bride, the Church ; the feast, the seasons of gracious invitation that are, or ought to be, times of great joy to the impenitent. . . . 3. *To call them that were bidden*—The guests were first notified of the intended wedding and invited to share in the festivities. Afterward, invitations to special meals were sent out. This was made necessary and proper by the fact that the merry-making extended through several days, so that each day's feast had its own separate guests. *They would not come*—They showed no violence to the messengers—simply refused to come. Where the wedding ceremonies were matters of such

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1. To whom did Jesus speak this parable? How did it apply to them?  
 2. Whom does this King represent? Whom the Son? What the marriage feast? Wherein is a marriage feast a fitting symbol of the Gospel gifts? 3. Whom do these servants represent? What are some of the ways in which the "call" is made? What is the difference between being "bidden" and being "called?" Why would not these people come? What

4. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come unto the

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great moment as with the Orientals, such a rude, unexplained refusal would be a serious discourtesy in any case. But such conduct on the part of subjects toward their King was a grave offence, little short of rebellion; for a king's request, directed to those more immediately about his person, on what was really a state occasion, had all the force of law. The *servants* of this verse are doubtless John Baptist, the Seventy and the Twelve in their earlier labors. . . . 4. *He sent forth other servants*—It is hardly required to suppose different persons from the above; the purpose seems to be to represent the great clemency of the King and the exaggerated crime of the invited. If the idea of greater official importance on the part of these last servants be inferred, we may still suppose them to be the Disciples and Apostles, only transferring the period of their labors to the time following the Crucifixion, when they went out with the new power of the Holy Ghost and the added authority of the accomplished Resurrection. Some expositors make the servants of vs. 3 refer to the Prophets, those of vs. 4 to the Apostles. *Tell them I have prepared*—That the fact may be made certain to them that all things are ready, and thus no excuse can obtain, the King courteously frames the message so as to imply no censure, but rather as if the former refusal were the result of misunderstanding as to the readiness of things. As they gave no reason for their refusal, he will take nothing on conjecture. Likewise the Eternal is considerate of us, when we are utterly careless of Him; He often overlooks our offences and extends the opportunity to undo them by obedience. *Fatlings*—As kids, lambs, calves. *My Dinner*—The blessings of the Gospel are the Lord's feast, prepared at infinite pains and

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made this so grave an offence? Was it the duty of these persons to come? Why?

4. What disposition did this second sending show on the part of the King? Whom do these servants probably represent? Why were they to take this message? What effect should it have had? In what does the readiness of the feast represent the Gospel? How may we obey the invitation:

marriage. 5. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: 6. And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. 7. And when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and

cost—prepared abundantly and completely. And the message which His servants are bidden to bring is: Come! come unto the marriage! The readiness of the blessings of pardon for the sinner is sufficient reason for offering and accepting it. . . . 5. *They made light of it*—Treated the matter as of no importance. So the message of Hezekiah was treated. 2 Chron. xxx. 10. *And went their ways*—Their ways, not the ways which their King required. *Farm, merchandise*—Representative pursuits, agriculture and commerce giving business to the great mass of men. It is lawful enough to go to daily work, ordinarily, but when the Lord bids us elsewhere, even though to a feast, our supposed industry is insolent indifference and open disobedience. . . . 6. *The remnant*—Those not engaged in farming or trading; idlers, who are always the most violent class of the wicked, as business occupies head and hands usefully. Or, the reference may be to the ecclesiastical class, the priests and Levites, who were usually more violent persecutors than men of business. Jesus here anticipates his own death and that of the Apostles and Christian Prophets. The terms *took, entreated spitefully, slew*, describe simply the progressive course of persecution; but they also may indicate the separate and common forms of persecution, viz.: arrest, insult and personal injury, death. . . . 7. *When the King heard*—No act of disloyalty escapes the notice of the King of Heaven. *He was wroth*—A righteous anger toward the incorrigible, God certainly entertains; He is long-suffering, slow to anger, but nevertheless *is angry* with the wicked. *He sent forth his armies*—The parable again anticipates the fate of

*Come unto the marriage?* 5. What is it to *make light of a matter?* Show how men deal in the same way now-a-days with God's message? Is it wrong to farm and trade? Why was it wrong at that time? 6. What sort of fellows composed this "remnant?" What class were represented by them? Why did they act thus? 7. Do any acts of rebellion escape God's notice? how does the parable show this? In what sense are "armies"

he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

8. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. 9. Go ye therefore into highways, and many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.

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Jerusalem, which was destroyed by the Roman troops after Christ's death. But its general application is this: that God will raise up and overrule human agencies for the destruction of his enemies. In this sense all armies, even of the wicked, are His, for they work his will. And urging and directing these are the invisible armies of the skies, the Angel-hosts. *Destroyed those murderers*—All are included in this capital charge and capital doom. For although only "the remnant" were directly concerned in the killing, yet the others, by their influence in originating, shaping and sustaining the spirit of rebellion, were equally responsible, and perhaps even more blameworthy. The tools of the cunning wicked are often the only victims of human justice, but the Lord's judgment is according to the heart and reaches all impartially. *Burned up their city*—The King disowns and destroys them and all theirs. So, always, the sinner imperils all associated with and dependent upon him. . . . 8. *They which were bidden*—At the first; the Jews, as contrasted with the Gentiles; the Pharisees and Rulers, as with the publicans, sinners and harlots. *Were not worthy*—The charge of unworth was based solely upon their rejection of Christ. . . . 9. *Highways*—The Greek word translated *highways* (diexodous) is used only here; and expositors are not agreed as to its application, whether to country roads or to city streets. The original seems to signify *ways leading through and out of the city*. The scene of the parable seems to be the city; and the fact of the destruction, recorded in v. 7, is no reason to suppose a change of locality, since that is plainly an anticipation, and we can hardly suppose the

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*God's armies?* Of what was this destruction prophetic? To whom does the term *murderers* apply? Show that it justly applies to those spoken of in vs. 3 and 5.

8. Who were those *which were bidden*? How did they show that they *were not worthy*? 9. What does this general and public invitation signify?

10. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.

11. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw

supper to be waiting while the armies wrought their work of destruction. The object is evidently to teach that a public and general invitation followed instead of the private biddings before given. Thus the rejection of the Gospel by the few is often overruled to secure its sending to the many. The crowds upon the main *thoroughfares* (thoroughways, the nearest English equivalent of the original) best symbolize that idea. Possibly, the word may also be meant to express those who were not residents of the city, but only passers *through* it, travelers and traffickers, going *out* of it after business-hours. The command to the servants is for all time; it opens the door of salvation to every people, and lays upon every Christian the duty of calling all men to Christ. . . . 10. *Those servants went out*—Would that God's servants were all as faithful in such work! *Gathered together*—For these persons would have been embarrassed to go singly to the palace; so each servant led a little company together. *Both good and bad*—Relative terms; there are grades of excellence among promiscuous crowds, some comparatively good, others very bad. But the Gospel messenger may not discriminate; the call is not based upon character; good and bad alike are invited to the feast of Redemption. Of course the final qualification for the feast, the wedding garment, is still lacking even with the "good," and when the guests are arrayed in that the distinction ceases, and all have the common Goodness, the Righteousness of Christ. *The wedding was furnished*—Jesus died to save souls, and souls will be saved; the purpose of the Divine love shall not be thwarted by rejecters and opposers of Christ. . . . 11. The parable changes; the reference is no longer to the Pharisees, but to the disciples, who needed this warning. The temptation to self-

10. What are highways? How may we obey this command?

11. To whom is this part of the parable spoken? Why did the disciples need this warning? What custom is here referred to? What was the

there a man which had not on a wedding garment: 12. And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a

righteousness is always great, especially when one's character is being, by implication, set over against that of great offenders.

*When the King came in*—After the assembling and arrangement of the guests, which was and is still the custom on such occasions.

*He saw there a man*—Only one; but the King's eye searched him out and discovered his lack. The placing of but one such offender in the parable brings out most decidedly the impossibility of escaping the Omniscient Judge. It also brings the thought, *Is it I?* more distinctly before each mind. Moreover, it certainly puts the man's fault in the strongest light, as he could not but have been conscious of his defect, since he was admonished of it on all sides. It was, therefore, witting, persistent and most presumptuous wrong. *Which had not on a wedding garment*—The Eastern custom of having a prescribed dress at a royal feast, or other presentation at the palace, is not unlike the modern requirement of a court-dress on similar occasions.

That these garments were provided by the King at this time was a necessity of the situation, as the guests were picked up wholly unfurnished for a royal entertainment. But our Lord here assumes a common custom, originating in the strict Oriental ideas of propriety. Perhaps also it had reference to safety, the arraying of those presented at court by the King's officers being a guard against any assassin who, as Ehud (Judg. iii. 16), might conceal a deadly weapon under the common long, loose garments. In the present case we may conceive of the garments as presents made to the guests, which were to be kept and worn through the festivities as a suitable recognition of the king's bounty. . . . 12.

*Friend*—Still gentle, awaiting full evidence, opening up the way to satisfactory excuse. *How camest thou?*—Since provision was made for all; since all were required to appear in the prescribed dress; since you must have known the order, have shared the

reason for this custom? What made it particularly necessary on this occasion? What does the wedding garment represent? What points are gained by representing only *one* man as in this plight? 12. Was there a garment for this man? Did he know that it was required? Did he know

wedding garment? And he was speechless. **13.** Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping

common opportunity, have seen your singularity, and have known how grave was your offence. *Not having a wedding garment?*—The garment signifies the Righteousness of Jesus Christ, which by faith is placed upon every soul, covering its guilt from the eye of the Judge, and giving it the only qualification for heaven. This Righteousness is the only ground of our acceptance with God; with this upon us we come before Him accounted as holy. It is not only by this that we are justified before the law, but by this, as we more and more enfold ourselves within it, as we put on daily more and more of the spirit and temper and life of Jesus, we are sanctified, and made meet for the inheritance of saints. This man came not having on the Righteousness of Christ, trusting in his own merits, glorying and persisting in the singularity, and hoping either to escape notice or to defy it, and have the feast upon his own terms. Vain hope! *He was speechless*—In the hour of judgment the hail shall sweep away every refuge of lies. The self-condemnation of the soul will precede and justify the sentence of doom. . . . **13, 14.** *Bind him hand and foot*—With handcuffs and shackles. He had impiously asserted his own will, and used his liberty to outrage his King. Now his liberty is lost and he is put in bondage. *Take him away*—Out of the company of friends and neighbors, away from the light and cheer of the palace, the feasting and joy of the meal, away from the King and his Son and the Bride—away! This is condemnation, that one is separate from Heaven, the Church, the Eternal King. *Cast him into outer darkness*—Outer and utter, afar off from the feast, in the dungeon keep, in the prison-house of despair. *For many are called*—A proverbial saying. The *many* are

himself to be singular in his lack of a wedding robe? Why then did he *not take a garment*? Stop, dear impenitent soul, and ask: Why are not *you* clothed in the Righteousness of Christ? *Speechless*—Why? **13.** How had he insulted and disobeyed the King? *Away*—from what? From what must the doomed soul be separated? Give the sense of *outer*. **14.** What is the difference between being *called* and being *chosen*? Who



and gnashing of teeth. 14. For many are called, but few are chosen.

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*those murderers* of v. 7, to which class this one man also belonged. The *few* are those clad in the garment of salvation, the true Elect of God.

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### ANALYSIS.

#### I. The King and the Despisers of His Grace.

*Facts.*—Jesus likens the kingdom of heaven to a king who sent out servants to bid guests to the marriage of his son. Some of these subjects refuse, some ill-use and slay the servants. For this the king destroys them.

*Thoughts.*—Our Jesus has espoused his Church, that He has loved and bought with his own blood, and has given his troth, *Yea and Amen!* to cherish and protect her for ever. Is it not meet that there should be joy in heaven and good-will on earth over this holy union? . . . The joy and honor of the Son are very near to the heart of the Eternal King. Therefore doth He show Him honors, and call upon us to join in them. How gladly should we consent, when to honor the Son is to honor and bless ourselves! . . . The Lord does not stop with one bidding, but sends again and again; He is not content with invitation simply, but argues, urges, entreats the sinner to come. And the salvation provided is complete in every respect. God is therefore justified when He judges. . . . The despisers of the King show their guilt variously: some refuse and give no reason; some because of care over their possessions; some because of struggles after possessions, and some with violence and bloodshed. But the guilt is common—rejecting the Gospel; and the doom is one—a rejected soul! . . . The anger of the Lord is as fierce as his love is great; and the execution of his judgment of wrath as complete as the provisions of his grace.

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In the whole parable represent the *many*; who the *few*? What is effectual calling?

## II. The King calls the Gentiles.

*Facts.*—The King's servants are then sent out to bring in guests from the highway without regard to condition.

*Thoughts.*—Oh, the troops of little wayfarers who wait in their rags for the good word that shall give them a royal garment and a seat at the Son's marriage! Brother, *Go!—Find!—Bid!—BRING* them to the Feast!

## III. The King, and the Guest without a Wedding Garment.

*Facts.*—When the King enters the banquet hall he sees a man without the usual wedding garment, whom he tries and condemns to be cast out.

*Thoughts.*—No one may sit down in the Kingdom of God who has not, by faith in the Righteousness of Christ, been justified before God. . . . The Lord will exact the required condition of Faith, and he who has not believed shall be cast out. . . . Let every soul see to it that, before the King comes, he be clothed with the garment of salvation and covered with the robe of righteousness. Isa. lxi. 10.

### SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless." vs. 12.

**THEMES.**—*For Thought:* God's mercy in giving the Gospel; man's sin in rejecting it. *For Prayer:* Almighty God, clothe me in the Righteousness of thy Son, that I may stand before Thee in that day! *For Practical Life:* Do I think to escape the searching eye and the punishing arm of my offended God?

**CATECHISM.**—Q. 53. What is the third commandment? A. See Catechism. Q. 54. What is required in the third commandment? A. The third commandment requireth the holy and reverent use of God's names, titles, attributes, word and works. Read also Qs. 55 and 56. The sin of these persons was irreverence of God, by slighting his word and requirements.

## LESSON XXVIII.

### THE UNFINISHED TOWER—COUNTING THE COST.

Luke xiv. 25-35.

#### HISTORICAL CONNECTION.

The event here recorded probably occurred on the day following the Sabbath whose incidents are given in the first part of this chapter. Jesus had resumed his journey toward Jerusalem, but was still in Perea. The fame of his teachings and of his miracles, particularly the healing of the dropsied man, had gathered about Him a great company of persons well inclined toward Him, and "almost persuaded" to be Christians. Some of them may have been pilgrims, like Himself, on the way to Jerusalem. Their presence, their expressions of faith in Him and of first warm enthusiasm for his cause, doubtless suggested the thoughts following, which are especially appropriate to new converts, and to those contemplating discipleship. The fact that they were now following Him in his journey, our Lord takes as the basis of a discourse upon the true spiritual following.

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#### NOTES.

**25.** And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, **26.** If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. **27.** And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

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**25.** *He turned*—Paused upon the road, and formally addressed them. . . . **26, 27.** *Come to me*—The address is to those who are considering the duty of coming, not to those who have already come. *Hate not*—"In that sense in which he must hate him-

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**25.** Where was Jesus at this time? Where were the *multitudes* probably going? Why were they following Jesus? What thoughts did this kind of following suggest? **26, 27.** To what class of persons are these words

*self*, namely, when estranged from Christ. The text peculiarly suits that time when few really followed Christ. This hatred must be understood not merely in a comparative and qualified sense, but even absolutely: For whoever hath obtained from Christ a full knowledge, taste and desire of God and heavenly blessings (vs.16) has also a contempt and hatred of self and the whole creature that is subject to vanity; a hatred at once noble, and at the same time devoid of all bitterness."—BENGEL. *Father and mother, and wife and children*—The laws of the heart, of society and of God make it a solemn duty, and it surely ought to be a great pleasure, to honor and love these. But Jesus purposely chooses objects the most strongly fortified in the judgment, heart and conscience of man, that the paramount obligation to Him may appear beyond possibility of question. He foresaw the near day when the fiercest foes of the disciple should be those of his own household. The peculiar social customs of the Jews, their strong, passionate, inveterate religious prejudice—in bitterness nearly approaching the spirit of Hindoo caste—made this test of discipleship a very common one in after days. It was this which made the necessity of having "all things common," which appears among the primitive disciples (Acts ii. 44), just as to-day caste has compelled Hindoo missions to organize Christian villages. *His own life also*—Which is not only the climax of self-abnegation, but also indicates the sense in which *hate* is here used; for no man does hate, or can hate, himself, his own life, in the evil and ordinary sense of the word *hate*. Unless one could prove it possible for a man to regard himself with malice and revenge, to maintain a studied, habitual and hearty opposition to himself, it will be impossible to use this text to justify like feelings toward kindred who are of different faith from ourselves. *He cannot be*—and continue to be *My disciple*—It was a kindness to the people, as well as a protection to his cause, to put the standard of discipleship thus high at this time. Those who could not reach to it would in the coming trials give way,

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addressed? In what sense can a man hate his own life? In what sense may he *hate* his dearest friends? Who is to have the *first* place in our love? How does this verse show that? How does it show Christ's Divine character? Did the people of Christ's time ever have to choose between

28. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? 29. Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation,

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and bring only suffering to themselves and shame to the faith. And, with honest love, the Lord would have no man deceived as to the cost of being his disciple. The two illustrations given bear upon this point. *Doth not bear his cross*—Ready to be crucified if needs be. . . . 28. *A Tower*—Such as were built for the shepherds and the vinedressers. These towers still abound in Palestine. They are built of stone, are large enough to furnish a lodge for the regular watchmen and lodging for the laborers at the harvest, and are high enough to command a view of the surrounding country. The towers of the flock were planted in the wilderness, and were intended to afford protection alike to the flocks and the keepers from the assaults of the wandering Bedouins. Ussiah (2 Chron. xxvi. 10), who “had much cattle both in the low country and in the plains, husbandmen also, and vinedressers in the mountains and in Carmel,” built towers in the desert and digged many wells. As Perea was chiefly a grazing country, we may suppose a tower of the flock especially referred to here. *Sitteth down*—With becoming deliberation, the posture being one opposed to haste. *Counteth the cost*—Consulting the builders, obtaining true estimates of all expenses and calculating his own available funds. The Hebrews probably made their written calculations with the letters of the alphabet. The passage takes for granted that carefulness in money matters which is now characteristic of the Jew. . . . 29. *After he hath laid the foundation*—He begins well, but he only *begins*; his folly is so much greater and plainer since he had means to go no farther than a foundation. *Is not able to finish*—The tower. *All that behold it*—And an unfinished building is so conspicuous! It is apt to

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Christ and their nearest kin? Why? Show that it was *kind* in Jesus to set before these people all the difficulties of discipleship. Show that it was a wise protection of his holy cause.

28. What sort of a tower is meant? What was the use of these towers? What made this illustration so appropriate in Perea? 29. What makes an unfinished building so conspicuous? Why would beholders mock the man? What does this parable teach? Why should we count the cost of

and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, **30.** Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

**31.** Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten

excite more notice than a finished work. *Begin to mock him*—Make sport of him; make him the butt of their jokes. And respect ends where ridicule begins. . . . **30.** *Saying*—The saying has passed into a proverb for rash imprudence. Our Lord here shows the contempt to which one is exposed from the godless when he commences the Christian life and fails to continue in it. It is an undoubted fact that men of the world do despise and ridicule the half-way religious more unmercifully than any other class. BUNYAN finely illustrates this in the character of Pliable, and the treatment which he received after his return from pilgrimage to his own city. And every such man must have in his own heart an echo of this mockery—an echo that shall be awakened into loudest self-reproachings when the wages of folly shall be paid in the pains of the second death. . . .

**31.** *Or what king*—The same lesson is taught under another parable, viz.: the duty of fairly measuring one's strength before entering upon the Christian life. But the consequences involved in this case are far more serious than in the first. The king with ten thousand men represents the inconsiderate and unprepared soul issuing forth to combat the mighty host of spiritual adversaries represented by the king with twenty thousand. Nothing more is to be made of the ratio 10 : 20 than that man's natural abilities to overcome sin in his heart and temptations from without are plainly so far inadequate as to make a conflict unwise to any careful mind. The inference is plain: as man must see that

following Jesus? What is the effect upon others when men begin a Christian life and then abandon it? What the effect upon themselves? Should the difficulties of following Jesus keep us from that duty? Why not?

**30.** Was this man to be blamed simply for not being able to finish a tower? For what then? But if the tower was necessary, what should he have done? Where may we go for help to finish our Christian course? Can we do this without that help? How do people of the world usually look upon backsliders and half-way Christians? **31.** What difference between this parable and the former as to consequences? What does the proportion *ten thousand* to *twenty thousand* signify? Is the soul able to

thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? **32.** Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.

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he cannot overcome his sins in his naked strength, he must say like David, "I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of thy Righteousness, even of thine only!" Ps. lxxi. 16. "In connection with what precedes, the parables thus virtually declare: 'In wishing to follow me, ye undertake a contest which ye are unable to carry through; attain first the conviction of your own weakness, and seek the higher power of the Spirit; then shall ye be qualified for the kingdom of God.'"—OLSHAUSEN. **32.** *Or else*—Should the weaker king be so far carried away by undue self-confidence as to commence military operations. *While the other is yet a great way off*—Before the battle is joined, or affairs have gone so far as to make a favorable arrangement impossible. *He sendeth an ambassage*—As we would say, a flag of truce. The application of the parable is this: He who would declare for Christ against the world should first dispassionately consider all the difficulties of discipleship; and if he cannot meet them in his present condition, let him withhold himself from the conflict. Or if he have already taken up the holy cause, and discover his utter insufficiency to maintain his position, let him pause, and before he be wholly ruined withdraw from the unequal strife. For the soul is sadly hurt, and the cause of religion is hindered by rash professions and speedy desertions, by immature enterprises which, having in them no reasonable element of success, speedily collapse. It were better for the soul and religion that such beginnings had never been. Of course it is not taught that one may make compromises, "conditions of peace," with wrong. Neither that one should abandon the effort to follow Christ, or even delay it. But it must not be undertaken in the hopeless weakness of the natural man. . . .

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overcome its enemies? Why not? What follows when one undertakes to oppose Satan in his own strength? In whose strength are we to go into the Christian warfare? See Ps. lxxi. 16. **32.** What does this parable teach? Wherein does this differ from the parable of The Unfinished Tower?

**33.** So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

**34.** Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be seasoned? **35.** It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

**33.** *So likewise*—As the foolish man who counted not the cost of his tower did not succeed, but sunk his means and lost his time and labor, and brought shame upon himself, so shall it be with you if you follow me without calculating upon the loss, if need be, of all things. As the king who measured not his strength, or undervalued the power of his adversary, or who was unwilling to brave and bear the risks of a combat in which *all might be lost*,—as he was compelled to withdraw with humiliation from the field, so shall it be with you if you follow me without having first resolved to risk the loss of all things of earthly value. *Forsaketh not all*—Making in heart a renunciation of all things for Christ. The literal forsaking is not now always required, but the heart-forsaking should always be complete and sincere. . . . **34, 35.** *Salt*—The chief supply of this mineral was the salt-pits or mines on the shore of the Dead Sea. ROBINSON describes the main body of the mountain *Usdum*, at the southern end of the sea, as a solid mass of rock salt. The mountain is five miles long, two and a half broad and from one hundred to one hundred and fifty feet in height. Masses of crystalized fossil salt crop out from the cliff, and large lumps, broken off, lie like stumps along the shore. *If it have lost its savor*—From admixture with earth and other impurities, or from exposure. *Neither fit for the land*—As a fertilizer; it cannot even lie without harm upon the land, for it destroys the fertility of the soil. *Nor yet for the dunghill*—For it will not aid in the decomposition of the compost, and it cannot be made harmless. *Cast it out*—Into the road, where it can work no

**34.** What is *savor*? How does salt lose its savor? Why is it then useless? Whom does our Lord call the *salt of the earth*? Matt. v. 13. Who are meant by the unsavory salt? What causes Christians to lose their “savor” of godliness and usefulness? **35.** Of what *use* are such Christians?



harm. The similitude is plainly in the line of the previous lessons; the professed disciple who is not a Christian, who lacks the vitalizing savor of the Holy Ghost, is worthless and despised before men and cast out of God.

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### ANALYSIS.

#### I. Jesus our Chief Love.

*Facts.*—Soon after the meal at the Pharisee's house, Jesus while journeying toward Jerusalem was followed by great multitudes, whom He addressed on *The way to follow Jesus*. First, Jesus must be loved above all other friends.

*Thoughts.*—*He who* demands of us love and duty and devotion superior to that which springs from the holiest and dearest natural relations, is not HE DIVINE? Who but God could claim or have such place of right in human hearts? . . . *The duty* of Christian Hating. The wicked cause is sometimes so firmly interwoven with its wicked advocates that we can hardly, in our hearts, dis sever the evil from the individual. But even love may not throw her mantle over the wicked, and our affections should never be suffered to warp our judgment against wrong. "Ye that love the Lord hate evil." And if our hearts *must* choose between evil-doers whom we love and our Beloved Lord, then Christ must be our portion. But do Thou, O Jesus, who knowest our weakness, spare us from this decision by bringing all our loved ones to Thyself! . . . "No cross no crown." He is the best scholar in the school of Christ who bears his cross most faithfully, walking closest to the Crucified Lord.

#### II. Counting the Cost.

*Facts.*—He teaches by the parable of The Unfinished Tower the duty of counting the cost of religion before beginning to follow Christ.

*Thoughts.*—


"And evil is wrought  
By want of thought,  
As well as by want of heart."—HOOD.

"*Religion* is a work of soberness, of thought, of calm and


fixed purpose; and no man can properly enter on it who does not resolve, by the grace of God, to fulfill all its requirements and make it the business of life."—ALBERT BARNES. . . . "I have seen a fair structure begun with art and care, and raised to half its stature, and then it stood still by the misfortune or neglect of the owner, and the rain descended and dwelt in its joints, and supplanted the contexture of its pillars, and having stood a while, like the antiquated temple of a deceased oracle, it fell into a hasty age, and sunk upon its knees, and so descended into ruin. So is the imperfect, unfinished spirit of a man; it lays the foundation of a holy resolution, and strengthens it with vows and acts of prosecution; it raises up the walls, sacraments and prayers, reading and holy ordinances; and holy actions begin with a slow motion, and the building stays, and the spirit is weary, and the soul is naked and exposed to temptations; it is faint and sick, listless and tired, and it stands till its own weight weakens the foundation, and then declines to death and sad disorder, being so much the worse because it hath not only returned to its first follies, but hath superadded unthankfulness and carelessness, a positive neglect and a despite of holy things, a setting a low price to the things of God."—JEREMY TAYLOR. . . . *Counting the cost of salvation. How much have I to pay? I am debtor to the whole law to do it. Gal. v. 3. . . . What have I to pay with? My righteousnesses are as filthy rags. Isa. lxiv. 6. . . . Lord Jesus, I am a poor, miserable, bankrupt soul. Give me out of thine infinite fullness, that I may be delivered from the sinner's eternal doom!*

"In my hand no price I bring,  
Simply to THY CROSS I cling."

### III. Measuring One's Strength.

 The King going to War teaches the duty of learning our own spiritual weakness and our adversary's strength.

### IV. The Unsavory Salt Cast out.

 The Cast-out Salt represents the fate of professed Christians who are without vital godliness, honored neither by the Church nor by the world.

## SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"So likewise whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." vs. 33.

**THEMES.**—*For Thought*: The following of Christ a subject for thorough, serious thought. *For Prayer*: LORD, save me from a false hope! Make me now wholly and for ever consecrate to Thee! *For Practical Life*: Whatever the following of Christ may cost, He repays it all a thousand fold.

**CATECHISM.**—Q. 42. What is the sum of the ten commandments? A. The sum of the ten commandments is, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our minds, and our neighbor as ourselves. Or Q. 36, last part of the answer.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK.

**BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS.**—Persons who began well to build, but failed to finish: King Solomon; Hymeneus and Alexander, 1 Tim. i. 19, 20; Demas, 2 Tim. iv. 10.

## BLACKBOARD.

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| <p>What it costs,</p> <p>1. To save a soul?</p> <p><b>THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST.</b> 1 Pet. 18, 19.</p> <p>2. To follow Jesus?</p> <p>C-onsideration,<br/>O-bedience,<br/>S-acrifice,<br/>T-ime.</p> <p>3. To gain the world?</p> <p><b>A LOST SOUL.</b></p> |
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## LESSON XXIX.

### THE LOST SHEEP AND THE LOST COIN.

Luke xv. 1-10.

#### NOTES.

1. Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. 2. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

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1. The following parables could not have immediately followed the discourse at the Pharisee's table (chap. xiv. 1), since Jesus is spoken of at verse 2 as *eating with* the publicans and sinners. But the interval of time between the two discourses was not great, and the locality was probably still Perea. *All*—It is not unlikely that in a small village this should be literally true; especially as the phrase *drew near unto him*, in the original, signifies, *were busied in drawing near, were about him constantly*, thus implying that they came around him at different times, coming and going in the manner of a crowd. *Publicans*—The provincial Telonai or local collectors of the foreign farmers of the taxes. They were stationed at the borders, at ports and at the gates of towns. The Jewish publicans were held in especial abhorrence; their evidence was rejected from the courts, and they were rated with the heathen, even beneath them, as the proverb "a heathen and a publican" implies. *Sinners*—Men and women notorious for the grosser class of sins. *To hear him*—Their motive seems to have been a genuine hunger after his words of Life and Love; and shows in pleasant and favorable contrast with that of the Pharisees, which was to watch Him, ensnare Him, and find fault with his words and acts. . . . 2. *Pharisees and Scribes*—Present among the rough crowd, as they were near enough to be addressed by Jesus. Their evil hearts carried them into the very surroundings to which Christ's great and impartial Love im-

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1. Who were publicans? Who sinners? What is meant by *drew near*? What was their motive in coming? Why did they want to hear Jesus?  
2. What brought the Pharisees and Scribes to him? The meaning of

3. And he spake this parable unto them, saying, 4. What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that

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pelled Him. *Murmured*—Among themselves, but so as to attract the notice of others; they would hardly take pains to conceal their opinions from the Disciples, and Jesus readily perceives the drift of their thought. *This man receiveth*—Into friendly intercourse, allowing them to question, to argue, to be taught and to be healed. *And eateth*—He even permits Himself to be treated as a social equal; or at least takes no care to avoid contamination by the unclean. A thought especially annoying, as Jesus had lately been their own Guest. . . . 3. *He spake this parable unto them*—But of course in the hearing of all. We are therefore to look for some direct application to them which would lead us to ask at least: By what are these Pharisees symbolized in the parable? . . . 4. *What man of you?*—No doubt many of them had flocks and herds which were then grazing upon the adjacent hills, the very slopes which had attracted the pastoral tribes of Reuben and Gad at the Possession. Our Lord, in this argument *ad hominem*, assumes their faithfulness as shepherds. Since it was his purpose to meet the murmurs of these men, who professed to be also the spiritual teachers and shepherds of the people, there is a fine irony in this phrasing, *What man of you? A hundred sheep*—"In the numbers named in the successive parables there is in reality a climax—one in a *hundred* (sheep)—one in *ten* (coins)—one in *two* (souls); the feeling of the value of the part lost would naturally increase with the proportion which it bore to the whole."—TRENCH. *Ninety and nine*—As the one lost sheep is clearly meant to represent

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*murmured?* What is the difference between *receiveth* and *eateth*? What were the notions of the Pharisees about eating? Were they near to Jesus when they murmured?

3. To whom was this parable spoken? To what was it an answer?  
 4. Where did these men live? What tribes once occupied that country? How came it into their possession? Gen., ch. xxxii. Were these Pharisees interested in flocks? Give the meaning of *pastor*; were the Scribes *pastors*? Whom does the *shepherd* represent? the *lost sheep*? the *ninety-nine*? Where was the *wilderness*? Who took care of the ninety-nine?

the publicans and sinners, the ninety and nine must represent the class with whom they in the context are contrasted, viz. : the Pharisees and Scribes. Our Lord pursues the parable from their standpoint, ironically assuming their claims to be of the number of those who had not strayed from the morality of the law. Granting their own premise, He shows the inhumanity of their conclusions as to the lost classes. The contrast between these two classes, which runs through all this family group of parables, appears plainly in the third—the Prodigal Son. We must suppose the same here, and of necessity must refer the ninety-nine to the Pharisees. *In the wilderness*—The usual pasture-grounds of the flocks, the tracts of waste land lying beyond the cultivated sections. In spring these tracts are covered with rich verdure and tender shrubs and herbs, of which the flocks are exceedingly fond. At the end of summer the herbage is entirely parched up. It was in these tracts, at the more remote points, that towers were built for the protection of the shepherds and their herds. “So have I left you,” Jesus would say, “ranging safely (as you think) the green pastures of the Law and its righteousness; am I not right? So have you *not* left those of like virtue with yourselves to seek these poor despised estrays. Are you not wrong?” *Lost*—A lost sheep is the most helpless of animals; powerless for defence, with no tact at finding the return path; becoming more agitated and confused the more it seeks to recover its way, it runs to and fro, bleating piteously, until it falls exhausted to the ground, or becomes a prey to the wild beast. If it be found at all, it *must be sought* and succored by the shepherd. This is the frequent and apt scriptural image of the sinner’s spiritual condition. And to save him from this, the Shepherd of souls has come. *Until he find it*—He keeps going after it; the wilderness stretches further away from home, nightfall hastens, the wolves threaten, but he goes on, on, until he finds it! Such is the only limit of Christ’s lov-

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Were they safe? How did the Pharisees look upon their own religious condition? Show the likeness between a lost sheep and a sinner. Isa. liii. 6; Ps. cxix. 176; Rom. iii. 11, 12. When does Christ’s search for his lost sheep cease? When should our search for lost souls cease? Was there any danger to this shepherd in his seeking? from what? What dan-

which is lost, until he find it? 5. And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto

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ing endeavor after his lost sheep; the saving point is its ceasing point. So should it be with every teacher of souls; no distance of wandering, no depth of sin should be deemed a sufficient limit for the following footsteps of the seeker of the lost. . . . 5. No scolding of the sorely-smitten thing; no upbraiding of the poor frightened and wellnigh heart-broken beastie. No! *He layeth it on his own shoulders*—For it is aweary and footsore, and the shepherd would bear it homeward faster than it could drag itself. Sweet image of the tender, considerate love of our Saviour! It should teach all teachers and parents the duty of bearing, by patience, faith, love, watch and care, their weak and erring children. God give us gentle hearts to deal with such! *Rejoicing*—The joy that breaks out at last in the chorus of the angels has its first note, the keynote, in the Shepherd's bosom. The true teacher has not only anxiety over the lost, but sympathy with the saved. . . . 6. *Cometh home*—To the house; the ninety-nine whom we must suppose to have been left with the servants have already been brought in, and the shepherd, with his burden, goes directly to the house. We may with propriety take the *home* to be the sheep-house or tower, and the *neighbors and friends* are therefore his fellow-shepherds and members of the families occupying the lodging-rooms of the tower. It is evening now, and the several flocks and herds are all safe and at rest, and there is time for merry-making. The shepherd, therefore, *calleth together* (to himself) *his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, REJOICE WITH ME.* The joy that had been bubbling in his heart as he bore the sheep homeward overflows upon others; he seeks sympathy in his feelings of delight. And he

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gers did Jesus brave for us? 5. Why put the sheep on his shoulders? What does this teach us? Why did he not beat and upbraid it? Where does the joy over saved souls begin? What may the shepherd's journey home represent? Was the sheep willing to come? See v. 1. Are you willing to be saved? 6. Where was the *Home*? What home does Jesus take us to? Where were the ninety-nine now? What time of day must we suppose that it was now? Why? Who were the *friends and neigh-*

them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. 7. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven

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is confident that his brother-shepherds will respond. *With me*—How he identifies himself with his sheep! The sympathy which should exist among all laborers for lost souls is illustrated here. Every teacher is interested, and should rejoice over souls saved in other schools. *For I have found my sheep*—That sheep of mine which was lost, implying a knowledge of the fact among the neighbors. The tidings had preceded the shepherd, carried by the returned keepers of the ninety-nine; and in that little community, interest in the sheep was the common bond which drew all hearts together. . . . 7. *I say unto you*—For Jesus had sat at the seat of Judgment in the highest heavens, and knew the mysteries of eternity. *That likewise joy shall be in heaven*—That is, joy in the Good Shepherd's heart, and joy (v. 10) in the presence of the angels of God. The future tense *shall be* simply indicates the rejoicing as a consequence upon the repentance of the sinner. *In the presence of the Angels* includes all the Redeemed. The oneness of God's Family in Heaven and on Earth is assumed. Also the fact that the souls of the Blessed are not wholly ignorant of the condition of mortals. *Over one sinner that repenteth*—The shepherd's following, seeking, finding and carrying home in the narrative are the equivalents of *Repenteth*. Repentance is viewed from the standpoint of the Divine Love, at which it appears as a *gift of God*. *Just persons*—As the Lost Sheep represents the publicans and sinners, the *just persons* represent the Pharisees and Scribes, whose murmuring Christ is reproving. He takes the matter from their standpoint, and concedes to them what St. Paul claimed for himself, that they were, "concerning the righteousness which is of the law, blameless."

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*bars?* How did they know of the loss? Why should they sympathize? What strong common tie unites co-laborers in the Church and Sunday-school? 7. "*I say*"—how did Jesus know? Where and what is *heaven*? Who shall there rejoice? Why should they rejoice? Do the redeemed also rejoice? What is it to repent? What part of the parable is equivalent to this word *repenteth*? What is the meaning of *just persons*? In what sense were the Pharisees *just*? Phil. iv. 4-6. In what sense did Jesus here refer to them as *just*? What sort of justness (righteousness) saves



over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

8. Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek

In this sense some of them may have been undoubtedly and honestly *just persons*, who, as to faithfulness to the Mosaic ritual and the moral law, *needed no repentance*. At least, Jesus accepts their pretension, and with a strong shade of irony, it may be, describes them in what was not unlikely one of their own favorite terms of self-praise. So also he said (Matt. ix. 12), They that be whole need not a physician. However, some, as ALFORD, make the ninety-nine to be the worlds that have not fallen; and others, as BENGEL and OWEN, the saints in heaven. BARNES refers the term to the unfallen angels. *More than*—Does not express excess in the feeling, but preference in the objects: "There is joy in heaven over one repenting sinner (such as these) *rather than* over ninety-nine just (ones) such as (you, who think you) have not need of repentance." Our Lord thus vindicates himself as a Teacher or Shepherd of the people, and rebukes the Jewish teachers by showing that his conduct, at which they grieve and murmur, gives joy to the holy spirits of heaven, and of consequence must be right. The two groups are made to stand out in bold contrast, the PHARISEES, claiming to be *par excellence* just persons, filled with sorrow and anger at the spectacle of *multitudes* of sinners turning from their sins to follow Jesus. The ANGELS and all the inhabitants of heaven, perfect in holiness, rejoicing over *one* repenting sinner! How different were Pharisees from Angels must have flashed upon their consciences as never before. . . . 8, 9. The parable of the Lost Coin

the soul? Phil. iii. 9. Why did the Pharisees think that they needed no repentance? In what sense did Jesus apply to them this phrase, *need no repentance*? See Luke v. 31, 32. Show all the points of contrast between these two groups, Pharisees and Angels, as to their condition, character, feeling, conduct. What was the lesson of this contrast to the Pharisees? What to *you*?

8. What does the *woman* here represent? Rev. xxii. 17. What was the value of these ten pieces in our money? the *relative* value now and then? What is the value of a *lost* coin? Give the symbolic meaning of the number *ten*; in what other parables is it used? What do the coins represent?

diligently till she find it? **9.** And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbors together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. **10.** Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

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teaches the same general truth. But there are marked points of difference. It is especially significant to the women of the Church as expressing their part in the great work of saving lost souls. The *woman* may represent "the Spirit and the Bride;" the Holy Ghost, through the Church, restoring lost men to holiness and life eternal. *Pieces*—Drachmas, about fifteen cents each, but relatively of much greater value. *Candle*—The Word of God. The Church that establishes and maintains Sabbath-schools lights a candle that shall shed light into many dark corners. *Sweep*—Reaching into places where the light does not shine, into corners, under the furniture, where the coin may have rolled, and turning over rubbish which may hide it. *Visiting scholars* is the Sabbath-school *Broom*. *Friends*—Feminine in the original. *Which I had lost*—Of the sheep it was said, *which was lost*. The language implies that the coin was lost entirely through the carelessness of the woman herself. This is perhaps the principal point of difference between this and the foregoing parable, showing the duty of the Church to seek diligently those who have been lost through her own fault, and the fact that heaven also joys over the restored backslider.

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#### ANALYSIS.

##### I. Jesus Attracts the Outcasts.

*Facts.*—The publicans and sinners, attracted by the fame of Christ's miracles and by the charm of his discourse, gather about

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Show the likeness. The candle represents what? What is the first great duty of Church and Sabbath-school? Why did the woman sweep? What is symbolized by this? Name some Church and Sunday-school "*brooms*." What use does the Holy Spirit make of *little brooms*? What difference can you find between the losing of the sheep and the losing of the coin? **9.** What does this parable teach more or different from that of the lost sheep? **10.** In what do both agree?

Him. The fraternal spirit in which they are received excites the open disapproval of the Scribes. vss. 1, 2.

*Thoughts.*—The outcasts cannot be raised by ecclesiastical dericks, sending down mission blocks and tackle from far heights; they need the brother's hand to *touch them* with the finger of love. Men will *go up with us* who would never *come up to us*. Therefore, if we would save the lost classes, we must go down among them, to talk and eat and worship, and, if need be, to dwell.

## II. Seeking Lost Souls.

*Facts.*—Jesus justifies his treatment of the lost classes by the parable of a Shepherd leaving his flock to seek an estray. vs. 3-5.

*Thoughts.*—Behold the emblem of the sinner's helplessly lost condition: "All we like sheep have gone astray." . . . Here is seen our dear Lord's long-suffering Love and persistent Seeking of the erring. . . . What Patience and Gentleness does the Heavenly Shepherd show in dealing with the poor estray when found!

## III. Heaven's Sympathy with Human Salvation.

*Facts.*—The shepherd reached home rejoicing, and called together his friends to rejoice with him over the lost which was found. vss. 6, 7.

*Thoughts.*—Jesus seeks the lost, and calls the unfallen and the redeemed to joy. . . . The joy in heaven is the echo of the great joy in the bosom of Christ. . . . The worth of a soul, over which Angels in heaven rejoice.

## IV. The Lost Coin.

*Facts.*—Jesus follows up this teaching with a parable of a woman who, having lost one of her ten coins, seeks it diligently, finds it, and calls her female friends to rejoice with her.

*Thoughts.*—The Church in the Saviour's footsteps as a seeker of Souls. . . . The duty of looking after those whom the negligence of the Church has suffered to be lost from her hand. . . . The *Means* to be used in recovering the lost: *First*, The Light of Gospel Truth, Bible Teaching in Pulpit and Sabbath-school. *Second*, Personal seeking out and reaching after the lost.

## SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost." vs. 6. Or vs. 10. **THEMES.**—*For Thought:* The love of Christ for lost men. The interest of heavenly spirits in Redemption. *For Prayer:* Thou Shepherd of Souls, give me of thine own tender sympathy and deep anxiety over the lost. *For Practical Life:* Have the angels ever joyed because of my repentance? **CATECHISM.**—Q. 20. Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery? A. God having out of his mere good pleasure from all eternity elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK.

**BLACKBOARD.**—In reviewing the lesson bring out the various points by questions, putting down the words upon the board as the answers are given somewhat as follows: What animal does Jesus here tell about? (*Sheep.*) What does he say about the sheep? (*Lost.*) Whose sheep was it? (*MY sheep.*) What became of it at last? (*Found.*) Whom did the shepherd say found it? (*I.*) What did the shepherd ask his friends to do? (**REJOICE.**) Why did he want them to rejoice? with whom were they to rejoice? (*With ME.*) Of course the above are only *indicators* of the thoughts, which may be applied and expanded at will. The golden text will then appear as below. For an appropriate Object Lesson on "*Souls like Coins*" see the author's work on "**OBJECT AND OUTLINE TEACHING.**"

**REJOICE**with **ME**for **I** have **Found****MY** **Sheep**which was **Lost.**

## LESSON XXX.

### THE PRODIGAL SON.

Luke xv. 11-34.

#### HISTORICAL CONNECTION.

This parable pursues the same line of thought as that of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin, but here a more aggravated character of sin is represented and the sinner's part in the work of salvation is brought out more distinctly. Stier calls this "the Crown and Pearl of Parables," but I had rather borrow a word from more homely life, and call it the Rose among the Parables. In beauty of construction, and fragrance to the wounded heart this is a most fitting title, and, in that it touches the popular life so universally and so nearly, more fitting, surely, than either "Crown" or "Pearl."

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#### NOTES.

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

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11. *A certain man*—God, the FATHER; in the Lost Sheep the Shepherd is the SON; in the Lost Coin the Woman is the SPIRIT, dwelling and working in the Church. Thus these three parables represent the Holy Trinity of Love. *Two sons*—The direct reference was undoubtedly to the two classes among the Jews, Pharisees and Publicans, but it need hardly be stated that these sons are representatives of characters and experiences common to every age and people. . . . 12. *The younger*—There is great propriety, and perhaps also a touch of charity, in associating the prodigal character with the younger son, as superior wisdom, stability

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11. Whom does this *certain man* represent? What classes are represented by the *two sons*? To whom was Jesus speaking this parable? What was his object? What is the place of this parable among the teachings of Jesus? Will you not commit it every word to memory? 12. Show that there was propriety and charity in representing the Prodigal by the younger son. What was the Hebrew law concerning inheritance? Deut.

of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them *his* living.  
 13. And not many days after the younger son gathered all to

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and privilege are usually associated with the eldest. Certainly the elder son, as legal *head* here, better represented the ruling class, the Scribes. *Portion of goods*—The elder son had by law (Deut. xxi. 17) a double portion; in this case, therefore, two-thirds of the property. But a life-interest in the estate was evidently retained by the father. This was a request which the father was at liberty to refuse, for although *falleth to me* truly expresses a legal claim which the younger had to a portion of the inheritance, that claim could not legally be realized until the father's death. But this case shows that such divisions were then common, as they have always been. As early as Abraham's time we find the custom (Gen. xxv. 5, 6). Here is the root of the prodigal's sin, he wished to assert his independence of paternal control. The beginning of rebellion in the sinner's heart is the desire to be freed from God's presence and control. It is the same voice of the Tempter that whispered to Eve, "Ye shall be as gods." *He divided unto* (both of) *them*—God will not take away man's soul-liberty, even though it be used for the soul's undoing. Each son had his choice, and each son had his right. *His* (the father's) *living*—The estate. The earth and its fullness is the Lord's, and He has distributed it among men. . . . 13. *Not many days after*—It was not love of home that kept him, but necessity; for time was required to *gather all together*, that is, convert it into cash. He made the severance complete: he left no treasury at home to attract his heart there also. *Took his journey into a far country*—We need not suppose that the young man's object was to find a better opportunity to waste his patrimony. The Jews of that day, as we may see from Acts ii., were much in the habit of seeking their fortunes in foreign parts; there

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xxi. 17. What was the *root* of the prodigal's sin? Can you see any resemblance between this sin and Eve's? What is meant by the *living*? What may this *dividing* signify? 13. Was the prodigal in haste to leave? Why did he delay at all? What did he intend to do abroad? What were the commercial habits of the Jews in Christ's time? What does the *far country* signify? How does the sinner waste his God-given substance?

gether, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

14. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in

was no country or city of any commercial importance in which Jews were not engaged in traffic. It is more reasonable to suppose that this young man proposed to himself to better his condition, to embark in trade; perhaps he so argued the matter to his good father, promising to turn a new leaf in life, and an early and honorable return. This seems more natural than to infer a deliberate purpose to run through with his property. Such intention hardly corresponds with that of even the most abandoned. And this view also better sustains the analogy of the parable, for the sinner never calculates to go into *the depths* of sin; he has always an *expectation* of doing better and of returning to God, and has many reasons to show himself and others why he should for a time abandon the old and steady ways. "The far country is forgetfulness of God."—AUGUSTINE in TRENCH. *And there*—For no resolution, no virtue, much less a soul weakened by evil habits, can stand where God is not. *He wasted*—Scattered; sin, like the desert sun, disperses the beauty, excellence and powers of youth. There were others to help him waste *his substance*, but *he* is the responsible person. *With riotous living*—The elder son (verse 30) gives the clue to his mode of life. . . . 14. *And when he had spent all*—Behold the sinner in the depths of sin; stripped completely of every heaven-given virtue, without God, an alien from the Church, self-orphaned, self-exiled, self-impooverished. Yet men call it *spending* money to buy such fruit as this. The tendency of sin is toward utter moral ruin; however liberally the Devil begins, he ends with taking *all*. *There arose a mighty famine*—"Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." The famine represents the judgments by which God often awakens souls to a knowledge of their lost estate: sickness, loss, defeat of plans, affliction and death

14. Wherein does the condition of the prodigal when he had *spent all* resemble that of the sinner's soul? What effect did the *famine* have? What effect do afflictions often have upon the impenitent? To what parts of the parable of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin does this *famine* correspond?

that land; and he began to be in want. 15. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16. And he would fain have filled his

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of relatives and friends. This Famine corresponds to the outstretched Hand of the Shepherd and the outreached Broom of the Housewife—the means by which the soul is drawn Godward. We shall see the wisdom of the charge of Eliphaz, Job iv. 17: “Despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty,” and the truth of the promise, *id.* 20: “In famine he shall redeem thee from death.” *He began to be in want*—Expresses the *first feeling* of his lost condition; God’s providences begin to touch his heart; he feels that he needs spiritual food. This is the pivotal point in the turning to the new life. . . . 15. *He went and joined himself to a citizen of that country*—The awakened sinner will not straightway turn to the Father. He will “drown” his care, he will trust the protection of the ungodly, nay, he will himself find means to satisfy his wants. The prodigal represents the sinner who goes *to the world* for relief from the clamors of an awakened conscience, as opposed to those who resort to the “righteousness which is of the law.” *He sent him into his fields to feed swine*—That is the worldling’s cure for a wounded conscience—drown its cries in the grunts of swinish companions. The parable here depicts the sinner in that depth of degradation which is most obnoxious to “an Israelite indeed.” In the service of the world he has touched the very bottom of sin and shame. ALFORD asks, “Is there here any hint at the situation of the publicans?” No doubt, for the peculiar offence of the publican was that he would accept from a foreign or any heathen a service which made him an instrument in the humiliation of his people and in the violation of the spirit of his law. “Yet this very deep leads up to the height, and among the swine he will fare better than among the *harlots*.”—OOSTERZEE. . . . 16. *And he would fain*—Gr., *he desired, longed*. It is implied that he *did eat*, as

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15. Why did he not go directly to his father? What conduct of sinners is this like? Was this *citizen* a Jew? What was the condition of ancient swineherds? What likeness in this to the state of the publicans? 16. What sort of fruit were these *husks*? What is represented by the unsatisfying



with Lazarus. Luke xvi. 21. What was to hinder the swineherd from eating the swine's food? *Have filled his belly with the husks*—He desired to satisfy his hunger even with swine's food, but he could not succeed; such food as that would not satisfy such hunger as his. So the soul's hunger can only be appeased by receiving Him who said, "I am the Bread of Life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger." John vi. 32. *Husks*—Carobs, the fruit of the carob tree, called here *Keratia* (little horns), from their shape, which resembles the fruit or pod of the honey-locust tree. Indeed, BONAR (Desert of Sinai, Appendix) suggests that the name of the Locust comes from the notion once had that carobs were the *locusts* which John Baptist ate with *wild honey* in the wilderness. Hence, also, the Germans call the carob fruit *Johannes Brodtbaum*. THOMSON (Land and Book) describes this fruit as fleshy pods, from six to ten inches long and one inch broad, lined inside with a gelatinous substance, not wholly unpleasant to the taste when thoroughly ripe. He had seen large orchards of the tree in Cyprus, the fruit still fed to the swine. TRENCH, who saw these carobs (it is better to use this word than the improper "husks" of our version) in Calabria, says that they have a dark, hard outside, and a dull, sweet taste; that they are abundant, sold at a very low price, sometimes eaten by the poorer people, but mainly used for feeding domestic animals. ROBINSON describes the tree as growing very large and spreading like the oak, and says that the pods contain a sweetish pulp and several small shining seeds, and are used extensively as food and eaten with relish by the common people. He adds: "We had them dry on board of our boat on the Nile in January; steeped in water, they afford a pleasant drink." CALMET describes the tree as of middle size, full of branches, abounding with round leaves an inch or two in diameter; the blossoms little red clusters, with abundance of yellowish stalks. *And no one gave unto him*—Although his hunger was so great that even carobs were desirable to his appetite, no one gave him suitable food. ALFORD and others read *for* instead of *and*, and make this

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nature of such food? Had he no friends? Where were his boon companions? What is the only enduring bond of friendship?

belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

17. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I

clause give the reason why he should eat carobs. Where were the "boon companions" of his dissipation? He had lost the only magnet which held them to him, and they had fallen off from him. The breath of poverty dissolves the links of dissolute friendships. Foolish prodigal! You have learned the value of the "friends" of that far country, and know now how true it is that

The friends who in our sunshine live  
When winter comes are flown,  
And he who has but tears to give  
May weep those tears alone.—MOORE.

. . . 17. *And when he came to himself*—The sense of his utter friendlessness comes over him: hungry, helpless, hopeless, it dawns upon him at last that he is *homeless*. That expresses his feeling—*home-less*. "I had a home *once*, but not now. I despised it; I left it; I dishonored it by the vilest sin. Oh how could I have done it, my own dear home? If I could only once more— But what is the use? That is all gone now; there is no more home for *me*! I shall die—here, among the hogs. They may eat my carcass; it is little matter; I deserve no more honored sepulchre. Do they—at home—ever think of me? Do they have any idea of my condition? I hope they never may know that I came to *this*! If he *should* hear of my condition—my father—what would he say? what would he do? Father, father! why did I ever grieve thee by my disobedience, and leave thee and forget thee?" And so, with thoughts of home and father, *he came to himself*. The language seems to imply a coming, not abruptly, but as one gradually awaking to consciousness. His soul had been benumbed by sin; the cold breath of

17. *When he came to himself* means what? Had he not been *himself*? What are sin's effects on real manhood? What power had had possession of his soul? Was he responsible for this? What brought him to himself? Bring out all the contrasts of this verse between himself and his father's

perish with hunger! **18.** I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and be-

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that far country had frozen all that was noblest within him. And now the sweet, soft thoughts of FATHER and Home fall upon his heart as the first warm rays of the spring sun, and *he comes to himself*. Or sin, like an opiate, had set all his better self to sleep, and now he has awoken—awoke with the sharp thrill of pain pricking his soul as with a thousand needles, but the fumes of the fatal drug have lost their strength, and he has *come to himself*! It certainly helps one to clearer views, both of God's ways and of man's, to believe that the sinner is under the power of a dreadful Spirit of evil, distinct from himself, yet so much one with him as to sway him to its own besotted desires. What folly and sin to give one's self up to that power—the Devil! Yet the words of the Prodigal here: *I have sinned!* must forbid the thought that any plea of "moral insanity" can deliver the soul from personal accountability for sin wrought under this evil possession. *How many hired servants of my father's*—He keeps his father before him, but his thought is full of humility; he does not contrast himself with father or brother, but with the servants. Note the contrasts running all through the verse: how many—*I alone*; servants—*I, the son*; servants of my father's—*I, the servant of a cruel alien*; bread—*husks*; have enough—*hunger*; to spare—*perish*. ALFORD'S text reads: *while I perish here*. Thus the thought of the happier condition of even the least honorable in God's house awakens longing after holiness in the sinner's bosom. Thus, it may be, godliness is made profitable for this life, not only from love to the godly, who are comforted and strengthened by possession, but from love to the ungodly, who are awakened to desire and stimulated to attain by the contrast with their own sorry state. These words mark clearly the difference between the holy and the sinner here, and the redeemed and the lost hereafter. . . . **18.** *I will arise and go*—Note the words: *my Father, Him, Father, Thee*. In the Prodigal's heart it is

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servants. **18.** Of whom does the prodigal think? How does the thought influence him? What is signified by this *arising*? Whence comes the

fore thee, 19. And 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 when he was

now the day of THE FATHER'S power, and he is therefore made "willing." Ps. cx. 3. The province of the human will, in man's return to God, is here asserted and illustrated. It is a positive putting of the truth which our Lord expressed negatively in his charge against the Pharisees: *Ye will not come to me.* John v. 40. "How many, even at this point, do not determine as he does! They betake them to some other citizen of that far country, who promises them a little better fare or less contemptuous treatment. Or, it may be, they learn to dress their husks so that they shall look like human food, and they then deny that they are the fodder of swine. Or, glorying in their shame and wallowing in the same sty with the beasts they feed, they proclaim that there was never intended to be any difference between the food of men and of swine."—TRENCH. *I will say unto Him, Father—FATHER!* that is the Rock on which the anchor of the penitent's hope has fastened. So the returning sinner feels stirring within him the spirit of adoption, by which he cries, *Abba, Father!* *I have sinned against heaven and before thee*—He has just views of sin, for the sin against God is reckoned first and chief in his mind. "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned" (Ps. li. 2) is the language of the truly contrite. But the sins against his fellows are not forgotten in his confession. . . . 19. *No more worthy to be called thy son*—No longer worthy! Before, he had not thought so meanly of himself. Thus the penitent sinner feels, although in the depths of his guilt he thought himself quite worthy of heavenly sonship. There is a sadness in the utterance; the lost honor is bemoaned. *Make me*—For I am undone, and in thy hands. *As one of thy hired servants*—Not one, but *as* one; for he *is* a son, however unworthy. . . . 20. *He arose*—Promptness in action is the only guarantee of good

power of the penitent's will? How does the prodigal show true sense of sin? 19. Does the prodigal here give up the hope of sonship?

20. How do sinners come to the heavenly Father? Give the spiritual

yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had 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, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. **22.** But the father

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resolutions. He left his degraded state. *Came to his father*—The long, weary journey is passed in silence. The sinner comes to the Father through Christ, the Living Way. *When he was yet a great way off*—Holding back, it may be, in the very sight of home, waiting, fearing. The associations which spring up at the sight of the old homeplace deepen the sense of his sinfulness and unworth. *His father saw him*—As though he were on the lookout for him. *Had compassion*—Love he had never ceased to have; his son's forlorn appearance now awakens pity also. *And ran*—Showing the eagerness of love, anxiety to assure him of welcome, and also indicating the *condescension* of the father; for it was not customary thus to go out to meet any one, except when it was desired to show unusual courtesy; superiors always, and equals often, were so treated. God's willingness to save and condescension in seeking sinners are here shown. *Fell on his neck and kissed him*—The usual signs of reconciliation and of affectionate and hearty welcome. (See the meeting of Esau and Jacob, Gen. xxxiii. 4.) This part of the parable corresponds with the finding of the sheep and of the coin in the two preceding ones. . . . **21.** *The son said*—He does not fail of the purposed confession, because of this affectionate welcome. But he omits the intended request to be made as a hired servant. The confession was sincere, but when received thus as a son the request would have been akin to hypocrisy. He knows now that the father still loves him and looks upon him as a son, and humbly but honestly he recognizes the sweet fact. . . . **22, 23.** *But the father said*—Hear the heavenly Father's answer to the penitent's confession: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin, and to cleanse us from all unrighteous-

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signification of the words: *great way off, saw, compassion, ran.* Explain Oriental modes of receiving guests. **21.** What does the prodigal omit from his intended confession at v. 19? Why? **22.** What does the father's answer signify? 1 John i, 9. Show the difference between the prodigal's ex-

said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put *it* on him ; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on *his* feet: 23. And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill *it* ; and let us eat, and be merry : 24. For this my son was dead, and is alive again ; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

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ness." 1 John i. 9. *Servants*—Three different words are used in the original for servants, in vs. 19, 26 and here ; that of vs. 19, *hired servants*, expresses the lowest order, this the highest. What a contrast between his expectation and the reality ! He would have been made as one of the lowest field-hands, but the chief of the house-servants are bidden to *wait upon him*. Even so God's thoughts of mercy are not as our thoughts. Isa. lv. 7-9. The *servants* symbolize the angels, and the ministers of the Gospel the teachers of religion. Such the Scribes should have been, such Jesus was. *The best robe*—The long loose outer garment of the East. This is Justification. Teachers, bring forth for your scholars no other robe than the Robe of Christ's Righteousness ! But the old rags were laid aside first. *Ring*—The signet-ring, the sign of authority delegated and honor bestowed, as in Gen. xli. 42 ; Esth. iii. 10, 12. *Shoes*—He had come barefooted, as a slave would come ; he is clad with shoes, the badge of the freeman. *The fatted calf*—Then (and it is so still) the kid or calf was ever ready to be killed for an honorable guest. Thus this good father not only "*receiveth*," but "*eateth with*," the returned *outcast*. Behold the sinner *transformed*, clothed in the merits of Christ, recognized as a freedman and son, and invited to the rich blessings of the Gospel Feast ! . . . 24. *Dead*—In sin ; *alive*—quicken in Christ. Eph. ii. 1. The sinner is dead to the only true life of the soul. Prolonged impenitence is the second death. *Merry*—And this, again, is the joy in heaven over the sinner that repenteth ! The Father's Love has conquered, and this is the triumphal festivity of his faithful servants in heaven and on earth.

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pectation and realization ? Whom do these *servants* represent ? What the *Robe* ? Isa. lxi. 10. What the *Ring* ? Gen. xli. 42 ; Esth. iii. 10, 12. The *Shoes* ? 23. What the *fatted calf* ? The merry-making ? 24. In what sense is the impenitent sinner *dead* ? Eph. ii. 1. In what sense *lost* ?

## ANALYSIS.

I. The Father forsaken. . . . II. The Father forgotten. . . .  
 III. The Father remembered and sought. . . . IV. The Father  
 receives and restores the Prodigal. . . . V. The Father rejoices  
 with his family over the found. Or, I. The Prodigal's sin—  
 Rebellion. . . . II. Ruin. . . . III. Repentance. . . . IV. Re-  
 turn. . . . V. Restoration.

## SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“I will arise and go to my FATHER, and will say unto him, FATHER, I have sinned against heaven and before thee.” vs. 18.

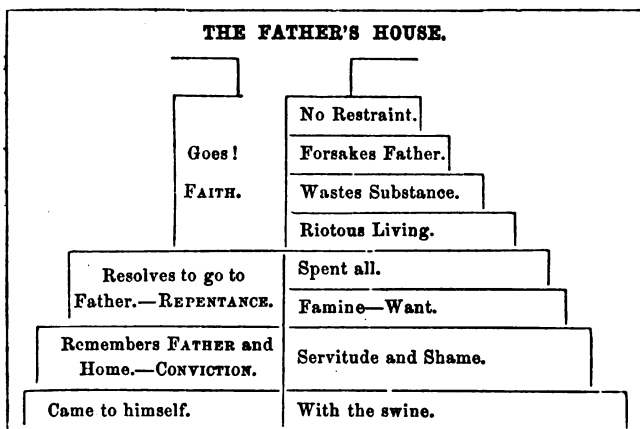
THEMES.—*For Thought*: The fatherhood of God; his pity for his erring children. *For Prayer*: Supplication—Forgive us our debts! Confession—“I have sinned!” *For Practical Life*: Shall I cleave to the husks and the swine of the “far country” of sin, or seek a heavenly Father's welcome home?

CATECHISM.—Q. 100. What does the preface of the Lord's Prayer teach us? A. The preface of the Lord's Prayer, which is *Our Father which art in heaven*, teacheth us to draw near to God, with all holy reverence and confidence, as children to a father able and ready to help us; and that we should pray with and for others.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK.

BLACKBOARD.—The whole of the following exercise will be better put upon the board during the review. Or before the class-work begins the superintendent, having first drawn the outlines of the steps, may briefly explain the design, thus: “Here is [write] THE FATHER'S HOUSE; these seven steps represent seven stages of [write] *The Prodigal's Ruin*. These three steps the stages of [write] *The Prodigal's Return*. This [write] *with the*

*swine*, where his sin left him, his landing-place; this [write] *Came to himself*, where God's regenerating grace found him, his starting-place. Now, at the close of the lesson tell me the seven steps down and the three steps up." The outline is also meant to represent these points: 1. The door of the Father's House is left open alway for the returning, it is closed against the departing. See 2 Pet. iii. 9, "Not willing that any," etc. 2. The difference between the height of the first three steps downward is very small, but afterward each step is a greater one. Prov. xvii. 14. So in returning; the soul soon finds God when it once has turned to seek Him.



N. B. The lines *The Prodigal's Ruin* and *The Prodigal's Return* are to be written diagonally across the board above the steps. The increasing depth of each succeeding step in the descent should be made more distinct upon the board than is represented in the above diagram.



LESSON XXXI.  
THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS SON.

Luke xv. 25-32.

NOTES.

25. Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and

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25. *Now his elder son*—Jesus, having under the character of the good father defended his treatment of the outcast Hebrews, now depicts the character of those who had murmured against Him. There is a difficulty which all interpreters have recognized in reconciling the father's words at verse 31 with the character of the Pharisees as drawn here and elsewhere. But greater difficulties seem to attach to any other view of the character represented by the elder son. *In the field*—Not a single, definite field; the word is used indefinitely, *country* as opposed to *town*.—WILNER *N. T. Gram.* The cultivated fields of the Jews lay outside their towns. *Drew nigh*—Implying that he had reached the house, but was on the outside. *Music*—More than that, a *symphonia*, or unison of voices and instruments in concord. The word (used only here) implies the perfect harmony *within* the house and suggests the contrast with this one discordant heart without. (For Hebrew instruments see Ps. cl. 3-5.) *Dancing*—Original, dances or dancers. The Greek word (Choroon) is the same from which our *choir* is derived, and refers to the prevailing choral dances, or to the band of dancers and singers who jointly performed them. They were hired, and among the Hebrews were *women*, as in the case of Miriam (Ex. xv. 20) and Jephthah's daughter (Judg. xi. 34). These *choirs* anciently were organized from among the women for triumphal and festal occasions, and in later times were hired, as here. A reported remark of an Oriental gentleman, who was looking upon a company of English dancers, expresses the Eastern notion. "Why

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25. Whom does this elder son represent? What were the privileges of the elder son? Wherein was this a true likeness of the Pharisees and Scribes? Was he at home when the prodigal came? What does this

drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. **26.** And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.

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don't you require your *servants* to do *that*?" he said, pointing to the laborious efforts of the ladies and gentlemen who were dancing. It is plain, therefore, that ALFORD'S *implied* justification of the dance of modern society by our Lord's mention of this custom here has not sufficient guarantee. The ready presence of this chorus indicates the scene of the parable as in the town, which agrees with the above view of *field*. Many find in the fact that the elder son was *in the field* an intimation of the Pharisaic devotion to, and dependence upon, *works*, supposing that he had been in the field giving that service to which he refers in verse 29. The fact that the son appears to have returned unaccompanied by servants, they being, even the hired servants, *at the house*, seems to forbid the inference that he was at work. Perhaps *the field* of this son corresponds with the *far country* of the other, expressing the same fact of *absence from the father*. That the elder son was in spirit an alien from his father's house appears in the sequel. Or perhaps it is only (or also) meant to express that he was *not at home* when his brother was to be welcomed; thus he had no part in promoting the greeting and the joy, and also, it may be added, no opportunity to hinder it. . . . **26.** *He called one of the servants*—What a contrast the return of the elder with that of the younger son! The father runs out and welcomes the penitent, and sends for all the household to join in showing him favor; the self-righteous son comes unnoticed, unseen; like a spy, appearing silently upon the premises. His alienation from the father appears in the fact that it is a *servant* whom he calls; it is not a casual inquiry, but a formal summons and questioning. The true filial spirit would have brought him to the father directly, without the intervention of a *servant*; but

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symbolize? Where had he been? Who were these dancers? What were they there for? Ex. xv. 20; Judg. xi. 34. Wherein did this custom differ from modern dances? Show the correspondence between *the field* of the elder son and the *far country* of the younger. Show the difference also, and apply both to the Pharisees and publicans. Did he suspect what the music meant? Why? **26.** Why did he call a servant? Why not the father? Why did he not at once go in? What sort of feeling did this

27. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

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the self-righteous are always in more intimate relations with the servants of God's house than with God himself. It cannot be doubted that this whole scene symbolizes (and was so intended) the difference between the reception of the Penitent and of the Self-Righteous at the Heavenly Home and in the Father's Heart. It is an illustration of Ps. cxxxviii. 6. *What these things meant*—What sort of things are these? implying doubt of their propriety as well as of their meaning. Our provincialism: "What sort of doings are these?" put in a sharp, censorious tone, is the best expression of the original question. Poor, selfish soul! even before he heard the cause he was vexed that his father's house should be filled with joy without his knowledge and consent. Unfilial son! to put thy father's conduct upon trial, and call thy father's servant to testify! Who art thou, to judge thy FATHER'S ways, presumptuous man? . . . 27. *Thy brother*—Which should have awakened all the nobler impulses of natural affection and have recalled the tender associations of boyhood. *Has come*—Recalling the long, sad separation, the source of so great peril to the wanderer and grief to the father. *Thy father*—The word should have aroused filial love and suggested obedience and reverence. *Hath killed*—Every sentiment of hospitality and good-fellowship should have given glad response to this honored rite, sacred even to the stranger. *Hath received*—Which should have suggested cheerful submission, or at least a philosophical yielding to the inevitable. *Safe and sound*—Common pity should have warmed up his heart at this news even if the servant spoke, as is probable, of his bodily condition alone. But if he had the higher meaning of the father's words at verse 24—*dead—alive; lost—found*—how did these words appeal to whatever was virtuous and religious within him! It is thus that the servants of God touch every

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show? 27. What feelings should the word *brother* have awakened? What thoughts the *has come*? What spirit should have followed the knowledge of the father's acts?

28. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came

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chord of the selfish sinner's heart to awaken, if possible, a generous response to the Father's Benevolent Will. The servant does not speak of the running out to meet the prodigal, the embrace, the robe, the ring and the shoes, but the elder brother knows enough of the father's heart and of the brother's probable destitution to *infer* all that. . . . 28. *He was angry*—Here appears the Pharisee murmuring at Jesus (verse 2), and the contrast with the *compassion* of the father. He thought this to be virtuous anger against sanctioning sin in another, but what a depth of sin it revealed within himself! *Would not go in*—The contrast with the father's running out to welcome. And here again is the Pharisee who would not *go in* to eat with sinners. Thus he stands where the brother whom he condemns lately stood, as one *willfully self-banished from his father's house*. This righteous son, in the very name of righteousness, is in open rebellion against the Holy Father. *Therefore*—How different the conditions of heart which draw the father's compassion toward these sons! yet of the two the elder was the more pitiable. *Came his father out*—Gravely, sadly, with none of the hopeful, elastic joy which marked the other coming out. Yet the same long-suffering and Fatherly love, "not willing that any should perish," is shown here. *Entreated him*—What an anomaly! that men must needs be *entreated* to exercise the holiest feelings of their nature, and to take the purest and highest joys attainable! Let us remember the Father's patience and love, and bear even with such religious persons as those who, like this man, in their pitiful self-righteousness, exalt themselves above their brethren, refusing to greet them in the Lord or fellowship them as brothers, saying, "*I am holier than thou.*" Is there not need, in this day of ritualistic exclusiveness, that we of the evangelical side should learn of this good father the grace of entreaty? O wandering brother, cease to rejoice in the multitude of thy external services; cease thy unhappy separation from thy father's house, and come in, come in,

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28. Why was he *angry*? Compare this with the conduct of the Pharisees. v. 2. Why would he not *go in*? Compare this with the Pharisees.

his father out, and entreated him. **29.** And he answering said to *his* father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment; and yet thou never

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and let us sit and eat and rejoice together as of old! . . . **29.** *Lo*—Abrupt beginning; there is no tender and respectful preface of the name Father. Contrast the address of the younger son with this, and compare this with the Pharisee's prayer, Luke xviii. 11, 12. *Many years*—Which adds to thy obligation and to my faithfulness. *I serve thee*—Here the spirit of him crops out—the spirit of a *slave* and not of a *son*. The younger son, when he came to his confession, had too much of the filial spirit, too high a sense of a Father's love and a son's place, to say what he had purposed: *Make me as one of thy hired servants*. Yet this fellow does not scruple to speak of himself as a slave rather than a son. As though such a confession were an appeal to a true father's heart. *Neither transgressed I*—Which was of course untrue; his very conduct was then belying this. But his standard of righteousness and sin had reference to letter, not spirit. The Pharisee appears in this presumptuous claim: "I fast, I give tithes of all." *Thou never gavest me*—Ah, it was not the Father, then, that thou wast serving, but thyself! He uncovers his Selfishness, the root of his dreadful sin. *A kid*—Narrow soul! But this is the coin in which the self-righteous ever reckons his reward. *Make merry*—There had been no merry-making in that house since a son had been lost; the father's heart was sorrow-stricken, he "would not be comforted;" how could he make merry, and how couldst thou have wished or asked a merry-making? This glimpse into that home during the prodigal's absence would lead us to believe that the elder son, at the very first hearing of the sounds of festivity, conjectured the real cause. *With my friends*—A grim merry-making that would have been if they were congenial spirits; no wonder the good father had no

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Contrast it with the father. How did this act put him in the same relation to his father with the prodigal when he went away? What does the father's *coming out* show? How may we show the same spirit? **29.** How does the man here show his disrespect of his father? Was it true that he had not *transgressed*? What reason had the father for not making merry?

gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:  
**30.** But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

**31.** And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and

relish for such. . . . **30.** *As soon as*—Not waiting for him to earn some consideration; not waiting to consult me and my pleasure. *This thy son*—Most contemptuous phrasing; but in disavowing his brotherhood he plainly renounced his sonship. See 1 John iv. 20. *Thy living*—A covert reproach of his father for having given it to him, some think; but rather, like what follows, intended to contrast the prodigal waste of his brother with his own careful servitude, by which the living was increased. He had exalted himself by giving his virtues absolutely; he does the same now by contrast. *With harlots*—Is this a truth which gives us a glimpse of the fact that messages and messengers from home had followed the prodigal? that reports of his sad doings had reached his relatives? Or is it, as ALFORD conjectures, “A charitable addition on the part of the elder brother, such as those represented by him always take care to make under similar circumstances?” *Thou hast killed for him*—And for thee, too, selfish one, if thou hadst but the heart to eat with thanksgiving and joy over a brother’s salvation. *The fatted calf*—Which, according to his basis of computing rewards, was giving the wasteful prodigal *better pay* than the hard-working economist. . . . **31.** *Son*—He was still entitled to the name, although showing none of the spirit of a son. This title is consistent with the dealings of God with Israel through all their sins. Especially did Jesus during all his ministry recognize the Jews as the chosen and favored sons. He came to *all* the lost sheep of the house of Israel, Pharisees as well as publicans. *Thou art ever with me*—This in the parable is plainly the sufficient justification for the alleged neglect of the elder son; not because I do not appreciate you, but because I put you upon the same footing with myself. Would I reward

**30.** Why did he speak of the prodigal as “*thy*” son? What is his object in bringing out the contrast between himself and his brother?

**31.** Did the term *son* apply to all the Israelites? In what sense were

all that I have is thine. **32.** It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

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myself for faithfulness, or rejoice over my own coming home? Besides, thou art already the heir; I have promised thee all that I have; nay, it is already thine; what more could I give? In seeking the spiritual significance of these words we are met with the difficulty referred to above: How can the sonship and heirship which they imply be reconciled with the utter lack of likeness to the true son and heir of God's kingdom which this elder son displays? The difficulty might, indeed, be *jumped* by supposing this to be one of those necessary discrepancies which are required by the parabolic form of speech in providing consistent costume for all the parts. My own view (as of the *just persons*, Lesson xxix.) is that Christ speaks from the Pharisees' standpoint—a view of the relations of Israel to God which certainly was in a sense true until the entire rejection of the Jews after the crucifixion. But no doubt the matter is purposely left just thus by that broad heavenly charity which would leave open the door to all, even such as this elder son; the same motive which left the son's decision in uncertainty and closed the parable with golden words (vs. 32), which are indeed the keynote of this whole chapter. . . . **32.** *It was meet*—For me and for thee and for all the household. *Make merry and be glad*—Rejoicing and showing our joy; pleased and glad, the whole nature stirred up to joy. *This thy brother*—The son denied, but the father reaffirmed, the relation. He *is* thy brother, and thou shouldst deal with him, nay, thou must meet him and deal with him, as such. *Was dead, and is alive*—The meetness is not based upon this, or, rather, is not separate from this. There can be no joy over a sinner in his sins. There is such a thing as untimely sympathy with the unrepentant criminal; but to rejoice over restored virtue, to sympa-

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the Pharisees also *sons*? In what was the formal position of this elder son like that of the Pharisees and Scribes? What privileges and possessions had they in their hands? **32.** How does the father reassert the relation of the prodigal? Does God our Father ever thus entreat sinners? Did the elder son at last go in?

thize with the truly penitent, this is meet. For is there not joy in heaven over that which *was lost and is found?*

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### ANALYSIS.

#### SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS EXHIBITED.

[~~Let~~ Let the scholar show from the narrative where and in what manner all the results of self-righteousness are represented.]

#### I. In its Effects upon Character.

Developing Selfishness, Anger, Pride, Worldliness, Cruelty.

#### II. In its Relations to the Heavenly Father.

Producing Estrangement, Irreverence, Complaining, Servility, Blasphemy, Rebellion. . . . The Prodigal Son illustrates *How we are to come to God*. The Self-Righteous Son shows *How we are not to come*.

#### III. In its Relations to Brethren.

Causing Jealousy, Envy, Hatred, Detraction, Separation.

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### SCHOLAR'S DIRECTORY.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—He was angry, and would not go in: there fore came his father out and entreated him. vs. 28. Or vs. 32.

**THEMES.**—*For Thought:* The tendency of self-righteousness to destroy Religion, Charity and Personal Worth. *For Prayer:* O GOD, my Father, deliver me from my own righteousnesses, which are as filthy rags, and give me to trust wholly in the Righteousness of Jesus Christ! *For Practical Life:* What sort of greeting do I give to my repenting friends? sneers, distrust, coldness?

**CATECHISM.**—Q. 34. What is adoption? A. Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges, of the sons of God.



## LESSON XXXII.

### THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.

Luke xvi. 19-31.

#### HISTORICAL CONNECTION.

This parable belongs to the series of discourses made in Perea which have been referred to before as peculiar to Luke. The opening sentence of the section, *There was a certain rich man* (vs. 19,) links the parable to the foregoing words, especially at vs. 14, where the "covetous" Pharisees heard and derided Jesus for teaching them to make riches the friends to help them heavenward, after the prudent example of the Steward. The parable which follows gives a case of one who *did not* use his wealth and station to increase his heavenly reward. It illustrates also vs. 15, That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God, which might indeed be taken as the formal expression of the truth which the parable teaches figuratively.

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#### NOTES.

19. There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple

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19. *A certain rich man*—An indefiniteness which leaves the lesson open to every rich man. *Purple*—Purple robes were worn by kings (Judges viii. 26); by the highest civil and church

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19. What truth in verse 15 of this chapter does this parable illustrate? What was the rich man's name? Why is he called Dives? What class of

and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: **20**. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate,

officers, as Mordecai. Esth. viii. 15. They were also worn by the wealthy and luxurious. Jer. x. 9. *Fine linen*—The tunics or inner garments. The Israelite women brought from Egypt (Ex. xxxv. 25) the art of weaving linen cloth of a marvelous fineness. WILKINSON quotes from Mr. Thompson an account of a piece of cloth found near Memphis, Egypt, in which five hundred and forty threads were counted to the inch in the warp, one hundred and ten in the woof. From PLINY he quotes concerning threads used for fowling-nets: "Some of them were so delicate that they would pass through a man's ring, and a single person could carry a sufficient number of them to surround a whole wood." *Fared sumptuously*—With the idea (in Greek) of hilarity accompanying his feasts. *Every day*—He made holiday of his whole life, and herein was his sin. He was the counterpart of the Rich Fool. Luke xii. 19. This description of Dives expresses the very highest degree of worldly wealth and luxury, and devotion to them. With these were associated neglect of the needy, contempt of God's Word and carelessness of eternity. It is a most truthful picture of the aristocratic Jewish classes of that day. . . . **20**. *Lazarus*—Hebrew, Eleazar, God-help. As the point of the parable was directed chiefly to the Pharisees, the same objection does not lie against giving a name to the beggar. But the naming is significant: "Seems he not to you," says Augustine (in TRENCH), "to have been reading from that Book (of Life) where he found the name of the poor man written, but not the name of the rich?" "Lazarus is known by his own name in heaven, whereas the rich man has merely a pedigree in the world."—BENGEL. Our Lord here gives us an insight of the light in which He, the Judge of the Last Day, will look upon the Record of men: the names of his own are graven upon his hands (Isa. xlix. 16), but the memory of the wicked

people usually wore *purple and fine linen*? Judg. viii. 26; Esth. viii. 15. Did Dives enjoy his sumptuous fare alone? How often did he have his merry-makings? Wherein did he resemble the Rich Fool? Luke xii. 19. **20**. What does the name Lazarus mean? What part of the house was the

full of sores, **21.** And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

**22.** And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried

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He will cut off. Ps. cix. 15. Dives is the Latin of Rich-man, and has long (as early at least as Chaucer) and conveniently been used as a quasi proper name. *Was laid*—Was cast down. The outer *gate* which guarded the entrance to the court around which Eastern houses were built is here meant. Here the porter waited. The frequent passing in and out of family visitors and guests at such an establishment made the chief entrance a resort for beggars. *Sores*—Ulcers; not even rags to cover them. Sad contrast with the purple and fine linen. . . . **21.** *Desiring to be fed with the crumbs*—So the Prodigal desired to be filled with the "husks." The crumbs or broken bits were doubtless given him, as they were given the dogs that waited with him. Most beggars ask money, Lazarus sought only food. *Moreover*—Besides getting the crumbs, which was one favor. *The dogs came and licked his sores*—Which was the only other favor and sympathy which earth had for Lazarus. He was thus attended and befriended by dogs, the Jewish emblem of all uncleanness! Draw the contrast:

## DIVES.

1. Lording it in the palace.
2. Clothed in the richest garments.
3. Faring sumptuously daily amid merry revelers.
4. Crowds of servants and choice society.

## LAZARUS.

1. Laid rudely at the street gate.
2. Covered with naked, running sores.
3. Waiting lonely for occasional crumbs.
4. Companion and beneficiary of dogs.

. . . **22.** *And it came to pass*—There is little thus far to indicate

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gate? Why was Lazarus laid there? Who laid him there? Why was he not able to help himself? **21.** What do beggars usually want? What did this one desire? Would ~~the~~ *crumbs* have satisfied him? Do you think he received them? Why? Who were his companions? Why did he not chase the dogs away? Why did he not cover his sores? Contrast the conditions of Dives and Lazarus.

**22.** Was Lazarus a good or bad man? How do you know? What be-

by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, any other than a difference of circumstances between the two, but the future brings out their true characters, and adjusts the uneven balance of circumstances. *The beggar died*—Not called *Lazarus* here, to bring out the happy contrast more strongly. *Was carried by the angels*—Who are ministers to the saints. Heb. i. 14. Rough hands had often cast his poor body at the palace gate; now angels bear his rejoicing soul into the Gate of Glory. Nothing is said of his burial; but no matter now, his body may lie at the rich man's gate; in the morning the servants will tell him that the old beggar is dead at last, and he will bid the carcass to the potter's field. *Abraham's bosom*—His soul did not wait outside the gate; to the highest seat, the very bosom of the Friend of God and the Father of the Faithful, the disembodied spirit is borne. This expression is undoubtedly derived from the table customs of the period, and contrasts the Feasts of the Kingdom with the rich man's feasts. See Matt. viii. 11, with John i. 18; xiii. 23. But it was also a popular name of that part of Hades in which the righteous were thought to await full blessedness at the Resurrection. The prevailing Jewish belief in Christ's time concerning the souls of the dead I have condensed from JOSEPHUS' Discourse on Hades, as follows: 1. Hades is a region of perpetual darkness, allotted as a place of custody for souls, righteous and unrighteous. 2. There is one descent into it, at the gate of which an archangel, with a host, separates the good to the *right hand*, who are led into a region of light and bliss, where all the just dwell and wait the eternal new life in heaven. 3. The unjust are dragged by force to the *left hand*, into a region hard by the lake of unquenchable fire, which is hell itself, and is prepared and reserved for the wicked at the day of final sentence. In this region they are tormented by the continual sight and sound of hell, and do not stand clear of the hot vapor itself. They suffer in expectation of their fearful doom. They are punished by the sight of the place of

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came of his body? Who took charge of his soul? Would not *one* angel have been enough? Why more? Who are the angels? Heb. i. 14. Who was Abraham? What does the term *into Abraham's bosom* mean? See

the fathers and the just, for a chaos, deep and large, is fixed between them, which no one can pass over. 4. At a day which God hath determined He will make a resurrection of all men from the dead, when every soul shall receive its own body; the bodies of all the just shall be glorious, pure and free from misery, but the bodies of the wicked shall not be freed from their diseases and pains. 5. All men, angels and demons, shall then stand before the Messiah, to whom the Father hath committed all judgment, when those who have done well shall receive the everlasting fruition of heaven; but the wicked, eternal punishment with the unquenchable fire, the fiery worm never dying, with never-ceasing grief, sleepless, deathless, beyond the interceding prayers of kindred. This view, in substance, is the view of many of the ancient fathers and of many learned moderns, among whom are TRENCH and ALFORD. According to this view, we are to suppose the scene following located in Hades, Abraham and Lazarus being on the Blissful side—Paradise, Abraham's bosom, Elysium; Dives upon the Baleful side, which is Hades proper. There is much in the Scriptures which seems to commend this doctrine of the intermediate state of the dead. It gives a more apparent consistency to such passages as concern the death of Christ, the final resurrection, the miraculous revivifying of the dead, the general judgment, and to some other parts of Scripture. But, on the other hand, it is hard, if not indeed impossible, to reconcile the doctrine with such plain facts and assertions as the vision and prayer of dying Stephen (Acts vii. 55-59); Paul's confidence (2 Cor. v. 8); his Strait (Phil. i. 23); the Soul's Forerunner (Heb. vi. 19, 20); and such passages as describe the saints as already in the presence of God and the Lamb. Rev. v. 8, 9; vii. 13-17; xiv. 3, 4. The argument in the first of these references rests upon the undoubted fact that Jesus is in heaven, at the right hand of the Father. If his saints pass immediately to Him and dwell with Him, then they

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Matt. viii. 11 and John i. 18; xiii. 23. Was Lazarus ever taken into the feasts of Dives? What place has he now at the feasts of heaven? What benefits do the souls of believers receive from Christ at death? See Q. and A. 37, Catechism. Show this to be true from Acts vii. 59; 2 Cor. v. 8; Phil. i. 24; Heb. vi. 19, 20; Rev. v. 8, 9; vii. 13-17; xiv. 34. When will the glory and enjoyment of the saints be perfected? Q. 38, Catechism.

and was buried; **23.** And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

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are not *in Hades*. In the last two and similar references, the Scripture statement is plainly on the side of the WESTMINSTER symbols (Cat., Q. 37): "The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory." This glory and enjoyment, however, is not perfected until the Resurrection. (See Q. 38, Cat.) Where so little can be asserted absolutely there should be liberty of opinion among evangelical people. It is, however, well to remember that Romish prayers for the souls of the dead grew out of a *perversion* of the doctrine of the Intermediate state, and that there is the same noticeable conjunction between the two notions among modern Protestant Ritualists. *The rich man also died*—Inevitable doom! His riches could not save him; his fine linen goes now for cerements, his spicery for embalmments, his sumptuously fed flesh is food for worms! His death is stated as following that of Lazarus, which accords with the Divine Mercy, both in delivering Lazarus early from his sorrows and in giving Dives greater space for repentance. As the beggar's mournful presence was a continual call to Dives to *prepare to live*, his absence was a solemn call to *prepare to die*. *Was buried*—With pomp and parade, in the whited sepulchre of his noble family. But where was the soul now? Unburied Lazarus is in glory, but Dives is *in Hell*. What a comment upon the funeral pageants of the ungodly rich and great! . . . **23. In Hell**—In original is *in Hades*. The word is used in the New Testament eleven times: Matt. xi. 23; xvi. 18; Luke x. 15; xvi. 23; Acts ii. 27 and 31, referring to Christ's soul; 1 Cor. xv. 55, translated *death*; Rev. i. 18; vi. 8; xx. 13 and 14. The obvious sense here is that Dives *was* in Hades, where Lazarus *was not*. *Seeth Abraham afar off*—How did he *recognize* Abraham? Even out of hell he was looking after him in whom the Jews put their chief trust. Perverse and profitless clinging of the soul to saints! The passage, and following, shows

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Who first died, Lazarus or Dives? How is God's mercy shown in this order toward both men? How was the body of the rich man treated? **23.** What became of the rich man's soul? Is this dialogue between Abra-

**24.** And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

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that departed souls retain fully their consciousness, also that they recognize each other. The power of the lost to communicate with the just might be inferred, but this conversation rather belongs to the drapery of the parable. The *truths* which Jesus would convey are taught in the form of an assumed dialogue between a lost soul and Abraham. It is obvious why Abraham was chosen to represent the Blessed. It is also to be noted that during the entire scene, and indeed throughout the whole parable, *Lazarus is silent*: he seems to have no knowledge of Dives, nor of the words of Abraham. Was not this intended by the Master to show us that the Blessed are not cognizant of the torments of the lost? Few men have preached such mighty sermons to the world as has this speechless beggar! *Lazarus in his bosom*—The expression varies from that of verse 22, and seems to indicate that the popular sense of *Abraham's bosom* (Blissful Hades) cannot be admitted here, but rather that we must confine the imagery to a feast with Abraham in the kingdom of heaven, as at Matt. viii. 11. See also John i. 18 and xiii. 23. This verse brings out strongly the contrast between the *future* state of these two men, which is even greater than was their earth-estate. . . . **24. Father Abraham**—Thus he confesses himself a lost Jew—lost, *although* a Jew, a child of Abraham, of the covenant, of the chosen people. *Have mercy on me*—"In this prayer of the rich man we have *the only invocation of saints* in Scripture, and certainly not a very encouraging one." **TRENCH.** *Send Lazarus*—An example of the power of habit; he could not forget even then, with that far depth of difference between them, that Lazarus was not for his service; he does not say: *Come thou*, but, *Send Lazarus*. Or, it may be, he saw no one of all his gay companions in heaven, no

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ham and Dives supposed really to have occurred? How does this verse bring out the contrast between the two men's souls?

**24.** How does this verse show the nationality of Dives? Did the Pharisees think a Jew could thus be lost? Why did Dives cry to Abraham?

25. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things:

one that he knew but this poor beggar. He *had* given him a few crumbs—that was the sum of good wrought by his great wealth which now he could recall—and on the ground of that he fain would be comforted a little in hell. *Water*—One drop of water! But then it was from the River of Life, and Dives may have thought it of such merit as to cool his tongue. O man, hadst thou but taken the water of life that was proffered to you freely and pressed upon you on earth! Now thou must drink the wine of the wrath of God. He does not ask deliverance from hell; that he knows cannot be. Even the mercy asked is the very least conceivable, as though he dare not hope for more. Only a drop of water! Is he who fared sumptuously every day at last content with *that*? Begging for a drop of water, begging from the despised beggar, and begging in vain! O rich man, remember the Coming Day! *I am tormented in this flame*—“That personality to which universal consent rightly attributes sensibility to bliss and woe, the man’s real *self*, is translated into the other world.”—ALFORD. . . . 25. *Son*—But in what a sense *now*!—cast-out son of the bond-woman, not son of faith and promise. *Remember*—The soul is lost, but not its life here. Ah, if he could only *not* remember! O God, give me grace to live godly now, to redeem my time, to improve my talents, that I may be saved from a lost soul’s memory of the lost, lost opportunity! *Receivedst*—All spent upon thy earth-life; nothing laid up for the future; a bankrupt, a beggar, homeless, joyless. *All drawn!* such is thy bank-account with heaven, but at hell-gate there waits for thee the *wages of sin*, which is *death*! *Comforted*—Sweet word! Just suited to the poor, weak, bruised and weary child of sorrow, whose smarting sores were so chafed upon the hard bosom of the earth—comforted, fondled, honored, rested in the bosom of Abraham! Behold how our light afflictions

Did he seek deliverance from hell? Why not? Why did he name Lazarus to be his helper? 25, 26. What two reasons does Abraham give why the desired mercy cannot be granted? Show from these three verses that



but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. **26.** And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. **27.** Then 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.** Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and

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work out for us the exceeding weight of glory! . . . **26.** *Besides all this*—Over and above the *Fitness* of this judgment. *Fixed*—A strong word, fixed for ever. This word and verse must destroy all hope of finding in the future a way out of hell. *So that*—Or *in order that*. . . **27, 28.** *Send him to my father's house*—Some suppose that this request shows a basis of remaining good broad enough to build a future repentance and reform upon. But natural affection is not inconsistent with unbelief; the rich man is not represented as of gross morals; many a soul goes down to hell possessed of many excellent traits. And besides, the motive of the man is not so clear: "Well, then, if you won't save me, help my brothers; I never had any chance to escape this torment; give them some chance at least!" Reproach of God's ways and a profound contempt of the established means of grace underlie these words. . . . **29.** *Moses and the Prophets*—The Scriptures of the Old Testament, which testify clearly and sufficiently of Judgment to come. How much greater is our light and responsibility who have also Christ and the Apostles and the Holy Ghost! *Let them hear them*—For in hearing of them is the great reward. "We are saved by hearing the word with faith, not by apparitions."—BENGEI.  
. . . **30.** *Nay*—The Revelation is *not* enough! *But if one went*

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in the future world the soul is Intelligent, Conscious, Remembers, Recognizes others, that its estate is for ever fixed.

**27.** Did this man love his brothers? Was that praiseworthy? Can such amiable traits *save the soul*? What does God require? What besides brotherly love *may* have prompted this request? **28.** Why did he want Lazarus to testify to his brethren? What sort of men were his brethren evidently? **29.** What testimony did these brethren have? Is that enough? Have you that? **30.** Why did he think a *spirit* would

the prophets; let them hear them. **30.** And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. **31.** And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.

*unto them from the dead!*—Behold the author and the origin of that modern spiritualism which holds forth spirit communications as the only sufficient proof of immortality! His low estimate of the Bible here fully appears. . . . **31.** *If they hear not Moses*—Which implies the practical infidelity, the unbelief of Dives and his brothers. Yet they were of the Household of Israel, and called Abraham Father! *Neither will they be persuaded*—The strongest argument possible is in the hands of the Teacher of the Law and the Gospel. *Though*—For it is not impossible. *One rose from the dead*—Lazarus of Bethany rose, and Jews believed not. Yea, Jesus Himself arose, and men were unpersuaded, and are unpersuaded still. Let the unbeliever tremble; he is without excuse for his sin. Let the believer rejoice and be confident; the foundation of his faith standeth sure upon the Word of God.

#### ANALYSIS.

##### I. The Rich Man's Sin.

Use of his God-given means in selfish indulgence. . . . Neglect of the Poor. . . . Exalting Saints above God. . . . Contempt of the Scriptures. . . . Practical Unbelief of Eternal Things.

##### II. The Retributions and Rewards of Eternity.

The Pampered Unbeliever a Suffering Beggar in Hell. . . .

convince them? Did Abraham agree to that? How is the preciousness and sufficiency of the Scriptures here shown? What views did Dives have of eternal things? Of the Bible? What should this lesson teach the rich? What the poor? What all impenitent souls?

Earthly Honors and Pleasures Cease with Earth. . . . The Consolations of the Pious Poor. . . . The Uses of Adversity. . . .  
 Yet Father Abraham was a rich man, and many a poor man lives and dies in grossest self-indulgence and abuse of life's opportunities. . . . The Silent Sermons of the Pious Poor!

### III. The State of the Soul after Death.

The Soul is Intelligent—Conscious—Remembers—Recognizes . . . Its State is Fixed for ever. . . . The Good pass immediately into Glory. . . . There the Righteous Rich and Righteous Poor meet together; the friendless beggar and the mighty patriarch, the despised outcast and the venerated saint, are brothers and companions now. . . . The Bad pass immediately into Hell.

### IV. The Soul's only Safe Chart for Eternity.

The Word of God. . . . The Fullness of all its Parts. . . . Its Sufficiency. . . . Its Preciousness above all other Schemes . . . The Doomed perish without excuse.

[N. B. Let the scholar group the *verses* under the proper heads of the Analysis, and establish the several Doctrines and Thoughts from the *Text of the Lesson*.]

## SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

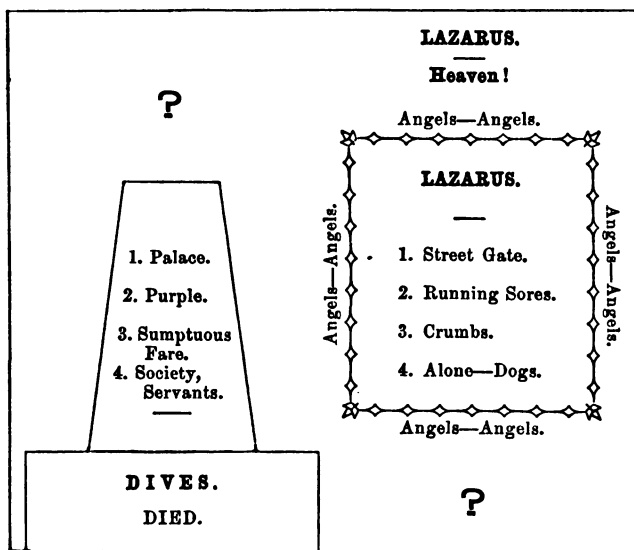
GOLDEN TEXT.—“Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.” vs. 25.

THEMES.—*For Thought*: The future rewards of the pious and punishment of the ungodly. *For Prayer*: Lord, so teach me to live that I may stand with joy at the judgment-seat of Christ! *For Practical Life*: Eccles. xi. 9, “Know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment!”

CATECHISM.—Review Q. 37. Q. 84. What doth every sin deserve? A. Every sin deserveth God's wrath and curse, both in this life and that which is to come.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK.

**BLACKBOARD.**—The contrast between Dives and Lazarus may be brought out as below. The name of Lazarus and that which follows may be surrounded with immortelles, intertwined with other emblems of hope and immortality. The record of Dives is inscribed upon his monument; his name, also, in bold letters, and next to the earth. The name of Lazarus is written also in heaven; his soul is guarded by the angels into glory. The (?) shows in the case of Lazarus the query: What became of his body? In the case of Dives, the awful question: Where is his soul? The monument around "Dives" and the wreath around "Lazarus," indeed all the lesson, may be placed on the board *during* the talk or review. Or the wreath with the name "LAZARUS" and the monument with "DIVES" may be prepared first and the rest added *during* the review.



## LESSON XXXIII. X

### CHRIST'S SUDDEN COMING—LOT'S WIFE.

Luke xvii. 30-37.—Parallel, Matt. xxiv. 3-41.

#### HISTORICAL CONNECTION.

This discourse seems to connect at vs. 10 with the first of the chapter, and so with the parable of Dives and Lazarus in the chapter preceding. We may believe that the Pharisees were in no amiable mood after the severe but merited lesson which that parable taught them. To the demand which they now made concerning the time of the coming of the kingdom of which Jesus so often spoke, their feelings of anger, contempt and pride chiefly prompted them, not unmingled, it may be, with some apprehension: "When shall this kingdom come? We see no signs of it. Where are the facts to justify your predictions, to vindicate your assumed authority, to substantiate your claims to Messiahship? We want proof, evidence, something that we can see. When shall we have it?" The same question in a different spirit was put by the disciples as they sat with our Lord upon Mt. Olivet, looking down upon the temple and the town, on the day before the betrayal. The answer is recorded at length in Matt. xxiv., where, it will be seen, Jesus repeated and enlarged upon what He here said.

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#### NOTES.

20. And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The

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20. *When*—As to where it should come and whom it should embrace they did not allow themselves to doubt; for were not *they* the chosen people, the future princes and subjects of the Messiah's Kingdom? *With observation*—With such outward

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20. What purpose had the Pharisees in putting this question? Did they look for the kingdom of God? What sort of a kingdom did they think it would be? How would the coming of such a kingdom have affected the

kingdom of God cometh not with observation: **21.** Neither shall they say, *Lo here!* or, *lo there!* for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

**22.** And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when

pomp of circumstance and condition as shall excite observation. These Jews looked for a Messiah who should establish the ancient kingdom of David and Solomon with a suddenness, splendor and power that should startle and awe and overshadow all nations, causing the world to marvel. The Kingdom shall not so come, said Jesus. . . . **21.** *Neither shall they say*—Nay, more, there shall be no opportunity for those who expect the kingdom, to say with truth, *Lo here* it comes! or, *Lo there!* for behold (Gr. *lo!*) *the kingdom of God!* Thus Jesus opposes his own, *Lo the kingdom!* to the *Lo here, lo there!* of those who were looking for it. *Is within you*—Not in the hearts of those mocking Pharisees, but in their midst, among them. Ye look for a kingdom whose glory shall be greater than Solomon's, but behold, a greater than Solomon *is here!* Jesus the Christ had come, bringing the kingdom, and now stood among them proclaiming it, yet they had not observed it. . . . **22.** *Unto the Disciples*—The haughty Pharisees must be content with the simple rebuke and announcement; yet although not directly addressed, they seem still to have been within hearing. *The days will come*—The days of persecution to themselves, beginning with the death of Stephen; the days of national peril and civil discord preceding the fall of Jerusalem. *Ye shall desire to see*—They would long for the days past, the joyful days of the Bridegroom, and desire the Son of man to be among them again, to cheer by his presence and protect by his power. *Ye shall not see*—Therefore you need not look for it,

nations? [Excited wonder, observation.] What does *cometh not with observation* mean? **21.** What reason did Jesus give why men shall never truly say, *Lo!* there cometh the kingdom? When had the kingdom come among them? Who had brought it? Were the Pharisees in the kingdom? Had they observed its coming? Why not? What is the difference between having the kingdom in our midst and being ourselves in the kingdom?

**22.** What were those coming days of trial of which Jesus spoke? What did He mean by *one of the days of the Son of man?* Why would the disciples have such desires? Did Jesus ever come again to them in person?

ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it. **23.** And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after *them*, nor follow *them*. **24.** For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one *part* under heaven, shineth

and need not listen to the *see here, see there*, of pretenders. . . . **23.** *They shall say, See here! see there!*—The misinterpretation of the Messianic prophecies into which the Jews had fallen made them susceptible victims of imposture at the hands of every mad enthusiast or political adventurer. They were ready to see in every new claimant of the name of Messiah the true Deliverer for whom they longed with a desire that was strengthened by a need which was sore enough. Before our Lord was fifteen years old, a dozen false Christs had been proclaimed by deluded or ambitious spirits whom the troubles attending the death of Herod the Great had thrown up to the surface of affairs. Among these the most noted were Judas of Gamala (Acts v. 37) and Simon the slave or Theudas of Acts v. 36. Among the many who appeared after the ascension of Jesus Christ, were John and James the sons of Judas of Gamala, the Claudian Theudas, and the Egyptian Prophet of Acts **xxi.** 8. There was, therefore, abundant reason for the Lord's warning. *Go not after*—A caution against the first steps; go not away from your chosen path even to consider the claims of the false Christs. *Nor follow them*—Much more, do not become their disciples. . . . **24.** *As the lightning*—Vividly seen against the dark sky, suddenly flashing over the whole vault of heaven. *So*—So suddenly, universally and certainly revealed. *Shall the Son of man be*—The coming of the Son of man is a different matter from the coming of his kingdom—the latter “without observation,” noiseless, scarcely perceived; the former known of all, visible to all, accompanied by the thunders of the lightning. *In his day*—At the Lord's coming. The destruction of Jerusalem is especially meant. So evident was this coming that the Christians of Judea, EUSEBIUS relates, heed-

**23.** What false Christs arose before our Lord's ascension? Acts v. 36, 37. Were there any pretended Messiahs after that time? Matt. xxiv. 24; Acts **xxi.** 8. Why did Jesus give this caution? **24.** What is that *coming of*

unto the other *part* under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day. **25.** But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.

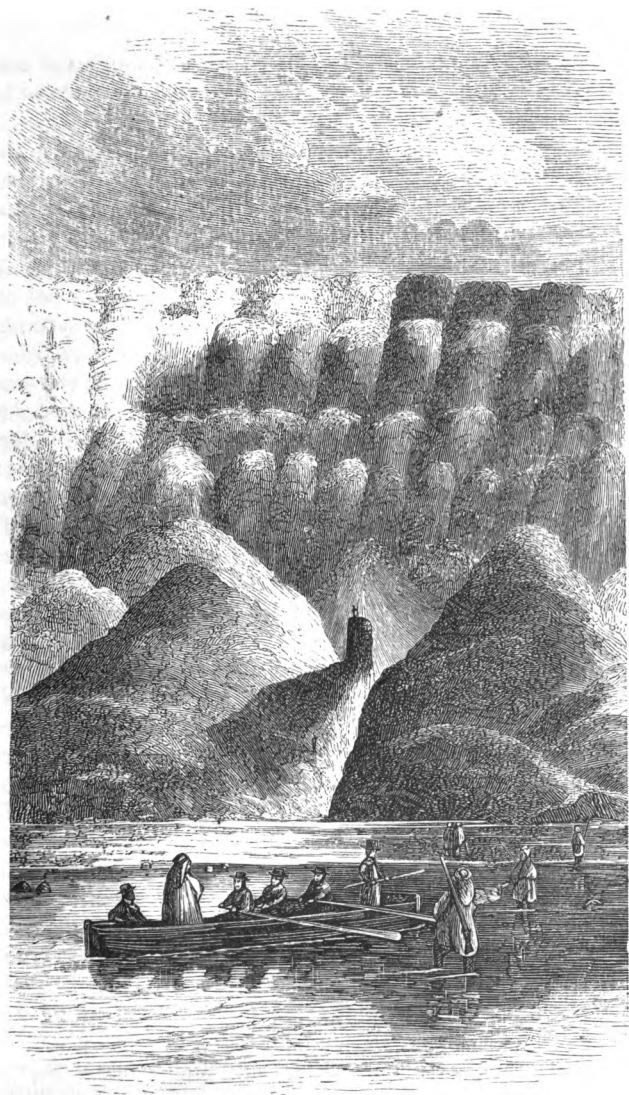
**26.** And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. **27.** They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that

ing the signs which Christ gave (Matt. xxiv.), fled to the Greek city Pella, beyond Jordan, A. D. 67, and thus escaped the fate of their unhappy countrymen. . . . **25.** *Must he suffer*—The suffering goes before the glorious coming; the rejection before the retribution. Here again Jesus associates the ideas of suffering and conquering in the character and life of Messiah, that the disciples might be familiarized with the truth. To the disciples this humiliation of their Lord was to be the evidence of his glorious appearing; to his enemies it was proof that his hopes and claims were for ever extinguished—the old truth, “a savor of life or of death.” . . . **26.** *And as it was*—In the three particulars referred to below, viz.: (1.) Abounding worldliness and irreligion; (2.) Utter lack of expectation of calamity; (3.) The completeness of the destruction. . . . **27.** *They did eat*—With feasting. *They drank*—Both Noah and Lot carried with them the taint of these convivial customs. *They married*—Hoping to found families and to long have the joys of love and home. *That Noah entered*—Noah and the Ark, Lot and Zoar, represent in this picture the safety of the Christians whose pastors led them out of Jerusalem to Pella. *And the flood came*—Even during the seven days of waiting after Noah’s entrance (Gen. vii. 10), up to the very moment of the flood, the perverse confidence of the people continued. There was also a short period of waiting after the Christians abandoned Jerusalem ere the calamity came. *Destroyed them all*—The deluge reached as far as men were scattered. Our Lord

*the Son* here referred to? In what was it to be like *the lightning*? **25.** To what event does Jesus here refer? In what manner do the people of *this* generation reject Christ?

**26.** In what were the days of the Son of man like the days of Noah? **27.** Did these people have any warning? What? Why did they not listen to it? In what was Noah saved? Show how the ark is a figure of Christ.





Usdum, and the Probable Site of Ancient Sodom.



Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. **28.** Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; **29.** But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed *them* all. **30.** Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

does not teach the universality of the deluge as to the globe, but He does affirm the O. T. narrative as to the destruction of all the earth's inhabitants. . . . **28.** *The days of Lot*—See Gen. xix. *They bought*—And hoped to hold. *They sold*—And hoped to hoard. *They planted*—And thought to reap. *They builded*—Expecting to dwell. New objects (compare vs. 27) have come with the advance of the race to engross the thoughts of the Sodomites—commerce, agriculture, architecture. But the old sin remains. . . . **29.** *The same day*—The destruction was here more swiftly, more “as the lightning.” *That Lot went out*—Thus often the righteous are the preserving “salt of the earth,” whose removal would be followed instantly by doom. *It rained fire and brimstone*—Gen. xix. 24. Jehovah rained upon them fire from Jehovah out of heaven. It was a miracle of judgment. And yet we may suppose that God made use of natural agencies; but whether lightning and burning meteors, volcano and earthquake, the depression and elevation of the earth, we cannot know. Why need we speculate? The whole region of the Dead Sea, where Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim stood, bears the marks of some dreadful convulsion of Nature.—*See the Bible Dictionaries.* . . . **30.** *Even thus*—Titus, having captured Jerusalem A. D. 70, completely demolished the city and temple, excepting part of the wall and Herod's three great towers, which were only

What became of the rest of the world? Why were they destroyed? Gen. vii. **28.** Where did Lot live? Where was Sodom situated? What sort of people lived in Sodom? See Gen. xix. 12–29. How did they show that they were not expecting a judgment? **29.** Who took Lot out of Sodom? Gen. xix. 15, 16. How long afterward did the judgment come? Why was it spared until Lot escaped? Gen. xix. 29. How did God destroy Sodom? Gen. xix. 23–25. Where did Lot find safety? Where does the soul find safety from the wrath to come? **30.** Wherein is the judgment upon Sodom like all the judgments of the Son of man? Wherein like God's judgment upon Jerusalem?

**31.** In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. **32.** Remember Lot's wife. **33.** Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.

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spared as monuments of the massive works which Roman valor had carried. Says JOSEPHUS: "The whole was so thoroughly leveled and dug up that no one visiting it would believe it had ever been inhabited." It was a destruction scarcely less complete than that of Sodom and of the Antediluvian world. . . .

**31. Housetop**—The roof of the Orientals is in constant use for various purposes, drying linen, curing corn, figs and raisins, for converse, recreation and rest in the evening, and for worship. In the humbler houses the roof is reached from the outside by a ladder; in others by an outside stairway landing within the court. These stairs are often shaded by vines or creeping plants. It would be a pressing danger that would compel one to pass down by his open doors and stop to take no "stuff" in his flight. . . .

**32. Remember Lot's wife**—Who disobeyed the angel warning, tarried in the plain which God had devoted to destruction, instead of fleeing for her life to the Heaven-appointed refuge, and was therefore overtaken by the storm of judgment. Her unwillingness to yield ensnaring possessions and the pleasures of sin wrought her ruin. Let her example warn us all who are fleeing for refuge from the wrath to come, to turn not back! . . .

**33. Shall seek**—Gr., *shall have sought*—As his life-principle. *To save his life*—Not to save one's possessions may the soul turn back; nay, not to save his life! The highest devotion to principle and obedience to God is here expressed. *Shall lose it*—He who barter's soul for life often loses both. *Shall preserve it*—For God's witnesses shall live until their testimony be given, and they who

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**31.** In what way were the Christians saved at that time? Matt. xxiv. 15, 16. To what city did they flee? [Pella, beyond Jordan.] What is the only sure way of safety for all souls who would escape eternal doom? **32.** What is it that Jesus would have us learn from Lot's wife? What was her sin? Whom had she disobeyed? See Gen. xix., vs. 17 and 26. To whom must we flee? How can we do this? What is it to believe in Jesus? When should we do this? Why now?

**34.** I tell you, in that night there shall be two *men* in one bed ; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. **35.** Two *women* shall be grinding together ; the one shall be taken, and the other left. **36.** Two *men* shall be in the field ; the one shall be taken, and the other left. **37.** And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord ? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.

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die in the faith are preserved unto life eternal. . . . **34.** *In that night*—In that day (vs. 31) it shall be *night*, for “the sun shall be turned into darkness.” *In one bed*—There shall be Sunderings of families, of friends, of the companions of the camp and khan. . . . **35.** *Two women*—The companions of domestic toil shall be sundered. *Grinding together*—At the ordinary handmill. In the upper stone a stake or upright handle was fixed, which the women pushed alternately toward each other as they sat upon opposite sides of the stones. Thus the upper revolved upon the nether stone ; the grain was fed to the mill by hand. . . . **36.** *In the field*—Sowing or reaping. *The one shall be taken*—Spared by the mercy of God. Matt. xxiv. 31. *The other left*—To receive the doom of his self-elected unbelief. Thus shall the Gospel of the Kingdom separate families, neighbors, companions, into the faithful and the unbelieving. Thus shall the Judgment of Souls divide between soul and soul. Lord Christ, help me and all mine to take Thee as Saviour, that we may be among those “who shall be taken !” . . . **37.** *Where, Lord ?*—Put excitedly, anxiously ; where shall this happen ? *Wheresoever the body is*—The body of sin and death ; the corrupt body politic of Judea. *The eagles*—Emblems of the armies of Rome. Or, if we do not admit the reference to the Romans, our Lord seems to say in effect to his disciples : Keep aloof from corruption and corrupt men, and you shall be safe from God’s chosen agents for destroying moral and political carcasses, for where God’s enemies combine, there his avengers come. The answer is purposely enigmatical. He reserves the details for a later period and more private occasion. See Matt. xxiv.

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**34–37.** What is meant by being *taken* ? By being *left* ? Why did these separations occur ? Will you be among the “taken” or among the “left” ?

## ANALYSIS.

**I. The Son Coming to his Kingdom.**

*Facts.*—Jesus declares to the Pharisees that the Kingdom of God is not such as cometh with outward glory and power; He proclaims it to have already come. vss. 20, 21.

*Thoughts.*—How many souls are questioning, When shall the kingdom come? before whom the King himself is standing, with words and tokens of mercy! God's kingdom is among you; his Spirit strives to subdue you; his word invites you; his ambassadors and servants urge you: will you yield your heart to God, and enter in through Christ into the kingdom? . . . Let the humble Sabbath-schools of town and country, weak in numbers, poor in purse, with little machinery, with the old-fashioned ways, and unknown to the public, remember that for them too, nay, for them especially, is that kingdom which "cometh not with observation." The King's seal is upon this quiet, humble toil. . . . Brethren who work among the multitude and in the public eye, beware! You hear the footsteps of the many visitors; do you hear among you the soft footsteps of the King? May God save us all from toiling with desire after "observation!"

**II. The Son Coming to Judgment.**

*Facts.*—Our Lord describes his coming to judge and destroy Jerusalem as a type of all his judgments upon men and of the last judgment.

*Thoughts.*—1. *Of the trials of faith preceding the coming.* vss. 22-25. "When the Saviour is missed with sorrow and expected with longing desire, He no longer makes long delay."—OOSTERZEE. How much more in the Last Great Day shall they who have again and again rejected the Christ who has come to them with entreaty and warning, long for one day, one hour, one moment of merciful opportunity! Read Prov. i. 24-31. . . . Here is "a warning to all so-called expositors and followers of expositors of prophecy who cry out, *Lo here!* and *Lo there!* every time that war breaks out or revolutions occur."—ALFORD. 2. *Of the sudden coming to a guilty and unexpecting world.* vss. 26-

30. Think of God's wrath upon a wicked world in the days of Noah, upon the cities of the plain in the days of Lot, upon Jerusalem and the Jews in their day of doom, and then think how it shall be with *your soul* if you repent not! . . . Behold the consequences of careless unconcern in view of threatened judgment. Once, twice and again the Almighty has warned; O soul, prepare to meet thy God! And *now*, lest He come upon thee unexpected and unready. Read 2 Pet. ii. 4-9. 3. *Of the way of safety from coming wrath.* vs. 31-38. Stop at the first voice of warning, and flee unto Christ Jesus for refuge. Leave all that hinders you; make no delay; turn not back: "Remember Lot's wife." The Ark of Safety is—Christ. The Zoar of the Mountains is—Christ. The Pella beyond Jordan is—Christ! "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountains, lest thou be consumed!" Gen. xix. 17. 4. *Of the separations in the last day.* vss. 34-37. God has thrown us together in life that we may be helpful to each other for time and for eternity. Let us so watch for opportunity to do good to our friends that there shall be no Sunderings in the circle of our loves in that day. . . . Teacher, shall your scholars be "left?"

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### SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Matt. xxiv. 44.

THEMES.—*For Thought*: The guilt of rejecting the offered mercies of God. *For Prayer*: Lead me not into temptation—the temptation to cleave unto the world, and turn from Thee my God. *For Practical Life*: The need of repenting just now.

CATECHISM.—Read Qs. 83, 84. Q. 85. What doth God require of us that we may escape his wrath and curse due to us for sin? A. To escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin God requireth of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption.

## LESSON XXXIV.

### THREE PRAYERS—IMPORTUNATE, PROUD, PENITENT.

Luke xviii. 1-14.

#### HISTORICAL CONNECTION.

Our Lord had just foretold the trials that should befall his disciples before the coming of the Kingdom of God. "The days will come (Luke xvii. 22) when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it." And yet notwithstanding this desire or prayer and its seeming denial they were still to "pray and not to faint." The parables following are therefore in very close connection with the preceding lesson. The effect of great trials upon the Church is usually twofold: *first*, discouragement and fainting in prayer; *second*, humiliation and more entire casting upon God. The parable of the Importunate Widow warns against the first tendency; that of the Pharisee and Publican shows that the uses of adversity are indeed sweet, since among them are the overthrow of spiritual pride and the development of genuine humility.

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#### NOTES.

1. And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men

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1. *Unto them*—The disciples, chap. xvii. 22. *That men*--Not praying men only, but all men; for habitual prayer is a universal duty. *Ought always to pray*—Which is explained by the limiting clause, *and not to faint*. The *always* is more than *regularly*—it means unceasingly, and to the end. This can only be, and this can be, by dwelling in an atmosphere of holy desire. "Thy desire is itself thy prayer, and if the desire be continuous, continuous is the prayer. Coldness of love is the silence of the heart; the fervency of love is the heart's cry."—AUGUSTINE.

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1. What facts had Jesus predicted at Luke xvii. 22? What would be the probable effect of these trials and this disappointment of "desire?" How would the parable of the Importunate Widow tend to correct this discouragement? What good effects do trials sometimes have upon true Chris-



ought always to pray, and not to faint; 2. Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man; 3. And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him,

*Not to faint*—Limits to pray as to quality, as *always* does as to endurance. The prayer should be one whose fullness of faith leaves no room in the heart for the faintness of doubt or fear. In other words, men should never pray with a faint heart! Nor will they while they believe; but when Faith looses its hold upon them, they are straightway seized by faintness. 2. *A Judge*—JOSEPHUS has seven judges for every city, to each of whom two officers from the tribe of Levi were allotted. His estimate of the judicial character brings out the monstrous baseness of this judge, and is worthy of itself to be pondered by this generation: "It is not fit that causes should be openly determined out of regard to gain, or to the dignity of the suitors, but that the judges should esteem what is right before all other things; otherwise God will by that means be despised, and esteemed inferior to those the dread of whose power has occasioned the unjust sentence; for justice is the power of God. He, therefore, that gratifies those in great dignity supposes them more potent than God himself." See, also, Deut. i. 16, 17. *Which feared not God*—Although Moses had said: "The judgment is God's;" and it was part of the law for judges established by Jehoshaphat: "Let the fear of the Lord be upon you; take heed and do it." 2 Cor. xix. 5-7. *Neither regarded man*—Not in the lawful sense (Deut. i. 17), "Ye shall not be afraid of the face of man;" he had no respect for man's rights, and no regard for his opinion, good or ill. This is perhaps a proverb for the utmost lack of principle, but the conjunction is natural, almost necessary: a godless judge is the tyrant's tool, but a God-fearing judiciary is the bulwark of human rights. Woe is the land that trusts its liberties to such rulers as this Unjust Judge. . . . 3. *A widow*—Always the

tians? [Humiliation, Dependence upon God.] Show how the parable of the Pharisee would therefore teach the uses of adversity. In what manner are men here instructed to pray? 2. What was the duty of a judge? See Deut. i. 16, 17; 2 Chron. xix. 5-7. What was the character of this judge? 3 Did the judge know of the condition and injuries of this

saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. 4. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear

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ideal of desolation and helplessness, but especially so in the East. The Mosaic code made no *legal* provision for their maintenance; they were left dependent upon the affection of relatives, especially of the eldest son. But they had a share with the Levites and others in the triennial charity tithe (Deut. xiv. 29); in the gleanings of the field, the olive orchard and the vineyard; and in the joyous freewill-offering of the feast of weeks "the stranger, the fatherless and *the widow*" were to be remembered. Besides, there were many safeguards in form of appeals to the honor, conscience and heart of the people. He who needed any urging or other inducement to protect a widow in her rights was a wretch indeed. Thus our Lord makes out, as was his design, the *very strongest possible case* of one unlikely to regard the plea of the poor and oppressed. The widow well symbolizes the Church in distress. See Lam. i. 1 and Isa. liv. 4. *In that city*—Well known to him, therefore, and in his jurisdiction. *Avenge me of*—Give me satisfaction against. *Adversary*—My opponent at law. It is indeed true, as TRENCH says: "And this is the same petition that we make daily when we say, 'Deliver me from evil,' or rather, 'from the Evil One.'" But it is not in place to represent by this woman the Church in the act of making this plea; for the prayer, "Deliver us from the devil," is made to the heavenly Father, whom the Unjust Judge does *not* symbolize. If a spiritual significance must attach to all the parts of the parable, it is better to make it signify the Church in her efforts to obtain justice and protection against evil men, Satan's agents, from civil governments too often truly represented by the Unjust Judge. . . . 4. *He would not for a while*—Long enough to show that he had no will to do justice. *He said within himself*—His conduct had already spoken the blasphemy, but his heart now utters it. It was indeed a great depth of guilt when one could acknowledge to himself such baseness and make it the ground of action.

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woman? Why should he have been especially careful to her cause? What is an adversary at law? What did the woman mean by *avenge me*? Whom does this widow here symbolize? Lam. i. 1. 4. Why would not the judge

not God, nor regard man; 5. Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.

6. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.

7. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and

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However, it need not be supposed that he framed his thought into words; like the fool who said "*No God!*" (Ps. xiv. 2), he spoke "in his heart." Yet how many there are whose hidden motives, if framed into speech, would read thus! Yes, and put into acts do read thus. His motive was wholly selfish; he considered his own, not the widow's, comfort. . . . 5. *Lest*—The "trouble" had begun, but he saw that the woman's spirit was such that it was not likely soon to end. *Continual coming*—Literally, coming for ever, or coming until the ending of the suit in her favor. *Weary me*—(Gr.) Smite me under the eye; hence, to annoy greatly. In the same way our word *annoy* is derived, originally signifying *to hurt, to strike*. . . . 6, 7. *Hear what the unjust judge saith*—There is no need to modify the character of this man, as though apology were required for the conjunction of such as he with the Just God. The parable is not a COMPARISON, but a CONTRAST; it is not God's *likeness* to the unjust judge that is brought out, but his *unlikeness*. And with this view Jesus presents the most exaggerated form of judicial unfaithfulness, in order that, in the contrast, God's Faithfulness may appear the more distinguished. In proportion as the points of this contrast are brought clearly into view will the purpose of the Lord's teaching be made plain. It might be represented somewhat as follows:

#### THE CONTRAST.

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| 1. A JUDGE, without regard for justice or law. | 1. JEHOVAH-GOD, the Holy, the Just, the Highest Expression of Principle and Law. |
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protect the widow at first? 5. What made him change his mind? Did he deserve credit for this? What influence would such public officers have upon a country's prosperity?

6, 7. Does this parable *compare* or *contrast* the unjust judge with the

night unto him, though he bear long with them? 8. I tell you

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|---|---|
| 2. Unmoved by the widow's condition.                    | 2. Pitiful—Touched with a feeling of our infirmities.         |
| 3. Moved by the bare prospect of continued importunity. | 3. With the actual day and night cry already long before Him. |
| 4. The petition presented him by one uncared for.       | 4. But to God by his own elect.                               |
| 5. The adversary was the widow's alone—"my adversary."  | 5. But the Church's Adversary is also God's.                  |

Thus the contrast appears in the character of the Principals, in the relations of the Petitioners to the arbiters of their causes, and in the nature of the Plea. If the widow's suit was granted by the unjust judge, *how much more* will the persevering cry of the Church and of needy souls have answer from God! *Though he bear long with them*—Though he delay long before sending them aid. It is the weakness of the Church's and the Christian's faith which delays the full triumph of the Church over the Adversary. So the law withholds privileges and possessions from the child until he has passed his minority and is able to use them discreetly. God's delays should not therefore destroy our faith, but only develop our patience. He *will* avenge, *i. e.*, establish in her full rights and privileges, his own Church; this *fact* is made certain to us, although the time of its consummation is concealed; *that* we must leave with God, and should do it with meek and hopeful faith, meanwhile bearing, as best we may, the trials with which, for wise ends, our Adversary is suffered to plague us. "Hope alone breeds of itself meekness, because that, by bridling the headiness of the flesh and allaying the heat thereof, it teaches equanimity and patience to those that submit themselves unto God."—CALVIN on Ps. xxxvii. 10. . . . 8. *I tell you*—O fainting heart, here is a sure word of

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Almighty? Is it the *likeness* between the two, or the *unlikeness*, that is brought out? Show the points of contrast in the *character* of the judge and of Jehovah. Show the contrast between the *relations* of the widow to the judge and of the Church to God. Show the contrast between the

that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

9. And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in

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thy soul's Burden-bearer to rest thy weary spirit upon. *He*—Who is able. *Will*—Who is willing to save all, and not willing that any perish. *Avenge*—Who hath said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay." Lord, avenge thy Church by converting all her foes! *Them*—His own children. *Speedily*—It indeed seems not so to us who cry out of the depths: "How long, O Lord?" But it will so appear when we look back upon all the earth-life from the gates of heaven. It is so to Him who dwells in an eternal Now, to whom a thousand years are but as yesterday. And in the degree that we by faith are made One with Him in Christ will we, too, be lifted above the ages, and see with the patience and the prescience of the Infinite of Days. *Speedily*, too, to the oppressor, to whom "the number of years is hidden" (Job xv. 20), and who is ever overtaken suddenly. *Speedily*, too, to ourselves, for when the Lord thus cometh, He will come *sooner than we expect* Him: *will He find faith*, expectation? May God help all his own to be brave, patient, believing and ready! And that we may bide thus, let us remember that God's delay is the Church's swiftest advance, and that our own forced marches will only find us farther from the Adversary, or only nearer to his oppression. "Watch and Pray." "Wait on the Lord!" Instead of referring *the Son of Man cometh* to the final coming of Christ, it seems better to refer it to those periods at which Christ has come, and shall come in Providence to *avenge his own elect*; and thus the view of the question, *shall he find faith on the earth?* as given above, will follow. In this view the passage cannot be used to prove the almost universal lapse of faith just before the final coming of Christ. . . . 9. *He spake this parable*—The spirit against which this parable is directed was one into which the disciples would be quite likely to fall while listening to the Lord's severe treatment of the Pharisees:

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*plea* of the widow and that of the Church. If this poor widow could prevail before such a judge, what may God's Church hope for from Him?

9. To what class was this parable spoken? 10. Why did our Lord

themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10. Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. 11. The Pharisee stood and

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“Ah! *we* are free from that sin; and what sorry fellows these Pharisees are!” Thus they fell into Phariseeism by their pride of heart at not being tainted with it, and by their contempt of those who were tainted. The two characters here are the same that we meet in the parable of the Prodigal Son. The lesson of Humility in prayer rightly follows the lesson of Importunity. If one may come to God with perseverance and boldness, there is yet need to remember the command that came to Moses out of the Burning Bush on Horeb (Ex. iii. 5): “Put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.” . . . 10. *Went up*—The Temple stood upon Mount Moriah, but he went highest who went most humbly: it was not a spiritual up-going to the Pharisee. The Temple remained open for the private devotions of the faithful—an example which all Christian churches would do well to follow, for what holier or more fitting ground for secret prayer than the house of God? . . . 11. *Stood*—The Gr. implies something more than a standing posture simply; he deliberately put himself into the usual erect position of prayer, with upturned face and eyes and open palms extended heavenward. *With himself*—It was not an audible prayer. *God, I thank Thee*—So he says, indeed, but the spirit of his prayer is rather: Lord, Thou oughtest to thank me! *That I am not*—He does not say: That I have not been made and kept. “By my own good will I am what I am!” says the Pharisee. “By the grace of God I am what I am,” said Paul. And, indeed, both of them said truly; for the Pharisee showed plainly enough the clumsy religious handiwork of man. *Other men*—“He makes two classes of men: into the one he throws the whole human race; the other and better class con-

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choose a Pharisee and a Publican to illustrate this truth? 11. What position did the Pharisee take for his prayer? Did he pray aloud? Was not all this good ground for thanksgiving? Was the man really thankful to God? To whom did he give the most credit for his righteousness? To whom do we owe every grace of character? 1 Cor. iv. 7. Why is it wrong

prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. **12.** I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

**13.** And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so

sists, it seems, of himself alone."—BENGEL. *As this publican*—The climax of the contrast in his mind; and so it was before God, but with reversed positions, the Pharisee's *first* being God's *last*, and his *last* being God's *first*. And this is very often the difference between our estimate and God's of our own and others' character and standing. . . . **12.** *I fast twice*—He not only recites his superiority to other men, but also his superiority to the demands of the Law itself; he actually thinks himself better than he need be! *In the week*—On the 2d and 5th days, whereas the Law requires but once in a year, on the great day of Atonement. Lev. xvi. 29; Num. xxix. 7. *I give tithes of all I possess*—Although the law does not certainly require more than the tithe of the fruit of the field and the increase of the cattle. Lev. xxvii. 30. It is thus that he had hoped to make himself right before God. Without doubt these works showed much earnestness of religious feeling, that this was an honest and earnest soul striving by its own powers to win God's approval. That he failed was owing, not to lack of faithfulness to his system of religion, but to the utter worthlessness of the system as a means of securing God's favor and great moral excellence. . . . **13.** *Standing*—The common posture in prayer. We surely owe it to God and to ourselves to place our bodies in some acceptable attitude of devotion. Standing and kneeling and prostration have abundant sanction in the Word and in Christian practice, but on what principle can sitting bolt upright be defended?

to contrast our virtues with our fellows' vices? Why is this especially sinful in the act of prayer? **12.** How often did the law require him to fast? Lev. xvi. 29. What tithes did the law require? Lev. xxvii. 30. Was he doing as much as the letter of the law asked? Why did he bring in this fact? Was this man sincere? Wherein did he break the *spirit* of the law?

**13.** Where did the Jews stand to pray in the temple? What was the publican *afar off* from? Why did he stand there? Why would he not

much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. 14. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

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Those who cannot stand in public prayer, and will not kneel, should at least bow or prostrate themselves before the Lord, like good old Jacob, who "sat upon his bed" (Gen. xlviii. 2) and "worshipped leaning upon the top of his staff." Heb. xi. 21. *Afar off*—On the very outer verge of the court of the Israelites; his unworthy person he felt to be fitly placed when farthest from the holy of holies. *So much as his eyes*—Much less his upturned face and outspread hands. *Smote*—"Where the pain is, there the hand goes."—BENGEL. The whole *attitude* of the man is spoken of with evident approval as being most becoming this penitent's state of mind. *God*—Thou Good One; oh that I might call Thee mine! *Be merciful*—For it is thy mercy alone that can reach me; I have no merit to commend me. *To me*—"Even me, also, my Father!" *A sinner*—Nay, the sinner (so the Greek). I have sinned before Thee! I have sinned beyond all my fellows! Is there mercy, Lord, for the Sinner—even me? . . . 14. *I tell you*—Sweet words of Him who keeps the Seal of the Book of Life, and who knoweth them that are his! *Justified*—Made just, righteous before God! Precious Righteousness of Christ by which the contrite, faithful soul is justified! *Rather than*—The meaning is that the Pharisee *was not* justified. "Before honor is humility."—SOLOMON. "Lord, that publican am I!"—*Dying words of* GROTIUS. *Every one that exalteth himself*, etc.—Golden words! they point out the only Gateway into God's pardoning love. And they give to the Christian worker a rule of life that shall save him many a bitter experience, many an hour of despondency, many a sad failure, because of un-

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lift up his eyes? Why smite his breast? What was his prayer? Was it a long one? Did he *feel* the need of mercy? 14. How far did his prayer reach? What is it to be justified? In what spirit are we to approach God's throne? Why should we humble ourselves when we come before Him? Whose righteousness alone may we then plead?



nerved arm, and heart palsied by ungratified pride. "We are so apt to forget that 'he that is down need fear no fall!' The temptation to compare ourselves among ourselves, and measure ourselves by ourselves, which is not wise, is great; and we, being weak, hold to it, and so make ourselves easy preys to the Enemy when he bids us think more highly of ourselves than we ought. And the word of the Lord stands sure: "Every one that *exalteth himself* shall be *abased*!"—ETHEL GRAY.

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#### SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"Men ought always to pray and not to faint." vs. 1. "God be merciful to me a sinner!" vs. 13.

**THEMES.**—*For Thought*: Faith, Patience and Humility the important elements of true prayer. *For Prayer*: Deliver us from evil, from the devil, our souls' adversary! Lord, be merciful to us sinners! *For Practical Life*: Do I pray in the spirit of the Pharisee or of the Publican?

**CATECHISM.**—Q. 33. [The result of the publican's prayer was justification.] What is justification? A. Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ, imputed to us and received by faith alone. See also Q. 98.

## LESSON XXXV. THE RICH YOUNG RULER.

Mark x. 17-31.—Parallels, Matt. xix. 16-29; Luke xviii. 18-30.

### HISTORICAL CONNECTION.

From Mark x. 10 we learn that Jesus and his disciples had withdrawn to some house, whither they had been followed by parents with their infants. "Let the Master put his hands on them and pray!" The prayer and the touch would bring and leave a blessing, these fond hearts thought. The disciples, anxious to save the Master from supposed annoyance, endeavored to keep back these parents. But Jesus called them to Him, took their children in his arms, put his hands upon them and blessed them. And then He spoke those familiar and gracious words concerning suffering the children to come unto Him. It was after He had gone forth out of this house into the way or road that the Young Ruler came running after Him.

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### NOTES.

17. And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what

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17. *There came one*—A Ruler in the Synagogue (Luke), and a young man (Matthew). The incident occurred just after Jesus had embraced and blessed the little children who were brought to Him, and whom the disciples would have kept away. A noteworthy transition—from receiving little babes to receiving the rich young ruler! *Running*—As though to overtake Him, thus showing his earnestness. *Kneeled*—Thus outwardly recognizing his dignity. *Asked Him*—Doubtless sincerely and anxiously. And

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17. Where was Jesus (vs. 10) and in what engaged just before this incident (vs. 16)? Whither was Jesus now going? What is learned of this person's position? Luke xviii. 18. Of his age? Matt. xix. 20. His wealth? vs. 22. Character? vs. 20. Sect? vs. 17. Why did he come running? What did his kneeling show? Prove that he put this question sincerely. Give the meaning of "Master." What was the ruler's view of Christ's character and mission? How did his question show his *low* estimate of eternal life?

shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? 18. And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is none good but one,*

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his question shows great seriousness; it bears upon the one great interest of the soul, concerning which all men ought to come with anxious inquiry to Jesus. *Good Master*—Good Teacher, a recognition of Christ's excellence as a Man and as a Teacher. He might thus, however, have addressed Gamaliel or any other learned Rabbi. *What [good thing] shall I do?*—By weighing eternal life against an act of human goodness he showed how small was the value he set upon it, or how unworthy were his views of its importance. *What shall I do?* *I* who have already done so much. The question is the out-cropping of deep-seated self-righteousness; he evidently held heaven to be a reward of his well-doing only. . . . 18. *Why callest thou Me good?*—Jesus uses the complimentary title given Him to disclose to the young Ruler the error in his views of Himself. "You call Me good, but *there is none good but one, God*; do you come to Me as to God, and will you hear Me as the voice of God? If not, why do you apply to Me a title which one should address to God alone?" This reply of Jesus would certainly raise in the Ruler's mind this dilemma: If I reaffirm that He is the Good Teacher, I now admit that He is the Divine Teacher. If I withdraw my title, I confess the error of calling "good" even the wisest and best of men, and thus throw out of the question I have put all consideration of my own goodness. Thus Jesus neither denies nor affirms his Deity, but so wisely frames his reply as to lead the young man into a cardinal truth, whichever view he may choose to take: one view pointing to Christ's Divine Messiahship, the other to the worthlessness of man's righteousness as a claim upon God for eternal life. Thus, either JESUS would be *exalted* in the ruler's mind, or *self* would be *abased*. "The address of Jesus to this inquirer is given in a twofold recension, but it admits of no doubt that in

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How his *high* esteem of it? Show the out-cropping of self-righteousness in it. Where did this interview take place? Who witnessed it? What may the anxious inquirer learn from these facts? 18. Did Jesus object to the title Good Teacher? Why? After Christ's remark had the ruler still called Him "*Good*," what would he have acknowledged as to Christ's claims?

*that is, God.* 19. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honor thy father and mother.

20. And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have

Matthew the reading, *Why askest thou Me concerning that which is good? One is the good, is the right one.*—OLSHAUSEN. . . .

19. *Thou knowest* [But if thou wilt enter into life.—Matt.] *the commandments.*—Jesus summons the law to its proper work as a schoolmaster to lead to Himself. The ruler's question had shown that he had radically wrong views of the nature of sin, of the strength of human virtue and of the mission of the law. In the face of the perfect law of God will a sense of sin revive in his heart? will the young man see his inability to do the whole law? and, stricken with poverty of spirit, will he seek a renewal of his life in God *by the Spirit* and not by works? We shall see. The second table is here quoted, *defraud not* being used for the tenth commandment, inasmuch as covetousness is the womb of fraud. . . . 20. *Master*—Teacher. He has dropped the "Good;" he will not confess Jesus to be The Christ. Yet neither will he renounce his own righteousness, for he says: *All these have I observed from my youth.* That his claim was not without some ground is shown by the fact that *Jesus beholding him, loved him.* The ruler had, indeed, been free from open and gross violations of the law of love to his neighbor. But his moral blindness to the deeper spiritual sense of the law which searches the intents of the heart appears from this claim to absolute obedience. He was unconscious of that *adultery of heart* and *murder of heart* which the lustful eye and the angry spirit wrought. Matt. v. 21, 22 and 28. *What lack I yet?* (Matthew) he adds to this profession; sincerely enough, no doubt, but with very apparent self-satisfaction. He does not feel himself to be an unworthy sinner; his feeling is

By refusing to call Him *Good*, how would he have condemned his own ground of hope? How does the wisdom of Christ appear in this? 19. Why did Christ refer the ruler to the commandments? What is the relation of the Law to the Gospel? Gal. iii. 24. Which table is here quoted? Why? Show how *Defraud not* is equivalent to the tenth commandment.

20. In addressing Jesus now, why does he drop the "good?" Had the

I observed from my youth. **21.** Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

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in strong contrast with that of the Prodigal and Publican. Yet he does have a certain restlessness of soul, a consciousness of something higher than that he has yet attained, a feeling that his godly life has not placed eternity utterly beyond risk, which expresses itself in this question. And thus the more earnest, spiritual natures have always more or less been affected while seeking pardon under the law of works. So felt Luther at Erfurth, and so many before and since. So it must ever be while the Infinite and Infallible is sought by the doings of a finite and fallible creature. . . . **21.** *Then Jesus beholding him*—Looking upon him as though to search the secret chambers of the heart. But the young man was not a hypocrite; he meant what he said, and he said much of truth. But with all his zeal, goodness and wisdom the young ruler was sadly deluded. *Loved him*—As the Pharisee in the Temple and the Selfish Son illustrated the most obnoxious features of Self-righteousness, so this case illustrates the amiable forms in which that sin concealed itself. The portraiture is true to nature; in every circle are just such amiable unbelievers to be met to-day, and all their acquaintance (as Jesus here) beholding them, love them. Their examples are frequently quoted in favor of false religions or non-religion. We do well to love such, to respect and encourage their virtues, for these do establish a claim upon the favor and love of their fellow-men. But they make no claim upon God for pardon of sin and spiritual adoption, for the sole condition of eternal life is repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. If I do not meet the one condition which God has unalterably fixed, what matters

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ruler kept the law perfectly? Did he think he had? What question does he add to this? Matt. xix. 20. What state of mind did this question indicate?—one of rest? Why cannot he who trusts in a salvation of personal works and merit be ever *certain* of eternal life? **21.** What moved Christ's love toward the ruler? What phase of self-righteousness does the ruler illustrate? Do such characters as this young ruler now exist? Is it right to love and respect them? Why? Why is their amiability no claim upon

it how many other good things I may do? This is what our Lord would teach when He says, *One thing thou lackest*. Not only one thing, but this one essential thing is lacking. The ruler had claimed to have kept the whole law of duty to his neighbor; he had no sense of shortcoming therein. He had also indirectly committed himself to follow Christ's counsel in the search of eternal life. Now comes the test of love to his neighbor, submission to Jesus and devotion to the search after life eternal: *If thou wilt be perfect* (Matthew)—Perfect before God, the Holy One. *Go thy way*—For you need no other instruction from Me; no longer deliberate, but *do*, for thou hast asked for doing. *Whatsoever thou hast*—For he who would earn life by doing must *do to the uttermost*. *Give*—Be your own almoner. There is a world of wisdom and a fountain of joy and reward for the rich in this passage; make your will now, and execute it yourself. The purpose of this advice was doubtless to show the young man how much he still loved *this* life, and how little he had done and would do to earn eternal life. It was a *just* requirement; for if Christ here gave him a call to the apostleship, no more was demanded of the ruler than of the fishermen, of Levi the publican, and of all the disciples. It was *necessary*, for in the coming trials the apostles of Jesus must be trammelled by no cares of this world, but be free to go at the Master's bidding. It was *benevolent*, for the poor thus became the recipients of what would else have been swept away in the persecutions to enrich and strengthen the enemies of the faithful. While an absolute compliance with advice given for this special case is not a duty to all men, yet the principle of this counsel is eternal and universal; ourselves and our all belong to Christ, and we are to surrender at his command to the utmost endeavor of our faculties and the uttermost farthing of our possessions. *Treasure in heaven*—The only treasure that endures and shall confer joy throughout eternity. What is given

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God's grace? What is the sole condition of pardon and life? Did the ruler lack but one thing of being perfect? What did Christ mean? Show that this requirement was proper, just, necessary, benevolent. What is the universal principle contained in this commandment? What is *treasure in heaven*? How is it accumulated? What is required beyond the consecration of our means to Christ? Will the former avail without the latter?

**22.** And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.

**23.** And Jesus 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 astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, *Children, how*

in Christ's cause is saved; all else is lost. We can take nothing with us to the grave, but we may send untold treasures before us. He who has scattered his means among the poor is richer far than he who invests in lands and railroads and ships, that spreads his capital over the quarters of the globe. *And come, take up the cross and follow Me*—For the follower of Christ is in the way to eternal life; even the sacrifice of all would not suffice without this following. . . . **22.** *And he was sad at that saying*—He wanted to follow Christ, but not at such a cost. *Went away*—Rejecting the offered apostleship. *Grieved*—Was it that sorrow of the world which worketh death? *For he had great possessions*—Real estate, lands. And here, as with him who sold his apostolate, the love of money was the root of evil. Did the young ruler return to the Master? Did the sorrow rankling in his heart lead him back to Him who alone could pluck the thorn which he had planted? When THE GOOD TEACHER had been exalted upon the cross, did the touching story of the Passion and the thrilling news of the Resurrection reach him and persuade him to bear his cross and follow his Lord? Or did he sit in the Sanhedrim that cast the vote of death to Jesus and cry with the multitude, Crucify Him? The sweet charity of the Gospel, as in the case of the Elder Son, here also casts a veil upon the final issue, and leaves us at least to *hope*. . . . **23.** *How hardly*—With what difficulty, for how hard it is for the lovers of wealth to renounce all! *Enter into*—For the gate is narrow and the burden of worldliness upon them is large. *The kingdom of God*—Where poverty of spirit prevails. . . . **24.** *Trust in riches*—Of any sort, material, mental or moral. There the sin lies, *trust in ought but*

**22.** Why was he sad? What did his going away show? What did he reject? Do men act in the same way now? Do you? Did the young ruler

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 the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. **26.** And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? **27.** And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men *it is* impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.

**28.** Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. **29.** And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or

*Christ. . . . 25. Easier for a camel*—A common proverb for an impossible thing. *Than for a rich man*—"In this sense every man is 'rich' in proportion to his attachment to worldly possessions."—OLSHAUSEN. . . . **26. Who, then, can be saved?**—Since all men hope and strive to be rich who are not already rich. Or they still failed to grasp the true idea of the kingdom, and were in bondage to the thought that the mighty, the noble, the rich, were nearer the kingdom and dearer to the King than others. It was a manifestation of the same spirit which just before had rebuked those who brought little children to the Master. And no doubt their own hopes of eternal life were much disturbed by such a sweeping assertion, for did not they expect to "sit upon twelve thrones?" . . . **27. Jesus looking upon them**—There is great power in the calm, loving look of the Teacher. *With men—with God*—Salvation is not possible to man's will, or wealth, or works, but is all of the overpowering grace of God. Why will men, in the face of this Scripture, spend their strength to work out an impossibility? O Lord, do thou help me, or I am helpless indeed! . . . **28. Then Peter**—He spoke as usual for all; what he said was true, and, judging from Christ's answer, was

return? What was hopeful in his case? What not? Why is the issue left in doubt? **23-27. Trust in riches** means what? What *sort* of riches do men trust in? Explain "*easier for a camel*," etc. In applying this passage, who is "a rich man?" Are you rich? What caused the disciples' astonishment? How did Christ remove it? Why can God alone save the soul?

**28-31.** What had Peter left? What had Matthew? Why is it well to speak of our future rewards? In what sense does the Christian gain



sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, **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.

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not spoken boastingly. It is right to think and talk about our final reward. . . . **30**. *A hundredfold now*—In this life. *Houses, brethren*—For in the Christian brotherhood the common love of the dear Lord makes all things common, and wherever Christ dwells there have I a brother, a sister, a mother. Sweet relationship! how often have the ministers and servants of Jesus tested the fullness of this promise in the hospitable homes of Christ's children! But in a narrower sense it is true that *godliness is gain*. The Evangelist, in church or Sabbath-school, is your best political economist; therefore, public men and corporations should further, by all lawful means, his labors. *With persecutions*—Which give the proper zest to temporal enjoyments, keep the soul in remembrance of and in preparation for the best gift of all, eternal life. . . . **31**. *But many that are first*—First called, as you, disciples: first in position and advantages, as this ruler. For the rewards of the kingdom are finally adjusted on the scale of grace alone.

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#### SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—One thing thou lackest. Come, take up thy cross and follow Me. vs. 21.

**THEMES.**—*For Thought*: Obedience to Christ and sacrifice for his cause the true test of our religion. *For Prayer*: Lord Jesus, enable me to give up all and follow Thee! *For Practical Life*: What lack I yet?

**CATECHISM.**—Q. 40. What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience? A. The rule which God at first re-

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houses, brethren, etc.? Why are *persecutions* mixed up with our blessings? Who are *the first* and *the last*?

vealed to man for his obedience was the moral law. Q. 41. Wherein is the moral law summarily comprehended? A. The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments. Q. 82. Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God? A. No mere man since the fall is able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them in thought, word and deed. Review Q. 33. What is justification?

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#### SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK.

BLACKBOARD.—The outlines of two cliffs facing each other, a chasm between; the left-hand cliff marked GUILT, the right-hand PARDON. Across the chasm from one end of the left-hand cliff a plank extending, but coming short of reaching the opposite side by a very little; the end of the plank sinking into the chasm. Write on the plank: *Our righteousness*. The outline is meant to illustrate to those who think themselves good enough without faith in Christ, the danger of trusting for salvation to a virtue which comes short *in anything*. Since God asks perfect obedience, even though the soul lacks but one thing, it fails of duty. The Perfect Righteousness of Christ, received by faith, is the only hope.

## LESSON XXXVI.

### THE HIRED LABORERS—THE ELEVENTH HOUR.

Matt. xx. 1-16.

#### HISTORICAL CONNECTION.

The *for* with which this parable is introduced marks its connection with the latter part of chapter xix. Peter had stated the question: *We have forsaken all and followed Thee; what shall we have, therefore?* This had been suggested by the Master's remarks upon the choice of the rich young ruler. Jesus answered, reciting the rewards which should be to the apostles and to all such; but to save their minds from the error of making the rewards of the kingdom a matter of personal merit, He adds (xix. 30): *Many first shall be last*, etc. This is the *text* of the parable which follows, as is shown by its repetition at vs. 16.

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#### NOTES.

1. For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man *that is* a householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labor-

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1. *The kingdom of heaven is like*—As to the principle upon which its rewards are distributed. Since the rewards referred to (chapter xix. 29) refer to both this life and that which is to come, the same is to be supposed of this passage. Jesus here gives the obverse or the complement of the truth just spoken. Rewards do follow men both here and hereafter, according to their sacrifices and toils for Christ and his Gospel—this is one side of the truth; yet neither temporal nor eternal rewards are given men *on the ground of* their sacrifices and works, but are *all of grace*—this is the other side of the truth, the side presented in this par-

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1. What question originated this parable? Chapter xix. 27. How had Jesus answered that question? What view as to the relation of work and rewards does that teach? What view of that relation is brought out in this section? Is the application of the parable to this life or to eternal life? Chapter xix. 29. "Like"—as to what? Whom does the householder rep-

ers into his vineyard. **2.** And when he had agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

**3.** And he went out about the third hour, and saw others stand-

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able. *Householder*—God the Father. *Went out*—By the Holy Spirit, the sermon, the class-lesson, does God go forth and come to us. *Early in the morning*—Greek, With the dawn. How earnestly our Father seeks us! He wishes the dew of our youth, life's fresh, early hours. Shall they not be given? "In the morning sow thy seed." God first seeks the soul, not the soul God. *To hire laborers*—And what glorious wages He offers: eternal life! Yet we owe Him unrequited labors, our all, our utmost. *Into his vineyard*—Not for the vintage, apparently, but for dressing and pruning. Such was the work to which the apostles especially were called. . . . **2.** *Agreed*—A proper precaution. Many alienations, disputes and heart-burnings would be saved were definite agreements always made in business transactions. Thus God has covenanted with his people. *A penny*—Denarius, 15 cents. The denarius a day was the pay of a Roman soldier in Tiberius' time, a few years before this parable was uttered. It was therefore fair, if not liberal, wages. *Sent them*—How many of the Lord's servants fail to go when sent! how many go with dull hearts and unready hands! how many go, but not to work, thinking only of the vineyard's shelter and the evening's reward! . . . **3, 4.** *Third hour*—From 9 to 10.30, according to the time of year. The market-place was the usual place for men who were seeking employment to gather. *Whatsoever is right*—The householder made his agreements, as was customary, at the regular *quarterings* of the day, the first quarter (third hour), second quarter (sixth hour), third quarter (ninth hour), and there

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resent? What is represented by his going out? Why did he go in the early morning? What is the morning of life? Why does God desire this for his service? Why should you give *your morning* to Him? **2.** How much was a penny? Was that good wages? Why? What is the use of making definite agreements in business matters? Why did the Householder send them into the vineyard? Are you sent into God's vineyard? Are you at work? What are you doing?

**3.** What hour is the *third*? Why did he go out at that hour, and the sixth and ninth again? Why choose those particular periods? How is God's love here represented? Why did the man go to the market-place?

ing idle in the market-place, 4. And said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. 5. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. 6. And about the eleventh hour

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would therefore be a complete understanding that *whatsoever is right* would be the proper proportion of the day's wages, three-quarters, one-half or one-quarter, as the case might be. *They went their way*—Expecting to receive only their fitting part of the day's wages. Those expositors who do not get the idea of a definite agreement from *whatsoever is right*, see here an instance of commendable trust in the goodness and justice of God. "Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" But is that trust any the less marked in the case of those who go, giving life's service to God, awaiting for his promised reward, with the hope that it will be in proportion to their work? The *faith* appears in working and waiting on the Lord for the fulfillment of his sure promise. . . . 5. *Sixth and ninth hours*—Noon and 3 P. M. *Likewise*—Hiring on the above terms, viz.: *at the rate of a denarius a day*. . . . 6. *Eleventh hour*—An hour before the day's work closed. And so now laborers on our wharves and elsewhere are hired even for an hour. *He went out*—Not the usual or regular period. See above, vs. 4. Behold the merciful Father, who follows man with offers of blessing even to the twilight hour of life! The dying thief was sought even after the eleventh hour. But let no one therefore presume; the Spirit-call *may not* come, and the hardened soul *may not* repent. *Standing*—Although the last quarter was past; an attitude of expectation. *Why stand ye here* [in the market-place] *all the day idle?*—"The market-place of the world is contrasted with the vineyard of the kingdom of God. The greatest man of business in worldly things is a mere idle gazer if he has not yet entered on the true work which

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What may the market-place represent? What means does God use to call men? To call *you*? 4, 5. What was implied in *whatsoever is right*, etc.? What portion of a day's wages would each squad earn? Was this understood? 6, 7. *Eleventh hour*—how long was this before sunset? Was it usual to hire at such a late hour? What does this last call signify to us? Had these men been called before? Did they go at the first call? In what

he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? 7. They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right, *that shall ye receive.*

8. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto

alone is worth anything or gains any reward."—STIER. The question was not so much a reproof as a test. . . . 7. *No man hath hired us*—Let those who justify their procrastination of repentance by this parable remember this: this was the laborers' *first call*. What multitudes of the uncalled thus stand expectant, anxious for better knowledge of spiritual things, waiting for you or me to come with the glad tidings! Lord, give us grace to go forth to be to these as thy voice, which saith, *Go ye also!* What hope these words *ye also* must bear to the aged and the dying! *Shall ye receive*—It is not much; but even he who has withheld his service from God until the very close of life is not left without the stimulus and support of a good hope through grace. They had only *one hour* to work, but they were bidden *to go*. Many decline labor in the Lord's vineyard because they are so old, called so late; rather, this fact should urge to more diligent toil. . . . 8. *When even*—In life God's time of reckoning; also death. *Was come*—"It is appointed unto all men once to die." *Steward*—In this life representing those, whoever they may be, by whom God distributes his blessings. At the last day the steward is Christ. Heb. iii. 6. *Call the laborers*—The trumpet shall sound, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. *Give them*—It will be very sweet and joyful to have our crown from Christ's own dear hands. *Their hire*—Why should we fail to take the simple truth here recognized out of fear of holding up eternal life as a matter of wages? There *is* a sense in which God's servants shall get "their hire," *i. e.*, the full reward which God has mercifully vouchsafed to them. But this need confuse no one, for back of *the hire is the work*, and back of the work is **THE CALL**, and back

respect are you unlike these men? What encouragement here for aged and dying sinners? Is it ever too late to do good?

8. Why were the laborers paid at the close of the day? Deut. xxiv. 15. Show the advantages of this custom to the poor. What does the *even* rep-

his steward, Call the laborers, and give them *their* hire, beginning from the last unto the first. 9. And when they came that *were hired* about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.

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of the call the infinite love of the Father, who of his grace alone permits any to work for Him in hope of unmerited "hire." *Beginning from the last*—An order which allows the proper test of the first called. This payment of the laborers at even was in accordance with the law: "At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it, for he is poor and setteth his heart upon it." Deut. xxiv. 15. Much suffering, loss, and even sin, is caused by a failure on the part of many Christian people to follow this merciful command. To say nothing more, such failure often requires a resort to *credit*, by which the poor are robbed of a large part of their earnings, and encourages dissipation and unthriftiness in those who, with the accumulated wages of a week or month in hand, squander without regard for debts contracted in the week past or for wants which shall arise in the future. No laboring-man especially should be sent home at even without his fairly-earned hire. . . . 9. *And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour*—Those who came at the third, sixth and ninth hours appear to have been paid only their due proportion of the denarius, a fact which preserves the parable from abuse by those who might get from it encouragement to *idleness* or *tardiness* in God's service. They received all that they were promised, and were satisfied. *Every man a penny*—For those who were last called and who wrought least, the special grace was given; they received far more than they had expected, and doubtless were as much surprised as the first laborers were grieved. The contrast is made between those who had wrought longest and those who had wrought least, so that the fact of Divine Grace in dispensing eternal rewards might come out more distinctly from the parable. . . . 10. *The first*—The other squads were content. . . . 11. *Murmured*—This murmuring

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resent? Who is the "steward?" Why begin at the last? 9. Did these men earn a whole denarius? Did they expect it? Why was it given? How had they shown their want and their anxiety to work? 10-12. Did the squads *between* the first and last receive a penny a day? Why this

10. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. 11. And when they had received *it*, they murmured against the goodman of the house, 12. Saying, These last have wrought *but* one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

13. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? 14. Take *that* thine *is*, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. 15. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with

against God and envy of their fellows is confined to the temporal application of the parable; there is no parallel to this conduct in the next world, although, unhappily, Christians do exhibit such qualities in this. . . . 12. *Thou hast made them equal to us*—Pride rebels against the thought of others being made our spiritual equals whom we think to be less deserving. This is the most pitiable species of selfishness. . . . 13. *Answered one*—For all. *Friend*—So the man without the wedding garment was addressed. *I do thee no wrong*—"It is wicked to wrong God, but still worse to think one's self wronged by God. And men think this oftener than one would suppose."—BENGEL. . . . 14. *Go thy way*—With thy wages; but the enjoyment of it was now marred by their selfish and rebellious spirit, and the favor of their Lord was utterly lost. "Check all inclinations to look grudgingly at your brethren who, having in times past grievously departed from God, have now found a place beside yourselves in his kingdom and are sharers in the same spiritual privileges; or to look down upon and despise those who occupy a less important field of labor who are called in the providence of God to endure and suffer less than yourselves. Check all inclinations to pride yourselves on your own doings, as though they gave you a claim of right upon God."—TRENCH. . . . 15. *Is it*

difference? Why did the first suppose they would get more? Had they earned more? Why murmur? What was their agreement? Were they right? Why not?

13-15. Why did the goodman answer their complaint with reasons? Wherein is this like God's dealing with us? What are the three reasons



mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? **16.** So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

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*not lawful*—The householder is willing to answer by argument: (1.) You will get all you deserve, and are not wronged. (2.) I have the right to use my own as I please. (3.) My goodness is no ground for your envy. *Eye evil*—Envy expresses itself from the eye; the eye is the emblem of the soul. *I am good*—Here is the ground on which the favorable decision to the eleventh-hour laborers must rest, the goodness of Him whose “nature and whose name is LOVE.” That this should have been manifest toward the last laborers can only be accounted for by the stronger plea which their greater needs made to this love. These needs appeared in their standing the whole day with patience and hope and anxiety looking for an employer, even when the last regular period, the third quarter or ninth hour, had passed. Besides, had they received but one hour’s pay, they and their families might have suffered. “Man’s necessities” are thus always “God’s opportunities,” for they appeal strongly to his goodness. . . . **16.** *So the last shall be first*—They were first rewarded as to time; their reward was proportionately twelve times greater than the first; they were first in the favor of the Householder. And so relatively the first were last, and above all were last in respect of character and standing before their Lord. *For many be called*—But their utter lack of the spirit of Christ and their contempt of God and his grace cut them off from reward before they have made their calling and election sure. *But few chosen*—To be the recipients of such unmerited and distinguished grace as was shown to these eleventh-hour laborers. The lesson must have been of great value to the apostles when tempted to think themselves more worthy and holy and important than those who should be called at a later period into the work of the kingdom.

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given? What is an evil eye? What do you call the feelings these men had shown? What lay at the root of their *envy*? What conduct did this lead to toward their fellows and their lord? **16.** Wherein were these *last first* and *first last*? What does the parable teach as to God’s love? As to pride? Envy? Trust in ourselves? Trust in God? As to the merit of good works in salvation? As to the danger of losing our eternal reward?

## SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right that shall ye receive. v. 7.

THEMES.—*For Thought*: The sovereignty of God in the gifts of his grace. *For Prayer*: From all uncharitableness, good Lord deliver me! Help me to make my calling and election sure! *For Practical Life*: "Why stand ye here all the day idle?"

CATECHISM.—Q. 80. What is required in the tenth commandment? A. The tenth commandment requireth full contentment with our own condition, with a right and charitable frame of spirit toward our neighbor and all that is his. Q. 81. What is forbidden in the tenth commandment? A. See Catechism.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK.

BLACKBOARD.—Four reasons why men do not accept God's call to work in Christ's vineyard: 1. Some are **Indifferent**; do not think, do not feel the importance of the work. 2. Some, like Felix, are **Delaying**. Thus opportunity is lost for ever. 3. **Lacking opportunity** is the excuse of many, but how few can truly say, "No man hath hired us!" God is continually giving opportunities to all—to some greater, some less, but to all for one hour's work at least. 4. Many are **Ease-loving**; prefer sinful pleasures or sinful sloth to the work and wages of Christ.

Why stand ye here all the day

**I D L E ?**

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## LESSON XXXVII.

### THE AMBITIOUS MOTHER.

Matt. xx. 20-28.—Parallel, Mark x. 35-45.

#### HISTORICAL CONNECTION.

The holy company were still traveling through Perea; they were probably not far from the fords of Jordan, about to cross into the region over which the hostile Sanhedrim could readily stretch its power to injure the dear Master. For the feelings of the disciples and of Christ, as recorded at Mark x. 32, are such as one might expect at such an important crisis. Jesus pressed forward in the very van of the company, while the disciples followed, amazed and afraid—amazed at such strange eagerness to meet almost certain death, afraid for their beloved Leader's safety, and doubtless for their own. On this occasion, as before, under the brow of Hermon, when Peter was rebuked as a *skandalon* (Matt. xvi. 21), and during the subsequent homeward journey through Galilee (Mark ix. 30), Jesus instructed the disciples as to his approaching sufferings and death. He seems here (vs. 17) to have done this at one of the halts for rest or refreshment or devotion, when He was "apart in the way" with his disciples. Sweet hours of seclusion, when we may turn aside from life's highway with Jesus, and at his feet meditate upon the cross and the passion, the resurrection and the ascension! It is remarkable that these occasions should have been followed closely by such aspirations after chief places as James and John here show. The same ambition also appears at the Passover Supper. Luke xxii. 24. And it is also to be noted that these predictions of final sufferings had been *preceded* by representations of the future glory of Christ's kingdom. In each case

our Lord explains the promised crown by the approaching cross and associates the glory with the shame. And in each case the apostles fail to learn the lesson of true greatness and entertain unhallowed ambitions. These facts are important to a full understanding of what follows.

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NOTES.

**20.** Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshiping *him*, and desiring a certain thing of him.  
**21.** And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.

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**20.** *Then*—After the private instruction of vss. 17-19. *The mother of Zebedee's children*—Salome, the sister of Mary the mother of Jesus; she was one of the women of Galilee who followed ministering to Him, and she was one of those who witnessed the crucifixion. *With her sons*—James and John; in the account of Mark x. 35 they present the request themselves, so that Salome acted for them at their request, or followed up their request by her own prayer. *Worshiping*—She had high views of his character as the Messiah. *A certain thing*—Wishing the promise before the naming of the desired boon. Not an unusual course for sovereigns. See 1 Kings ii. 20. So, also, Herod promised Herodias whatever she should ask. But the question seems to betray uncertainty as to the propriety of her desire. . . . **21.** *What wilt thou?*—I will first hear your wish! It would become in our hand a sad perversion of grace, and a sorrowful grant to

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**20.** When and where did this occur? Matt. xx. 17. What had Jesus been talking of just before? What influence should this have had upon the disciples' hearts? Why did the predicted cross awaken such ambitions? What was the name of this woman? Mark xv. 40. For whom did she act? Mark x. 36. Who came with her? Of what kin was she to Jesus? Compare John xix. 25 with Mark xv. 40. What was her first request? Why did she wish to secure the promise first? What did such a request show as to Salome's opinion of her standing with Jesus? Of her opinion as to what she was about to ask? **21.** How did Jesus answer? Why thus? Does Christ know our desires? What would follow were He always to give us whatever we ask for? What did Salome ask for? Why these places? What was the position of her sons with Christ already?

**22.** But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask.

ourselves, were Christ to yield unconditioned assent to our prayers. And even when the petition is well, and He is willing to give, "He will nevertheless be inquired of to do it." *Grant*—Command, as a king issues his royal decree. *My two sons*—This fact alone is often judged by parents to be sufficient qualification for high honor. It is well to remember that kinship is no claim to place, either in Church or State, but merit alone. A young man should scorn to plead natural relationship, or trust to the mediation of friends, where solid worth alone should carry the plea. Doubtless Salome and her sons relied very much upon their kinship with Christ. *May sit, etc.*—The right hand was the first place of honor at court, the left hand the second, these being nearest to the throne. No doubt James and John were influenced by the glowing words of Jesus (ch. xix. 28) concerning his and his apostles' coming glory. They believed the kingdom of God would immediately appear (Luke xix. 11), and had the opinion that it would be largely a temporal kingdom. The question arises: What influence did Christ's late prediction of his coming sufferings have upon their minds at this time? Did they realize the sad facts? did they wish to be first with Him also in his dangers? How much that is praiseworthy entered into the ambition of Salome and her sons? That there was an unlawful desire for pre-eminence is plain from our Lord's rebuke and the disciples' indignation. That the sons at least understood somewhat of the perils which encompassed the path to the coveted possession, and included in their request the privilege of being first in perils also, appears from what follows. There was therefore in their motives a noble and praiseworthy element also. . . .

**22.** *Ye*—He addresses the sons now. *Know not what you ask*—

What reason did she give for such a favor to them? What did she probably rely upon? What is the true ground on which all requests for favors from our fellow-men should rest? What must we plead when seeking favors of God? Was Salome's prayer a proper one? What words of Christ's had probably excited her sons' desires? Ch. xix. 28. What were their views of Christ's kingdom? Luke xix. 11. Did they believe what Christ said about his sufferings? v. 18. Did they wish to be first also in suffering for Jesus?

**22.** What did Jesus mean by this answer? In what respect is this true

Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say

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You do not fully realize the vast cost of pain at which the place nearest me in my kingdom is to be secured! How little we know the awful perils which would follow the answer to many of our petitions in behalf of ourselves and our loved ones! The care and love of the Holy Father are often shown in withholding answers to our prayers. There are many points in our life at which we now see that both temporal and spiritual ruin would have followed the bestowment of our petitions. O Lord, teach me ever to ask in cheerful and entire submission to thy higher wisdom and love! *The cup*—An image of joy (Ps. xxiii. 5), or of sorrow (Matt. xxvi. 42); here of sorrow. *Baptism*—Often used in the same twofold sense for the divine allotments of joy or sorrow, but here for the chiasm of sorrow, the bloody sweat of Gethsemane, the water and blood of the cross. Some distinguish between the meaning of the figures, supposing the cup to symbolize the *inner* and spiritual trials, the baptism *outer* persecutions and sufferings. STIER sees in them an allusion to the two sacraments of the Church, the supper and baptism. These words refer back to the prediction of the coming passion (vss. 18, 19), and imply a doubt as well as put an inquiry: Ye are not able, are you? *We are able*—So Peter said: "Yet will I never be offended," Matt. xxvi. 34. Thus, all this group of the most favored of the twelve, Peter, James and John, betrayed an overweening confidence in their ability to endure with Christ in his trial-hour. For when the cup was being drained in Gethsemane these three failed upon their watch with Him. And, in the following scenes, James, with the others, "forsook him and fled," Peter denied him, and John, though known to the High Priest, was a silent witness of the Lord's shame. O Spirit of Power, dwell Thou in me; O Crucified and Risen Saviour, let me dwell

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of us all? Who helps us in this infirmity? Rom. viii. Why, therefore, should we say, "Thy will be done?" Use of the word *cup*? Ps. xxiii. 5; Matt. xxvi. 42. Of word *baptism* here? What did John and James answer? Did they speak truly? What likeness had this to Peter's conduct? Matt. xxvi. 34. Wherein did their future conduct fail to justify

unto him, We are able. 23. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared of my Father.

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ever in Thee as my stronghold and sure defence; then indeed may I, in humility but with hope, take with Thee and for Thee the bitter cup of sorrow and the grievous baptism of blood! These men would hardly have answered so had they better known themselves or better known what was in store for them! Yet we *may* say, *We are able!* when remembering that without Him we can do nothing, but with Him all things. Lord, I am able; help Thou my inability. . . . 23. *Ye shall drink indeed of my cup*—James was the first of the apostles to suffer death (Acts xii. 2); John the last to die, and therefore given to drink longest and deepest of the cup of suffering which all the apostles quaffed. *But to sit on my right hand and on my left* [in the kingdom of God] *is not mine to give*—“By this opposition or *exception* (for it comes to the same thing) Jesus does not say that it is not his to give (see Rev. iii. 21), but defines and declares to whom He will give it, and the time and order, referring all, as usual, to the Father. Jesus did not give it until He had drained the cup of his passion and taken his own seat at the Father’s right hand. Nor is it an earthly kingdom in which He gives it, nor does He give it to those who have not suffered.”—BENDEL. So also ALFORD reads, “is not mine to give *except* (not but) for whom.” Observe the words, *it shall be given to them*, are italicized in the English version, and are not in the original. The text shows that there are chief places in the eternal kingdom, that some will have higher seats than others. These Christ is here represented as *bestowing*, the Father as *preparing*, Matt. xxv. 34. The following verses give a clue to the character of those for whom these

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their confidence? By whose help alone can we say, *we are able!* What would have been a better answer for these men? 23. How was this fulfilled in case of James? Acts xii. 2. Of John? What are these places of higher and of highest honor in Christ’s kingdom? To whom does Christ give these? Is it lawful to hope for them?

**24.** And when the ten heard *it*, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren. **25.** But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. **26.** But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; **27.** And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your

most honorable seats are prepared. Lord Jesus, if Thou wilt, let me have a place very near to Thee in thy kingdom; but oh, grant me *some* place therein, even though upon the very outer bound, farthest from thy throne! . . . **24.** *Moved with indignation*—An indignation born of their own ambition doubtless; Matthew (the writer) includes himself. James and John, with Peter, then occupied first places in the college of apostles; that they should thus anticipate the future and more promising kingdom was thought unfair and unkind. Their anger is against the two brethren, not the mother. . . . **25.** *The princes of the Gentiles*—Jesus also had a personal experience of this at the hands of the Romans. *They that are great*—But subordinate to princes, as ministers, governors. *Exercise authority*—Even more rigorous than the “dominion” of the princes, as is often the case with petty rulers. . . . **26, 27.** *But it shall not be so among you*—You are not to have among you, nor to be to others, princes *exercising dominion and authority*: the State is not to be the model for the Church in this matter of rulers and subjects. The text undermines the whole system of popery and priestcraft. Yet there are to be “princes” and “great” in the Church. How are they to obtain and exercise rule? Thus: *Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister*. This is Christ’s ladder to chief place in his Church. He who would be highest must become and be lowest; he who would rule must rule by the love of serving and the service of love. Do I covet such greatness?

**24.** Why were the ten indignant? Had they good cause? Did they show a good spirit? **25.** Why did Jesus call them to Him? **26, 27.** What principle of organization and government does Christ *exclude* from his kingdom? What principle does he establish? To whom does this apply? Is it lawful to desire and seek such greatness? What is the difference be-



servant: **28.** Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

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Lord, give me a holy ambition to be first in serving Thee and all thine! Notice how the heavenly promotion is proportioned to the earthly humiliation: He that would be *great* must be *minister* [Gr. diakonos, a word which is used for service generally, an occasional, voluntary and not menial service], but he that would be *chief* [protos] must be *servant* [doulos]; he must even take the work and position of the menial, the hired or captive servant, giving up time and labor and inclination to the interests of another. . . . **28.** *Even as*—The Exemplar of all Christians, clergy and laity, rulers and subjects alike, is not an earthly king in his kingdom, but The Anointed King of Zion in his life of denial. *The Son of man*—Appropriate use of the word, indicating the place of the glory, but through the path of shame. *Not to be ministered unto*—Yet how pampered and exacting do his servants oftentimes become! *But to minister*—TO SERVE. What condescension! Sweet name for the preacher of the Word: MINISTER! How better far than rabbi, priest or doctor! *And to give his life*—The highest act of his ministry. As the *Offerer* of the ransom, He was our Great High Priest; as Himself the Ransom, the life yielded up in our stead, He was the Lamb of God (John i. 29), slain that He might redeem his people by his blood. Rev. v. 9. *A ransom*—“A plain declaration of the sacrificial and vicarious nature of the death of our Lord. The principal usages of *ransom* [Gr., lutron] are the following: (1.) A payment as equivalent for a life destroyed (Ex. xxxi. 30); (2.) The price of redemption of a slave (Lev. xxxv. 51); (3.) ‘Propitiation for,’ as in Prov. xiii. 8.”—ALFORD. Thus Christ is (1) our Ransom from the death-doom of a broken law (Ex. xxi. 30); (2) our Ransom from the bondage of the law itself in that He has


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tween *minister* and *servant*? What is *your* standing according to this rule? How does this rule apply to home-life? **28.** Who is our Exemplar in the ministry of love? In what and to whom did Christ minister? Meaning of ransom? (1.) Ex. xxxi. 30; (2.) Lev. xxxv. 51; (3.) Prov. xiii. 8. For whom did Christ die? How may we have this ransom? When and where should we seek it? What are sinners ransomed from? Are you ransomed?

fulfilled it; (3) the riches of his righteousness are accepted before God as covering and atoning for our short-comings. *For many—Even for me!*

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#### ANALYSIS.

I. Vss. 21, 22.—A Mother's Unlawful Ambition for her Children. . . . II. Prayer Perverted through Ignorance and Ambition or Self-Interest. "Ye know not what ye ask." vss. 22, 23. . . . III. The Places of Honor in the Kingdom.  If I would be nearest to Christ there, I must be nearest to Him here in my walk, and nearest like Him in my works! vss. 24-27. . . . IV. The Ministry of Love is the True Greatness. vs. 28. . . . V. Christ Jesus the Ransom of Souls.

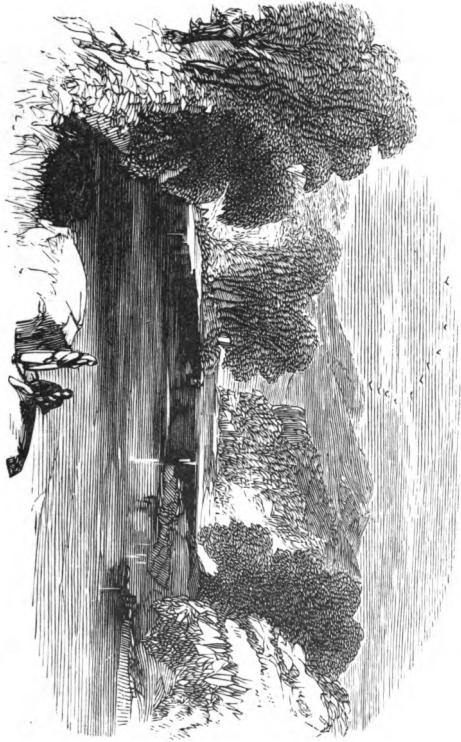
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#### SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." vs. 28.

**THEMES.**—*For Thought:* The condescension of Jesus Christ in his work of atonement. *For Prayer:* Lord, take from my heart all unhallowed ambitions, and help me to follow Thee in denials and labors for others! *For Practical Life:* "Before honor is humility." I must do life's lowly work if I would rise to heavenly places.

**CATECHISM.**—Q. 35. How doth Christ execute the office of a priest? A. Christ executeth the office of a priest in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us.



**Fords of Jordan.**



## LESSON XXXVIII.

### BLIND BARTIMEUS.

Mark x. 46-52.—Parallels, Matt. xx. 20-34; Luke xviii. 35-43.

#### HISTORICAL CONNECTION.

Joined by a large company of pilgrims, chiefly friends and disciples from Galilee and Perea, Christ and his apostles crossed the Jordan and moved on toward Jericho. This city would naturally be the terminus of one of the daily stages of travel before beginning the difficult ascent to Jerusalem. The date of this event may be placed at Thursday, the 7th of the Jewish month Nisan, corresponding to March. The stimulus of greetings with friends, and the more notable stimulus of a crowd of sympathizing followers and admirers, doubtless had much to do with inspiring such hopes and ambitions as appear in the request of the sons of Zebedee. Three hours' travel would have brought them to Jericho, the route lying through a tract of country at that time the most fertile and beautiful in all the East. Groves of palm trees were on every hand, extending even to the bank of the Jordan. The waters of Elisha's fountain threaded the plain, winding among beautiful gardens and fields of wheat at that season clothed with their brightest green. In the midst of this beauty rose the city, with the splendid palace of Archelaus, the castle of Heroq, the hippodrome, and the fine suburban mansions of the gentry.

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#### NOTES.

46. And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimeus,

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46. *As He went out of Jericho*—The following apparent discrepancies as to the number of persons cured and the location of the miracle appear in the narratives of the Evangelists:

|          |          |                       |
|----------|----------|-----------------------|
| MATTHEW. | Two men. | Leaving Jericho.      |
| LUKE.    | One man. | Entering Jericho. (?) |
| MARK.    | One man. | Leaving Jericho.      |

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46. Whence was Jesus coming? John xi. 54. Whither going? Who joined Him in the plain of Jericho? What was the character and appear-

Thus Mark agrees with Luke as to the number cured and with Matthew as to the location of the miracle. How account for these differences? 1. TRENCH adopts BENGEL'S view, viz.: "That one [blind man] cried to Jesus as He drew near the city, but that He did not cure him then, but on the morrow, at his going out of the city, cured him, together with the other, to whom in the mean while he had joined himself, the evangelist relating by prolepsis [anticipation], as is so common with all historians, the whole of the event where he first introduces it, rather than by cutting it into two halves preserve accuracy, yet lose the total effect which the whole narrative related at a breath would possess." 2. ALFORD says: "He must be indeed a slave to the *letter* who would stumble at such discrepancies, and not rather see in them the corroborating coincidence of testimonies to the fact itself." So, also, OLSHAUSEN: "Their very differences on such immaterial points show the genuine historical character of the gospels. . . . Their agreement in every little trait would have been the surest means of awakening suspicion." LANGE adopts the *former* (BENGEL'S) view, further conjecturing that Christ "made his exit by the same gate through which He entered." OOSTERZEE (on Luke in the Lange commentaries) prefers the *latter* (OLSHAUSEN'S) view. 3. That the miracle was wrought not at the first entrance nor at the final exit, but at an occasional departure from the city during his sojourn in the place. 4. The view which seems better than any of these and that to which the American commentators generally incline (OWEN, BARNES, Dr. ROBINSON) is this: The original Greek of Luke's phrase, *was come nigh unto Jericho*, admits of the rendering, *when He was nigh unto Jericho*, which, being an indefinite expression, may apply equally to nearness of approach or nearness of departure. Thus Luke may be harmonized with Matthew and Mark as to location. As to the seeming discrepancy in the number, it is removed on the same principle of interpretation which is applied to the demoniacs of Gadara (Matt. viii. 28)—*i. e.*, the mention of one person only, who, by some peculiarity, had asso-

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ance of the procession? What the probable date of this event? Meaning of *Bar*? How d'd this man's name chance to be preserved? Why was he

the son of Timeus, sat by the highway-side, begging. 47. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry

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ciated his case more closely in the disciples' minds with the incident, does not at all contradict the fact that there was another but less noteworthy cure. *Blind Bartimeus*—*Bar* is Syriac for *son*. As Bartimeus became a disciple, he was doubtless well known among the friends of Jesus. But the old prefix, *blind*, adhered to him—a not unpleasant reminder of his great deliverance. *By the highway-side*—Near the city gate, a good location for a beggar. The procession had passed through the city, and was now leaving it on the way to the neighborhood of brook Cherith, where the greater part of the caravan would bivouac for the night. . . . 47. *When he heard*—Luke says that, hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant, a natural curiosity in a blind man. *Jesus of Nazareth*—His informers do not seem to have been among the number of decided disciples, or they would have added to this title. *He began to cry out*—He had heard of Jesus before, and knew that He had opened the eyes of the blind. He could not see Jesus; he knew not in what part of the procession He might be; he cried out at a venture, believing that when Jesus did approach his voice would be heard. So let the sinned-soul at least make a beginning of prayer. "Venture on Him." *Jesus, son of David*—This was the ordinary title of the Messiah. To the multitude who apparently were following in the train of the Saviour He was only "Jesus of Nazareth;" to the heart of this wayside beggar He was the Divine Messiah. How much better the blind saw than the seeing! How much more truly did he follow who *sat* by the *wayside* than they who *walked in the way!* It is not strange that the blind man should be first to remember the words of the blessed Book which bore the only hope to him for earthly vision. Isa. xxxv. 5; xlv. 7. How often as he sat in darkness must he have thought of these words and prayed for the coming Messiah! It was a sure conclusion: This Jesus—this opener of blind eyes—this is the promised

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seated at the highway-side? 47. How did Bartimeus know who was passing? Were his informants disciples? What led him to cry out at once? Whom did he take Jesus to be? How had he come to this opinion? See

out and say, Jesus, *thou* son of David, have mercy on me. **48.** And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, *Thou* son of David, have mercy on me.

**49.** And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called.

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Son of David! *Have mercy on me*—Kyrie Eleison. He had now a new reason, nay, the strongest reason, for desiring his sight—that he might see the Messiah Jesus. . . . **48.** *And many*—Of those in the van of the procession, Luke says. Not one, two, but many, as though they cried out with one mind and voice, “Hold your peace!” It was no gentle charge, but a rude rebuke, such as an elated crowd gives to one who displeases it. It is not said, and it is not likely (as some expositors assume), that the apostles had any part in this rudeness. The multitude did not understand Bartimeus, supposing he only begged the usual alms; and then they were pressing on to Jerusalem with visions of Judæan independence and the restored kingdom of Israel before them. Why should a blind beggar stop them, or annoy the Prophet, or disturb the proprieties of that festal occasion by his piteous clamors? How truly this illustrates the fact that those who often seem to be the advance guard of the Christian host represent least truly the heart of Christ! How many, in promoting the noisy pageantry of Christian work, neglect, nay, silence the pitiful cry of the solitary poor! *But he cried the more*—Their noise threatened to drown his voice, and he must cry louder now to be heard. “This is my only chance; the Master himself may soon draw near; He will not rebuff me.” Here was genuine faith in Christ’s love. And so, above the tramp of the crowd still passing all this time, above the clamor of tongues and the harsh tones of those who bade him hold his peace, rose all the louder and all the oftener the Kyrie Eleison, *Son of David, have mercy!* . . . **49.** *And Jesus stood still*—Ah, that cry has entered the right ears at

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Isa. xxxv. 5; xlv. 7. What fact would have especially impressed those texts upon his mind? What new reason had he *now* for wishing sight? **48.** Where and who were those who bade Bartimeus keep still? Why did they do this? Wherein did these men misrepresent Christ? What reasons had Bartimeus for crying the more? What encouragement?

**49.** Why did Jesus stop? Who were probably sent to call Bartimeus?



And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise, he calleth thee. 50. And he, casting away his garment,

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last. His eyes could not reach Jesus, but his voice did. "What power has the prayer of believers! There prayed *Joshua*, and the sun in the heavens stood still. Now JESUS, the Sun of Righteousness which in mid-course was soon to descend, also stood here still."—BOGATZKY in OOSTERZEE. Jesus does not reason like the multitude, for to Him what were the proprieties and order of a grand festal procession to the piteous cry of a sufferer and the opportunity to give relief? Blessed Jesus, whose thoughts are not as our thoughts! *Commanded him to be called*—Teacher, here is thy mission, at the command of Jesus to call darkened souls to Himself, who is the light of the world. The people would stop now and gather around to see the issue. He who a moment before was the centre of scornful rebuke is now the centre of respectful interest. What a change the evident favor of the dear Jesus often makes in our relations to others! *They call*—Doubtless some of the apostles, for they show in their words more of the spirit of Jesus. *Saying unto him*—Sweet saying, not in the letter but in the spirit of the command. *Be of good comfort*—Cheer up! It may be the poor man's face began to express fear lest he should be left unnoticed and unhealed. The Christian teacher often needs to make a heartsome *cheer up* the keynote of his discourse. *Rise*—So may the teacher say: Rise—for I will lead you; rise—out of your sins, for you cannot thus reach Jesus; rise—HE calleth you, not we, who only act for Him; rise—the crowd have rebuked and hindered, but He *calleth*; rise—a nobler, a joyful position for your salvation is nigh! . . . 50. *Casting away his garment*—The outer garment, his cloak by day, his covering by night. So must the soul cast off all that hinders its free approach to Jesus. Phil. iii. 7. *He rose and came to Jesus*—So the Prodigal rose and came to his father. So you, dear

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Why? Why did the apostles bid him cheer up? What good ground for comfort had he? What is the best possible reason for cheerfulness to the sinner? Have you that? What reason did they give why he should rise? Have you that reason for repentance? 50. Why cast away his cloak? What lesson here for the soul seeking Jesus? How is *the soul* to come to

rose and came to Jesus. **51.** And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. **52.** And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

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soul, must rise and come in faith and love to Jesus. Now at last he stands mute before the Messiah, waiting for the first sound of that voice which is to speak life to his sightless balls. Silent and eager, the expectant multitude look on. . . . **51.** *What wilt thou?* How He loves to hear us utter our requests! The people thought it a sorry thing to hear that plaintive cry, and would have silenced it, but it was sweet enough to the Saviour's ear to lead Him to ask its repetition. Christ knew well enough what he wanted, but the blind man's request was a testimony before bystanders to his sightless condition. Besides, this was a test of his faith; the cry for "mercy" was a general request, just such as that used in begging, and Jesus would have Bartimeus plainly express his faith in his power to cure him. . . . **52.** *Jesus said unto him*—Matthew records that He had compassion and touched the eyes; Luke, that He also said, Receive thy sight. *Go thy way*—Not to beg now; no, his way hereafter was Christ's way. *Thy faith hath made thee whole*—Because it had brought him to Christ, whose power had healed. He had indeed shown great faith, (1) by recognizing at once Christ's Messianic character; (2) by crying to Him immediately upon the first and most general information; (3) by disregarding all opposition in the firm trust in Christ's pity, and crying on; (4) by rising straightway and coming to Christ; (5) to sum up all, by his unshaken belief that Jesus could and would save him. And such faith, impenitent one, will make thee, also, whole. *Immediately*—Christ's saving work is done quickly. Would that Christian workers would learn to look for Christ's power *immediately* in the salvation of the children! *And followed Jesus in the way*—Joining the triumphal

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Jesus? And when? **51.** Why did Jesus ask, *What wilt thou?* What additional particulars do Matthew and Luke here give? **52.** Wherein had Bar-

procession. Luke says that he "followed Him glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God." The same men who a moment before cried, "Hold thy peace!" now could not hold their own peace. And the *Kyrie Eleison* of Blind Bartimeus gives way to his own *Doxology* and the hallelujahs of the people. O my soul, when shall people give glory to God for thy salvation? Multitudes of the faithful in every age have felt their hearts thrilled under the pathos of this sweet story as they have applied it to their own deliverance from spiritual blindness by the Son of David. The writer of these notes has seen a congregation melted into tears by the unexpected singing of Newton's "Blind Bartimeus" to the quaint and plaintive air so familiar to our fathers:

Mercy, O Thou Son of David,  
 Thus Blind Bartimeus prayed;  
 Others by thy word are savèd,  
 Now to me afford thine aid.  
 Many for his crying chid him,  
 But he called the louder still,  
 Till the gracious Saviour bid him  
 Come, and ask Me what you will!

Money was not what he wanted,  
 Though by begging used to live;  
 But he asked, and Jesus granted,  
 Alms that none but He could give.  
 "Lord, remove my grievous blindness,  
 Let mine eyes behold the day!"  
 Straight he saw, and, won by kindness,  
 Followed Jesus in the way.

Oh, methinks I hear him praising,  
 Publishing to all around:  
 "Friends, is not my case amazing?  
 What a Saviour I have found!  
 Oh that all the blind but knew Him,  
 And would be advised by me!  
 Surely they would hasten to Him,  
 He would cause them all to see."—HYMNAL, 434.

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timeus shown his faith? How long does it take Christ to save a child's soul? How did his cure affect Bartimeus? And how affect the people? How does our salvation through faith in Christ glorify God?

## SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Be of good comfort; rise, He calleth thee.  
vs. 49.

THEMES.—*For Thought*: The value of Promptness and Energy in seeking divine mercy. *For Prayer*: Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me! Lord, that I may receive my sight! *For Practical Life*: He calleth me: have I answered?

CATECHISM.—Q. 31. What is effectual calling? A. Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, *enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ* and renewing our wills, He doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the Gospel. Also Q. 86. What is faith in Christ?

## SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK.

BLACKBOARD.—The following Analysis of the narrative may be used for the review of the lesson. The various points should first be brought out by questions, and then fastened in the mind by writing, in order as above.

|               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. Christ's   | -oming.       |
| 2. Bartimeus' | -ry.          |
| 3. People's   | -ensure.      |
| 4. Bartimeus' | -ontinuance.  |
| 5. CHRIST'S   | -ALL.         |
| 6. Apostles'  | -omfort.      |
| 7. Bartimeus' | -oming.       |
| 8. Christ's   | -ure.         |
| 9. Bartimeus' | -onsecration. |

## LESSON XXXIX.

### ZACCHEUS CALLED.

Luke xix. 1-10.

#### GEOGRAPHICAL REFERENCE.

Jericho is situated in the Jordan valley, about eighteen miles from Jerusalem, seven miles in direct line from the Jordan, and eight miles from the entrance of that river into the Dead Sea. The surrounding valley is known as the plain of Jericho. The most notable natural feature is **Elisha's Fountain**, the scene of the healing miracle recorded 2 Kings ii. 19, and which still bears the name of the prophet. This fountain probably marks the site of the old city; its waters burst forth in great abundance about a mile in front of the bold, precipitous Mount Quarantana, which rises, an almost perpendicular wall of rock, twelve or fifteen hundred feet above the plain, whose fertility is due to the copious streams which traverse it. The New Testament Jericho was situated about two miles south of the fountain, near the opening of Wady Kelt, the Brook Cherith, where the ravens fed Elijah. The earliest mention of Jericho is associated with the visit of the spies and their protection by **Rahab** the harlot. Josh. ii. She afterward married Salmon, the son of Nasson, and became mother of Boaz, who married Ruth the mother of Obed, who was the father of Jesse the father of David, whose Son and Lord was Jesus the Christ. Even at the time of the Conquest by Joshua, Jericho was a place of great **Importance**, being a walled city of considerable size and of large wealth, as shown by its spoils. Its situation in the well-watered plain of Jericho—ten or twelve miles in breadth—whose fertility has been celebrated in every age, and its nearness to the Jordan, made it the centre of a rich and numerous population. It was surrounded by groves of palms, and was called the "City of Palms." Judg. i. 16. Its very name, which signifies "place of fragrance," indicates the exceeding richness of its soil. The **Climate** of Jericho is excessively hot, and after two or three months becomes

sickly, and especially unhealthy for strangers. In passing the short distance from Jerusalem, the traveler descends nearly four thousand feet, and passes from a temperate atmosphere into the sultry heat of an Egyptian climate, which is not surprising, since the plain of Jericho is thirteen hundred feet below the level of the ocean. In the winter season, even when there is snow at Jerusalem, the inhabitants of Jericho rejoice in linen garments. The New Testament **Historical Associations** of Jericho are with Blind Bartimeus, who was healed at its gate, Zaccheus, the Chief Publican, and with the mountain Quarantana, which overhangs it, whose top is the traditional scene of Christ's Temptation. It was opposite Jericho, at the ford of Jordan, that Christ was baptized, and between Jericho and Jerusalem was laid the scene of the parable of the Good Samaritan. In the Old Testament history Jericho is associated closely with the career of Elijah. It was at the neighboring Brook Cherith (Wady Kelt) that he was fed by the ravens; at Jericho was one of his schools of the prophets (2 Kings ii. 5); and, opposite Jericho, Elijah "went up by a whirlwind into heaven." But the most memorable mention of Jericho is its siege and **Overthrow** by the Israelites under Joshua, the account of which is given in Josh. vi. The curse which Joshua laid upon him who should rebuild was for ages religiously observed, and probably the old site was never built upon. The new town and modern village is about two miles from the old site. The present name of Jericho is Erihah, shortened often to Rihah. The place is a miserable little village, and the plain is now wholly destitute of its famous palm groves; the sycamore also is gone, and the balsam tree, which probably helped largely to swell the revenues which Zaccheus collected. But the fig tree still grows, and fine fields of grain, with maize, cotton, indigo, tobacco and the common fruits. It was at Jericho that Herod the Great died, and it was in the hippodrome of this city that he confined the nobles of his dominion, and ordered his sister Salome to put them to death the moment he expired, so that there might be, without fail, appropriate mourning throughout the land at his own decease. Happily, Salome disregarded the order.

## HISTORICAL CONNECTION.

We have here the last of a group of incidents which fairly show Christ's methods of dealing with various classes of men. First, his affectionate reception and embrace of the Little Children; then his wise, truthful, severe but tender treatment of the Rich Young Ruler; next, his merciful healing of the blind beggar Bartimeus; and finally, his recognition and conversion of Zaccheus, the rich taxgatherer. It is noticeable that, of this group, the Master's choice was in every case contrary to the wishes and in face of the opposition of those around, while the only case apparently unopposed by others, the Young Ruler, was the only one who failed to obtain the Lord's favor. Truly, his thoughts are not as our thoughts. Surely, we are born, not of the will of man, but of the will of God. How plainly is here marked the sympathy of Him, the Rejected of Men, for those whom man rejects! Need any outcast despair?

## NOTES.

1. And *Jesus* entered and passed through Jericho. 2. And,

1. *Jesus entered and passed through Jericho*—These words seem to imply that the interview with Zaccheus was after our Lord had made his entrance and passed out of the city. The cure of Bartimeus we located just outside the gate; the call of the chief publican was therefore in the populous suburbs of the town, where it is not at all unlikely that Zaccheus lived. The march of the large company of paschal pilgrims through Jericho would at any time have caused a stir among the citizens. But on this occasion the presence of the great Nazarene Prophet added largely to the excitement, which indeed carried the crowd beyond the city walls. Some of the pilgrims may have halted for the night-bivouac by the copious streams of Elisha's fountain, which burst forth near the old site of the town, two miles north of the modern city. Others accompanied Jesus as He *passed through Jericho*,

1. Of what group of incidents is this the last? What do these illus-

behold, *there was* a man named Zaccheus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. **3.** And he sought to see

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purposing, it may be, to encamp just south of the town, by the waters of Brook Cherith (Wady Kelt), on whose banks the ravens wrought their kindly and miraculous offices upon Elijah. But for Himself and his immediate disciples Jesus had other purposes. He was to find a host among this multitude that thronged his path, and a lodging-place in one of those beautiful homes among the groves and gardens that begirt the town. Our Lord had often (six times) before visited the town of Rahab, his noted ancestress according to the flesh, but never under circumstances of external pomp, which, as now, seemed to promise a kindred fame with that of his great type, the first Jesus—Joshua, the captain of Israel's salvation; for his entrance into Jericho, as shortly afterward into Jerusalem, was that of the conquering Messiah. . . . **2.** *Zaccheus*—A Hebrew word (meaning *pure*) with a Greek termination; a common name among the Jews. *Chief among the publicans*—The richness of that part of the Jordan valley of which Jericho was the mart made necessary a superintendent of customs or tribute for that district. Such was Zaccheus, *and as such* (original) *he was rich*. He was directly responsible to his Roman principal, and the ordinary taxgatherers were subordinate to him. The historical accuracy of Luke, in locating such an official at Jericho, is incidentally confirmed by Josephus, who says (Ant. xv. 4, section 2) that the palm groves of Jericho and its gardens of balsam were given as a source of revenue by Antony to Cleopatra, and, on account of their value, were afterward redeemed by Herod for his own benefit. . . . **3.** *He sought*—And kept on seeking, now at one point, now at another, as one does seek when surrounded by a crowd. Whether or no Zaccheus was led by more than curiosity, the incident well

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trate? What noticeable difference appears in them between the choice of Jesus and of his followers? Why should the caravan have passed through Jericho? What good grounds for bivouac lay beyond the city? What are the Bible associations of Rahab and of Joshua to Jericho? What their relations to Christ? **2.** What was the chief publican's duty? What made such an officer necessary at Jericho? Was the office profitable? Was it lawful? Was it popular? **3.** What moved Zaccheus to see Jesus? What



Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. 4. And he ran before, and climbed up into a

illustrates the spiritual seeking of Christ by the longing soul. *He could not for the press*—There is the same crowd ever to stand between the soul and its Saviour. *Little of stature*—There is a like defect in the spiritual stature of us all when we seek to “behold the Lamb of God.” O Lord Jesus, let not the crowds of greater ones who gather about Thee shut out the sweet sight of thy Person from those dear ones of ours, “little of stature,” who fill our Sabbath-schools! . . . 4. *He ran before*—He did not give up and go home, saying, “It is no use: I have tried in vain.” He held to his purpose, and flanked the obstacles which he could not override. Soul, if the crowd hinder thy vision of Christ, do thou leave the crowd and place thyself where thy view shall be unobscured. And yet it is not of him that will-eth nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. *Climbed up*—Had he consulted the proprieties of his rank he never would have done so outlandish a thing, and therefore he never would have seen Jesus nor have been seen of Him. The real or fancied requirements of social position often hinder souls from a successful pursuit of salvation. *Sycamore tree*—Not our American sycamore, but the fig-mulberry, an abundant and valuable tree in Egypt and Palestine. It grows to the size of the walnut, with widespreading branches, and, on account of its shade, is often planted by the waysides. Its leaves are heart-shaped, downy on the under side, and fragrant. The fruit grows directly from the trunk, on little sprigs and in clusters like the grape; when quite ripe it is soft, watery, somewhat sweet, with a slight aromatic flavor; in form and smell and inward structure it resembles the fig. The tree is always green, bears fruit several times in a year, and is thus of great value to the poor. The wood is porous, but very durable. DR. THOMSON thus describes one: “Nothing is easier than to climb into these sycamores;

hindered him? Wherein are you *spiritually* like Zaccheus? Does the “crowd” hinder you? Is it the great crowd or a small circle of companions? How do adults sometimes hinder our little ones from seeing Jesus? 4. Why did not Zaccheus give up the effort? How did he over-

sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. 5. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and saw him, and said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for to-day

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here is a score of boys and girls in this one; and as its giant arms stretch quite across the road, those on them can look directly down upon any crowd passing beneath. It is admirably adapted to the purpose for which Zaccheus selected it." *For He was to pass that way*—He who wishes salvation should not wait until Jesus passes by, but seek those ways by which Jesus passes. Through the sanctuary, the Sabbath-school, the closet especially, does Jesus delight to pass. But wherever a penitent soul prays, and looks in faith, even though out of a tree-top, Jesus will "pass that way." . . . 5. *When Jesus came*—Patience, anxious soul, Jesus will come! *To the place*—No failing in that; to the place where thou waitest, wherever that may be, He will surely come. *He looked up and saw him*—"By the very exceptional nature of his position Zaccheus strikes the eye of all. His name goes from mouth to mouth. One shows him to another. Here and there dislike manifests itself against the doubtless not universally-beloved chief publican, and therefore, in an entirely natural way, the Saviour's look is directed upon Zaccheus."—OOSTERZEE. *Said unto him, Zaccheus!*—He whom the multitude laugh at, Christ addresses with respect; the name bandied about the jeering crowd Jesus takes kindly upon his lips. The same divine knowledge that searched the heart of Nathaniel (John i. 48), and saw in him an Israelite without guile, searches the heart of Zaccheus, and detects in the midst of its stains an honest love of himself and longing after something better. Lord, look in pity upon me, also, and name my worthless name before the Eternal Father! *Make haste and come down, for*—Sweet reason for haste, to welcome Jesus! One need not be gazing after Christ, when He awaits our hospitality in the persons of his

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come his difficulties? Was it a proper thing to do? How did he know Jesus was "to pass that way?" 5. What led Christ to look up? How did he know Zaccheus' name? Did he speak it tenderly? Does Jesus speak your name in love? What reason was given why Zaccheus should make haste? In what part of the city was Zaccheus' house? Why did

I must abide at thy house. **6.** And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. **7.** And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. **8.** And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the

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servants and of the poor. *To-day*—Through the night. *I must abide*—Not only for my comfort, but for thy conversion. *At thy house*—It must have been well removed from the gate. . . . **6, 7.** *Received Him joyfully*—Zaccheus obeys the command literally, but in the right spirit also. Here was an unexpected honor: The Messiah will lodge with me; the holy King of Zion with unworthy Zaccheus; the Prince of Peace with the chief of publicans! And Zaccheus shall rise up in judgment against you who have heard Jesus calling and have received Him not at all! *When they*—The citizens who knew Zaccheus and the followers of Christ who had heard who He was. The Apostles could not have joined in this murmuring, for one of their own number was Levi the publican. *Murmured*—Not because Jesus had gone from them, but because He had gone to a sinner. It seemed to show high regard for Christ's honor, but really showed entire ignorance of his holy mission. *Gone to be guest*—And so, too, may we go, when going in the same spirit and with the same purpose. But social relations with the wicked, in which we come down to their level, are wholly unsanctioned by this example. *A sinner*—As though they were saints! O Thou Guest Divine, come Thou and dwell within this guilty heart of mine! . . . **8.** *And Zaccheus stood*—After Jesus had been received at his house. *Behold, LORD*—Sovereign Master of my all! It was not an empty title upon this man's lips. *Half of my goods*—A noble expression of his love. A fitting thank-offering to God for the gift of salvation! Would that many rich would follow the publican's example; nay, that all of us might learn to testify thus our gratitude to Christ! *I give*—Solemnly, freely consecrating

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Jesus say, *I must abide*? **6, 7.** How did Christ's words affect Zaccheus? What reason had he for rejoicing? Why did the crowd murmur? Did they love Christ's company? Were they *saints*? Is it well to be intimate with sinners? When only may we safely be "guest" with the ungodly? **8.** What do you mean when you call Jesus, Lord? What is a thank-offer-

Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore *him* fourfold. 9. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. 10. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

it now and here. *To the poor*—How well he has caught the true character of Jesus, and the nature of the gift most pleasing to Him! *If I have taken*—Whatever I have taken. *False accusation*—By levying “black mail” upon men charged unfairly with violating the revenue, or by making undue assessments and pocketing the surplus tax. The system of *farming* the customs gave great scope for such oppressions. *I restore fourfold*—The law of Moses required restitution of like for like, or double, but even fourfold in case of stolen sheep and fivefold in case of a stolen ox. Ex. xxii. 1. But Zaccheus rises above the strict *letter* of the law (Num. v. 7), and acts in its fullest spirit. “The Roman law, after judgment was obtained, required an oppressive publican to restore fourfold.”—OWEN. A simple calculation will show that the bulk of Zaccheus’ wealth was obtained honestly. For we cannot suppose that the half consecrated to God for the service of the poor was other than honest possessions; and in order to restore fourfold of such of the remaining half as he had gained by fraud, at least three-fourths of that also must have been honest wealth. . . . 9, 10. *This day*—“The very day may be denoted whereon one heretofore lost begins to be Christ’s. Phil. i. 5.”—BENGEL. “Happy day, when Jesus washed my sins away!” Lord, hast Thou said that? and can I truly sing this? This sweet assurance of Christ *follows* the consecration of Zaccheus. *A son of Abraham*—A Jew, and therefore also in

ing? For what did Zaccheus make this thank-offering? What thank-offering do you owe to God? What can you give? Was Jesus pleased with the gift to the poor? Had Zaccheus been an honest man? In what way had he defrauded? What restitution did the law require? Num. v. 7. Was this conduct right? What did it prove? What proof have you given that you love Jesus? 9, 10. Has salvation come to you? If so, when were you saved? If not, will you be saved “this day?” What is the ground of our salvation? How does Jesus “seek us?”

the covenant, which harmonizes this act with our Lord's usual course, to go first to the lost sheep of Israel. *To seek*—As the shepherd. *To save*—From the paw of the Roaring Lion, the Destroyer of souls. *Lost*—“For the greater sinner he may have been, the more does he come under the description of those whom the Good Shepherd came to seek and save.”—ALFORD. And so Zaccheus is left a richer though a poorer man, “saved by grace,” to superintend the revenue service on Christian principles.

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### ANALYSIS.

#### I. The Zeal of Zaccheus in Seeking Christ.

Shown by overcoming (1) *Constitutional Difficulties*, the shortness of his stature; (2) *Circumstantial Difficulties*, the press of the crowd; (3) *Conventional Difficulties*, the fear of compromising his social rank and exposing himself to ridicule.

#### II. Zeal in Receiving Christ.

(1) He made haste, and came down immediately; (2) he received Him joyfully.

#### III. Zeal in Serving Christ.

(1) He gave half of his goods to the poor; (2) he offered to make restitution for all improper gains.

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### SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—“To-day I must abide at thy house. *And* he made haste and came down and received HIM joyfully.” vs. 5, 6.

**THEMES.**—*For Thought*: The reward of zeal in seeking Christ. *For Prayer*: Dear Saviour, come Thou this day with salvation to our hearts; to our Sabbath-school home! *For Practical Life*: Have I given the evidence that Zaccheus gave that I am Christ's disciple?

**CATECHISM.**—Q. 34. What is adoption? A. Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges, of the sons of God.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK.

The following syllabus of the Geographical Reference will enable the Superintendent to give an acrostical map lesson on Jericho with greater readiness. The words in small caps are the catch words of the divisions.  For a BLACKBOARD LESSON on "Zaccheus," by Ralph Wells, see the author's "OBJECT AND OUTLINE TEACHING."

(**J.**) **JERUSALEM**, distance from, eighteen miles; Jordan, *ditto*, seven miles; Dead Sea, *ditto*, eight miles.—(**E.**) Site of old town, marked by **ELIJAH'S FOUNTAIN**, one mile from precipitous mountain Quarantana; water most copious, fertilizing the whole plain; healed by Elijah (2 Kings ii. 19); New Testament town two miles south, at mouth of Brook Cherith.—(**R.**) Earliest mention, with **RAHAB** and spies (Joshua ii.); Rahab's descendants from Salmon: Boaz, Obed, Jesse, David, . . . **JESUS**.—(**I.**) **IMPORTANCE** shown; antiquity; walled town; rich spoils; situation; fertile plain; named "City of Palms" (Judges i. 16), meaning "place of fragrance." Products: palms, figs, balsam, maize, cotton, grain, etc.—(**C.**) **CLIMATE**: hot; unhealthy to strangers; four thousand feet below Jerusalem; thirteen hundred below sea level.—(**H.**) **NEW TESTAMENT HISTORY**: Bartimeus, Zaccheus, Temptation on Mount Quarantana, Baptism of Christ, Parable of Good Samaritan. **OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY**: Elijah and Ravens, School of Prophets, Elijah's Translation, Elijah's Fountain.—(**O.**) **OVERTHROW** by Joshua (see Joshua vi.), Curse, Present Condition, Herod's Death, modern name Rihah or Eribah.

## LESSON XL.

### IMPROVING OPPORTUNITIES; THE TEN POUNDS.

Luke xix. 11-27.

#### HISTORICAL CONNECTION.

The parable of the ten pounds was spoken either at the house of Zaccheus in Jericho, or during the ascent to Jerusalem on the day following. The imagery used was readily suggested by incidents in the late affairs of Jericho under Archelaus. The will of Herod the Great left to this prince the throne subject to the ratification of Cæsar. Accordingly, after establishing himself in power, Archelaus sailed for Rome to push his interests before the emperor. His brother Antipas went to Rome with a similar claim. [Jos., Ant., bk. xvii., ch. 9.] In the issuing of the matter before Cæsar, an embassy of fifty Jews, who had been permitted to come from Judea by Varus the president of Syria, sustained by eight thousand of the Jews resident at Rome, appeared and plead against the confirmation of Archelaus. Cæsar decreed a partition of the kingdom, and Archelaus returned with the title of Ethnarch and the promise of royal dignity. [Jos., Ant., bk. xvii., ch. 11.] As a further historical illustration of the parable we read [Id., ch. 13] of Archelaus upon his return accusing and punishing "the seditious" and rewarding his friends. These facts would give great relish and point to this parable in the minds of those who were at the time in the vicinity of the splendid palace of Archelaus at Jericho, or who had but lately left it.

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#### NOTES.

11. And as they heard these things, he added and spake a

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11. *As they heard these things*—Which Jesus had been saying to Zaccheus at his house. The coming of the Son of man to

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11. What "things" had the people "heard?" With what is the title

parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. **12.** He said, therefore, a certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. **13.** And he

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save, of which Jesus spoke (vs. 10), and which was probably the theme of further discourse, meant to many of the hearers a magnificent royal triumph; their hopes were the higher because they were *nigh to Jerusalem* (a day's journey distant), the scene of the expected revolution, which, in their minds, was *immediately* to establish the Messiah's kingdom. Evidently He *added and spake* this parable in order—(1) to show the more faithful that the *kingdom of God should not immediately appear*; (2) to teach them to wait patiently and work diligently until Christ's second coming; and (3) to warn the unbelieving and opposing among the multitude of the doom which, however delayed, would certainly overtake them. *Kingdom of God*—The spiritual kingdom was indeed to be *set up* at Jerusalem by the death of Jesus, but its acknowledgment and triumph before all Israel and the world were and still are far away. . . . **12. Nobleman**—Such as would cherish and might hope to realize such aspirations, as, for example, Archelaus. The nobleman represents Christ. *Far country*—As Rome. Jesus here speaks of his Father's House, whither He went after his crucifixion. *To receive for himself*—The Kingdom of Christ is the souls of the Faithful, and as the Exalted Prince He is conquering by his Spirit, and receiving to himself continually the royal recognition which is his due. And in the interests of his own chosen, He has received from the Ancient of Days dominion over all things, that He may rule and overrule for their good and his own glory. *To return*—In Power of the Holy Ghost, as at Pentecost; in Providence, as at the destruction of Jerusalem and often since; in Person, as at the Last Coming, when all things shall be put under his feet. . . . **13. His ten servants**—Ten of

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son of man associated? Dan. vii. 14. What had nearness to Jerusalem to do with their views? What special errors was this parable meant to correct? **12.** What propriety in naming a nobleman as the central figure? Whom does he symbolize? What is the seat of Christ's Kingdom? What power is given Him in order to establish his Kingdom? When and wherein does Christ "return?" **13.** Had he only ten servants? What significance



called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. 14. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this *man* to reign over us.

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his servants (Gr.); not that he had only ten. The number *ten* here, as elsewhere, is the symbol of completeness, signifying the universal application of the principles of the parable. *Delivered them*—For every good gift is of God. *Ten*—One to each one; there is indeed more equality among those gifts of God to men by which the honor of Christ's Kingdom is promoted than many think; and learning, wealth, social position, power, health, each has found itself often outstripped in usefulness by simplicity, poverty, humility, weakness and frailty of body. After all, the great difference in the results of life-work seems to lie in the use which men make of opportunity. The chief design in representing each man's share as the same, is to show clearly the results of different degrees of zeal and diligence in improving gifts. *Pounds*—The Attic Mina, \$15. Every power, influence and opportunity by which God may be served is our "pound." *Occupy*—Not simply, Keep it in trust until I come; but (Gr.), Take it and trade with it; keep it occupied in profitable traffic. And thus God says of all our gifts and possessions; they are to be occupied for Him. . . . 14. *Citizens*—His fellow-citizens, whom he hoped to have for subjects. Christ here means especially the Jews, but also all the race, to whom He became in a sense a "fellow-citizen" by assuming human nature. *Message*—An embassy (Gr.), to intrigue and protest (at Rome) against the endowment of the nobleman with royalty. Their message expresses exactly the world's ground of hostility against Jesus. Men are willing to support his established ministry, and build up his churches, and promulgate and even practice his morals, but

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in the number ten? What is the design of representing each one as receiving the same amount? From whom do all our gifts come? Does He bestow equally upon all? In what light can one see greater equality in this respect than is usually acknowledged? What is the relation of personal diligence to natural gifts? Meaning of occupy? 14. Who were the citizens? In what sense is Christ our "fellow-citizen?" Meaning of message? What was the object of this embassy? Show the likeness of this

15. And it came to pass, that, when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. 16. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. 17. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over

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to have Him *reign over* them is what they cannot abide. "Twice this very declaration found utterance from the Jews' lips, once when they cried to Pilate, 'We have no king but Cæsar;' and again when they said, 'Write not, The King of the Jews.'—*Theophylact*, in TRENCH. . . . 15, 16. *Having received the kingdom*—The three parties having been introduced, viz., Jesus Christ, his Open Friends and his Open Enemies, the lesson of the parable is developed. The Lord Jesus from the cross has passed to the throne. One by one his servants are *called unto Him*. This is the judgment that lies at life's close: it is the consummation of the final Judgment; nay, it is that foretaste and foretoken of judgment which men often have here in this world, where constantly the question *faces every man*, How much and by what means (Gr.) have you *gained by trading*? Then came—Joyfully to account to his lord. *Thy pound*—"In St. Matthew the faithful servant comes forward saying, *Behold, I have gained*, while in St. Luke it is, *Thy pound hath gained*; thus between them they make up the speech of St. Paul, 'I—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.'"—TRENCH. *Hath gained ten pounds*—Thus faithfulness, with no greater gift than others, may win the most complete success. Lord, grant that my one pound may gather from my Sabbath class a gain of souls like this! How few teachers are willing to take a class of *one* scholar, and by faithfulness in mission work increase it to ten! . . . 17-19. *He said*—Oh, to hear my Lord say this unto me.

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to the world's relations to Christ. When did the Jews literally answer as here? 15, 16. What is meant by Christ's receiving the Kingdom? By His returning? When shall this "coming" and "account" be to us all? Does Christ take account of the *methods* of gain also? 17. Wherein was the action of this servant "well?" How had he shown his claim to the title

ten cities. 18. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. 19. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.

20. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, *here is thy pound,*

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*Well*—Well conceived, well planned, well wrought, well executed, and now well earned is the reward which I will give. *Good servant*—The goodness is shown by the service. *Faithful in a very little*—What encouragement here for the humble worker who has a mind to be *faithful!* And faithfulness is a quality not limited by the magnitude of an undertaking; it can approve itself as well in small affairs as in great ones. *Have thou authority*—For thou hast shown thyself a man of affairs. It is not so much the character as the degree of the reward here referred to; although it is not out of harmony with a true idea of heaven to suppose degrees of authority among the redeemed. *Cities*—An ordinary way of bestowing royal favors; the revenue was the valuable part of the reward. The straight path to a wide sphere of usefulness and influence lies across the faithfully-trodden narrow-field. And how far beyond our utmost hope or desert does sovereign grace multiply blessings unto us! The *second* approaches with the same humility, and receives also in proportion to his increase. . . . 20. *Another came*—Each one alone and for himself must give in the account of life's work; the habits, customs, companions, possessions, influences which brace us here and now against the thought of judgment will be wanting at Christ's Judgment-Seat; naked, as the soul came, must it go to the bar of God. *Lord*—His first word condemns him: LORD, Sovereign, who had of right bidden him trade with his gift. *Behold*—No need to call attention; He knows well thy recreancy. But if thou couldst, it were better to hide thy shame than blazon it. *Thy*—He acknowledges the gift to be God's, yet he had given God no authority in using it. *Pound*—That which was given, indeed, but without its lawful growth. *Napkin*—Handkerchief

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"good?" What special encouragement here to the little toilers and the humble workers? What is the "authority" which the redeemed soul shall receive? Were these rewards, ten cities, etc., deserved? Were they earned? 20. How did every word—Lord—Thy—Pound—condemn the

which I have kept laid up in a napkin: **21.** For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man; thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. **22.** And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, *thou* wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: **23.** Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury? **24.** And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. **25.** (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) **26.** For I say unto

(literally, sweat-cloth). That which should have wiped the brow wet with toil in using and making useful the pound was made the inappropriate instrument for burying it. . . . **21.** *For I feared thee*—That he may be himself exempt he charges God with wrong. Or he had utterly distorted views of God's character; and thus, as always, erroneous notions of God led to errors in life. The faithful exhibition of God's character is one of the teacher's most important duties. . . . **22, 23.** *Out of thine own mouth*—"To the ungodly the inner causes of the divine judgments are not revealed, but the means of conviction are merely adapted to their capacity."—BENGEL. *Wicked servant*—For simple neglect to do is sin, since God commands as well as forbids doing. *Thou knewest*—Judged even by the sinner's estimate of God, his case cannot stand in trial; what, then, must it be when judged by God's High Law? *Bank*—Table or counter of the exchangers. *Usury*—*i. e.*, lawful rent for usage; interest, as we now say. If this man had indeed feared to venture his pound upon his own responsibility, he might at least have submitted himself to the spiritual fostering and oversight of wiser and bolder and more successful laborers. . . . **24-26.** *Them that stood by*—The king's

sluggard? What is the meaning and right use of "napkin?" **21.** What erroneous views of God had he? Show that God is not "austere" from Nature, Providence, Character of Christ. Show that strictness in enforcing wise, kind, just laws is not austerity. What would have cast out his fear? How is the life influenced by wrong views of God? **22, 23.** Show that the servant was condemned out of his own mouth. Wherein did his wickedness consist? Meaning of usury? What is the spiritual significance of putting the pound in bank? **24-26.** What punishment is ex-

you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. 27. But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay *them* before me.

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bodyguard, symbolizing the angels. *Take from him the pound*—Many lose their good gifts because they fail to use them for God. This is the slothful Christian's punishment: he goes to God's Bar hugging his hoarded hope of Eternal Life only to be stripped of all for aye. The unused limbs shrivel and weaken, the untilled farm runs wild, the unoccupied house decays, the idle ship rots upon the docks, the spiritual gift unexercised fades out of the soul! Lord, Lord, save me from sloth in thy service! *Shall be given*—For it is well to put wasted gifts where they will be most abundantly increased. . . . 27. *Mine enemies*—Although they had been fellow-citizens, and might have been faithful subjects. *Slay them before me*—More fearful retribution than the *take from him*, for their guilt had been greater. Thus we see not only degrees of rewards but of punishments in the future reckoning of the Judge of souls.

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#### ANALYSIS.

##### 1. The Nature of Christ's Kingdom.

This parable is an antidote against a fourfold error: 1. That Christ's Kingdom was very soon to appear; 2. That it would be at once visible on earth; 3. That every one would willingly submit himself to the same; 4. That its subjects could have no higher calling than in active enjoyment.—VAN OOSTERZEE (abridged). . . . "In this parable Jesus taught them to regard the coming of the Messiah in his kingdom as a time of reckoning, for which they had now to prepare in the rightful use of their spiritual opportunities. The open enemies of the Messiah should at that day be cut off, while the unprofitable servants, the non-

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pressed by taking away the pound? Why did the bystanders exclaim against the disposal of the pound? Show the propriety of this course. 27. Who are Christ's enemies? What shall their doom be?

inal friends, should be stripped of their trust and degraded before their brethren"—CROSBY, *Life of Jesus*.

## II. The Account and Reward of the Faithful.

1. An abundant gain; 2. The Lord's approval; 3. Multiplied blessings and honors; 4. Added gifts. . . . "For to this kingdom, standing at the right hand, it shall be said in the end, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, receive ye the kingdom, i. e.,* Ye who were a kingdom and did not reign, come reign; that what ye were in hope, ye may be able also to be in reality."—AUGUSTINE. . . . From a memoir prefixed to SHARSWOOD'S *Blackstone's Commentary* I transfer the following thoughts (by the American editor) bearing upon the rewards which Christ will give in the future life to those who are faithful to Him in this. "The faculties and powers of the soul—especially memory—the strong affections of the heart, all belonging to and constituting an inseparable part of its spiritual nature, as well as its unwearying activity even while the body reposes in soundest slumber, render it, to say the least, a reasonable conjecture that, though engaged in moral and intellectual employments and enjoyments much nobler and purer than earth's, they are still spectators, interested, curious spectators, in the works of God's providence which relate to his moral creation. . . . We may well fancy, then, a power in departed spirits of watching and tracing the influences of their own lives, writings or actions upon those who have come after them. If these influences have been for human virtue and happiness, the wider and more extended, the purer must be the pleasure afforded; if they are otherwise, they must be the source of bitter, unavailing and never-ending regrets. Such considerations may well excite us to the practice of virtuous actions, to the cultivation of noble and generous sympathies and emotions: a part of their appropriate reward may be the observation hereafter of their widening circles as they spread, with their influences for good, the name we have borne down to the remotest generations."—JUDGE SHARSWOOD.

## III. The Account and Punishment of the Faithless.

1. His unsound views of God; 2. His slothful life; 3. His slan-

derous and blasphemous words; 4. His self-condemnation and final sentence. . . . "Observe, it is not the sin of *misuse* which is here condemned, but merely that of neglect—failing to use to good purpose the means at one's disposal. To use my talents, or my time, or my money, in the perversion and the positive ruin of others, is of course an aggravated crime. But I shall not escape the displeasure of the Master by merely living a negative life. Positive good is required at our hands. The unfaithful servant was condemned, not for stealing the pound, or misappropriating it, but simply for carefully laying it away unused. Is there any part of my worldly estate which I do not need, and which I might use advantageously in the spread of the Gospel? Have I any time unoccupied by the necessities of business, when I might be doing something for the cause of Christ? Have I any talent for business, any gift of speaking or writing, any pleasantness of personal address, any persuasiveness of manner, which might be used in winning souls, but which is now either unused or used only for selfish or worldly purposes? Do I every day put forth a positive, conscious effort for the awakening and conversion of some sinner? What am I doing with my Lord's deposit?—employing it in his service, or folding it away in a napkin?"—HART.

#### IV. The Fate of the Rebellious.

1. What they had been, fellow-citizens; 2. What they might have been, honored subjects; 3. What they were, enemies and rebels; 4. What they received, Perdition.

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#### SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. v. 24.

**FOR THOUGHT.**—No hopes of future gain or fears of failure are to hinder us from the utmost faithfulness in present duty. *For Prayer:* Lord, save me from sloth in thy service! *For Practical Life:* What results of my heaven-given advantages have I to show before God?

CATECHISM.—Q. 103. What do we pray for in the third petition? A. In the third petition, which is, *Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven*, we pray that God, by his grace, would make us able and willing to know, obey and submit to his will in all things, as the angels do in heaven.

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SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK.

BLACKBOARD.—For a review of the lesson. See ANALYSIS. The board may stand during the entire session with the words "Our King Jesus will give to the Faithful—Glory, Faithless—Shame, Rebellious—Perdition." At the review the items that appear in the parable as making up the Glory, Shame and Perdition may be brought out and entered as below.

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Our KING JESUS will give to the |  |
| Faithful                        | <b>G</b> -LORY!<br>-reat gain.<br>-od's approval.<br>-lorious reward.<br>-ifts besides.                          |
| Faithless                       | <b>S</b> -HAME!<br>-keptical views.<br>-lothful life.<br>-landerous words.<br>-elf-condemnation and<br>-entence. |
| Rebellious                      | <b>P</b> -ERDITION!<br>-osition.<br>-rospects.<br>-lotting.<br>-erdition.  |



## LESSON XLI.

### CHRIST ANOINTED AT BETHANY.

**John xii. 1-11.—Parallels, Matt. xxvi. 6-13; Mark xiv. 3-9.**

#### HISTORICAL CONNECTION.

Jesus left Jericho on the morning of the sixth day of the week (Friday), the 8th. of the Jewish month Nisan (March), having spent the first part of the day, *i. e.*, the preceding night, with Zaccheus. It is five hours' journey to Bethany, over a rough, lonely, mountain road. The day was therefore well advanced when they finally accomplished the ascent and approached the village. Now they passed the spot where first Martha and then Mary had met Jesus with their great sorrow; here they had turned off the road to the tombs yonder in the hillside, where, in speaking words of life to Lazarus, Christ had touched the springs of death to Himself; and there in the town, hidden away in the foliage of the olives that gave their name to the mount, and of the palms that gave their name to the town (Bethany, house of dates), stood the home of that little family, so often a holy retreat for the divine Wayfarer who now approached. In this home the Sabbath was passed, the Lord's last earthly Sabbath. In what holy services and holy converse its holy hours were spent we can only imagine. Doubtless the memory of it lingered in that household long afterward, a far sweeter fragrance than that which Mary's ointment shed through it. The Jewish Sabbath closed at sunset, and after that hour one of the principal meals of the day was spread. On this occasion, in honor of the holy and beloved Guest, the evening meal takes the form of a feast. The scene of the reception is the house of Simon, whom we conjecture the Lord had healed of leprosy and restored to his family, but who, like Blind Bartimeus, still bore in his name the badge of his great deliverance. The twelve are there, and the village disciples, among them most conspicuous Lazarus, "which had been dead," and Mary and Martha, his sisters.

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When did Jesus leave Jericho? Where had He spent the night? How far from Jericho to Bethany? What events might be recalled as they ap-

## NOTES.

**1.** Then Jesus, six days before the passover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. **2.** There they made him a supper, and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.

**3.** Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.

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**1, 2.** *Six days before the passover*—Counting backward from Thursday evening, on which the passover (Friday) began that year, six days brings us to the evening of the previous Friday, just bordering the beginning of Sabbath, as the time at which Jesus came to Bethany. The marked association of Lazarus with this supper is explained by the facts of verses 9-11. "The banquet at which the restored Lazarus was present may be compared with the heavenly banquet at which hereafter the dead shall participate when they shall have risen again."—BENGEL. *There*—At Bethany. *They*—The disciples of the village. *Made Him a supper*—A banquet in his honor; it was (Matthew) in the house of Simon the leper. Jesus shall prepare for us the feast of eternity. *Martha served*—The extraordinary demand upon the hospitality of the house called for such voluntary aid from the neighbors; so we have seen at a supper in our own American villages the matrons of several families sharing the pleasant task of serving the table. The mention of Martha in this characteristic position accounts for Mary's presence as well as her own, for it was not customary for the women of the East to appear on these occasions, a feature that unhappily has descended to modern banquets. . . . **3.** *Then took Mary*—Each member of the household contributes to the Guest's honor; Lazarus sits at meat with Him,

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proached the village? Where and with whom did Jesus spend Sabbath?  
**1, 2.** Who made the feast? For what? Where held? Who was Simon? When did the banquet occur? Who was present? Did the Jewish women attend banquets? Why were Martha and Mary present?

**3.** In what way did each member of the Bethany family honor Jesus? What suggested the anointing to Mary? The nature and value of this

testifying to his divine power over death; Martha, with true housewifely piety, ministers to his temporal wants; Mary, in her own peculiar way, gives her tribute of adoration. It was a thought born of woman's graceful piety; an inspiration of that enthusiastic love which so often overleaps the ploddings of reasoning, the haltings of prudence, the calculations of policy, the barriers of punctilio and the graspings of self, and sees the sweetest and the noblest thing to do, and with happiest manner does it, awakening the murmurs of the present, but commanding the approval of the future, and, above all, of the eternal Lord. *A pound of ointment*—The Greek *litra*, an uncertain weight, hardly so much as a pound. It was contained in the usual long-necked alabaster flasks or vases (box, Mark), sealed with wax. The package may have been known familiarly as a *pound flask*, although the actual weight was less when the contents, as here, were less solid, and therefore lighter. *Spikenard*—The ointment of nard was highly esteemed in antiquity as a precious aromatic and a costly luxury. It was brought chiefly from Asia Minor in little alabaster flasks, and the best were to be had in Tarsus. Yet the plant grew in Southern India.—WINER. As to the adjective *Pistikees*, which in the original qualifies *nard*, ALFORD (on Mark xiv. 3), after giving the two prevalent interpretations—(1) genuine, unadulterated; (2) liquid, potable—concludes that, the uncertainty being so great, it were better to leave the term untranslated, *pistic narde*. *Very costly*—One of the hints in the record of the superior wealth and position of the Bethany family. *Anointed the feet of Jesus*—According to Mark, she broke the box and poured it also on his head as He sat. Anointing from the earliest times was the method of consecrating kings, priests, and even prophets, as 1 Kings xix. 16. It was therefore especially appropriate to Jesus, who now as HIGH PRIEST was about to offer himself as a sacrifice, and as KING to ascend to his Kingdom and his Father, to send forth as our PROPHET the Holy Ghost to lead into truth. The anointing of the feet of distinguished guests was an occasional custom. Both head and feet were here anointed. Here is fulfilled the saying of

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ointment? What was the alabaster box? How broken? What was the ancient significance of anointing? What special propriety was there in

4. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, 5. Why was not this ointment sold for

Ps. xxiii. 5: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; Thou anointest mine head with oil." *Wiped his feet with her hair*—That which is the crown and ornament of woman, "a glory to her" (1 Cor. xi. 15), she uses in the humblest offices upon the very feet of her Saviour. And thus the ointment which we pour upon the feet of Jesus by love's lowliest service comes back to be a fragrance to the crown and covering of our own heads. Fairer and sweeter in the tresses of woman are those drops of spikenard from the feet of Jesus, the blessings of the lowly poor, than the costliest gems or the most artistic braids. *The house was filled with the odor*—The whole house. Thus deeds of piety breathe sweetness through all our homes and upon all within them; nor does their fragrance easily fade away. . . . 4. *Then saith one*—Judas was the speaker, but, according to Matthew and Mark, he spoke for others of the disciples who shared his indignation. It is sad enough, and yet not unusual, that good men should be misled by the plausible complaints of such a miserable fellow. *Of his disciples*—There is no attempt to disguise this bad man's connection with the apostles. Their own honesty was above concealment or falsehood and their cause beyond the need of either. Its truth was not to be gainsayed by the guilt of any disciple. . . . 5. *Why?*—And in every age the spiritual sluggard and the money-lover have questioned the motives and challenged the acts of pious souls whose spiritual exaltations they could neither reach nor comprehend. And men have cried down foreign missions and every other good work with the same plea. This is the first recorded speech of Judas. Let the croakers in Church and Sunday-school remember what disciple they imitate. *Might have been given*—But it would not have been given, O Judas! "How often does charity serve as a cloak for covetousness!"—CLARKE. *Three hundred pence*—Denarii= \$45.

anointing Jesus? Why did Mary wipe Christ's feet with her hair? What lesson has this for us? Wherein are good deeds like the odor of this ointment? 4, 5. Did Judas speak for himself alone? Why did not St. John try to cover up the sin of Judas and his connection with the disciples?

three hundred pence, and given to the poor? **6.** This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

**7.** Then said Jesus, *Let her alone; against the day of my bury-*

PLINY tells us that the cost of a pound of ordinary ointment was not more than ten denarii, but that the price of the best ointment was three hundred and ten denarii. *He was a thief*—The whole character of the man, then hardly suspected, had come to light after the betrayal. *Had the bag*—The apostles plainly had all things in common, and bought and paid and gave out of this fund, of which Judas was treasurer. Many have supposed that this purse was supplied by the charity of Christ's friends; but, aside from the improbability of the apostles consenting to this, the very expression, *given to the poor*, shows that they were rather the almoners than the recipients of bounty. *Bore*—Carried, had charge of, not *appropriated*, as the old commentators have it. We cease to wonder that Judas should have betrayed his Master when we learn that first he had steeled his heart to purloin the sacred funds of the holy company. In nothing should men be more scrupulous than in the care of sacred moneys given in trust to them. . . . **7.** *Let her alone*—May it not be that they who exclaim against woman's gentle offices being pushed more prominently into affairs of Church and State shall hear the Master's remonstrant, *Let her alone?* God forbid that we should push back any hand that essays to break over the dear Master the precious ointment of useful lives! "Why trouble ye the woman?" adds Matthew; "for she hath wrought a good work upon me." "She hath done what she could," Mark adds, one of those golden sayings of Christ's that have so much to comfort the despondent, and cheer and console those who have been feeble in ability for Christian work, but strong in good-will. Yet, alas! of how few

What do bad professors show as to the truth of Christianity? Were the disciples honest in their complaints about waste? Who is the grumbler's "patron saint?" Wherein do men now-a-days commit the same kind of wrong? What were the motives of Judas? What lesson here as to caring for entrusted funds?

**7.** How did Christ justify Mary? Matt. xxvi. 10; Mark xiv. 8. Have you done what you could? What did Mary intend by her act? Did she

ing hath she kept this. **8.** For the poor always ye have with you, but me ye have not always.

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of us can this be said! Out of the dead past, from the graves of opportunities unhonored and unseen, come to us now oh how many reproachful "It might have been's!" *Against the day of my burying has she kept this*—The best interpretation of this is the record of the other evangelists: "For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial."—Matthew. "She is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying."—Mark. The reference is to the prevailing custom of anointing the corpse with unguents of myrrh, aloes and other aromatic substances. It was rather as a King to sway the sceptre of Judah than as a corpse smitten by the sceptre of Death that Mary had anointed Jesus. But her act had a farther reach, and a holier, yes, and sadder, significance than she had thought. The word reveals the design of which she had been the unconscious executrix. For on this day, the 10th of Nisan, on which (Ex. xii. 3) the paschal lamb, according to the divine bidding, was selected and set apart for the slaying, Jesus, our Passover, the Lamb without spot or blemish, was thus solemnly set apart for the sacrifice of Calvary. . . . **8.** *For the poor always ye have with you*—"The poor have everything to gain from this adoration. It is when the precious spikenard has been poured forth that the hands open for their most generous succor. He who is miserly toward God will be miserly also toward God's creatures; calculation is incompatible with love. In other words, side by side with the daily and permanent calls of charity, which must not be neglected, there are extraordinary occasions on which piety must be manifested in an exceptional manner and follow freely its own impulse."—DE PRESSENSE. "Over against a narrow, contracted piety the Christian system of morals might take its appeal to this language of our Lord to prove that earthly wealth, though it be employed but in subserving an idea, as in art, for example, is likewise employed in accordance with the mind of Christ."—THO-

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understand its full significance? What coincidence between this and the selecting of the paschal Lamb? Ex. xii. 3. **8.** Is almsgiving the whole of piety? May I follow and trust the impulse of charity—love? What prin-

LUCK. Yet CALVIN very justly says that "we are not to infer from Christ's reply that costly and magnificent worship is pleasing to God; for He rather excuses Mary on the ground of her having rendered to Him an *extraordinary service*, which ought not to be regarded as a perpetual rule for the worship of God." There is food for much sober thought in these words of Jesus, *Me ye have not always*. How many a broken vase of godly deeds would shed its perfume upon the dear body of Christ, his Holy Church, did men but know how soon the opportunity for well-doing shall be withdrawn! "Oh, if I had known of this," many a mourner has wailed over his beloved dead, "how kindlier and truer and more faithful would I have dealt with the dead! What warnings would I have uttered! What wooings to Christ would I have breathed!" Dear heavenly Teacher, help me to remember that Thou, in the persons of my little scholars, wilt not always be with me! and oh, quicken my purpose and hasten my hand to break upon them for Thee the anointing of thy holy truth! "Let the good also take this, but let them not be alarmed, for He was speaking of his bodily presence. For, in respect of his Majesty, in respect of his Providence, in respect of the ineffable and invisible Grace, that is in fulfilling which was spoken by Him, *Lo, I am with you, even to the consummation of the world*. But in respect of the flesh which the Word assumed, in respect that He was born of the Virgin, in respect that He was laid hold on by the Jews, that He was nailed to the tree, that He was taken down from the cross, that He was wrapped in linen clothes, that He was laid in the sepulchre, that He was manifested in the resurrection, *ye will not always have Him with you*. Why? Because He conversed, in respect of his bodily presence, forty days with his disciples, and, by them attended homeward, their eyes following, not themselves, ascended into heaven, and is not here. For He is there; He sitteth at the right hand of the Father, and yet is here, for the presence of the Majesty hath not quitted us. In other words: in respect of the presence of the flesh it was rightly said to the disciples, *But me ye will not always have*. For the Church had Him in respect of the presence of the flesh for a few days; now by faith it holds, not with eyes beholds, Him." —AUGUSTINE. Later in the week, when the disciples seemed

9. Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see

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more to realize the truth that their Master was soon to leave them, they received the comforting words: "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send Him unto you." John xvi. 7. And even were the dear Lord to dwell always in bodily presence among men, would his people therefore gather more closely about Him?

"Shouldst thou not need some mighty charm  
To win thee to thy Saviour's side,  
Though He had deigned with thee to bide?  
The SPIRIT must stir the darkling deep,  
The Dove must settle on the Cross,  
Else we should all sin on or sleep

With Christ in sight, turning our gain to loss."

KEBLE'S *Christian Year*.

The lesson of this touching incident would hardly be complete without the Lord's prophecy concerning it given by Matthew: "Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her." It was the eye of Omniscience that penetrated the coming ages and saw what we have seen—the world girdled with the Good News of Salvation. And thus not here alone, but everywhere, is the honor and elevation of woman coupled with the preaching of the Gospel. Sharing the spiritual exaltation and self-forgetting love of Mary, all her sex shall build the noblest memorial of woman-kind. "As regards the practical use of the announcement, we see that though the honorable mention of a noble deed is thereby recognized by our Lord as a legitimate source of joy to us, yet by the very nature of the case all regard to such mention as a *motive* is excluded. The motive is *love alone*."—ALFORD. . . .

9. *Much people*—"As Christ showed in the resurrection of Laza-

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ciple may you learn here to regulate the use of your wealth? What is the reason here given that should urge on our pious deeds? How has Christ's prophecy (Matt. xxvi. 13) been fulfilled? What have you done to fulfill it? With what is woman's glory and elevation ever coupled? 9-11. What



Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. 10. But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death, 11. Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away and believed on Jesus.

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rus a remarkable proof of his divinity, God intended that it should have many witnesses."—CALVIN. . . . 10. *Put Lazarus also to death*—Thus the witnesses to Christ's saving power may expect the wicked to seek to abate their testimony by putting them out of the way. "O foolish thought and blind rage! If the Lord Christ had power to raise him, being dead, had He not power to raise him, being put to death? In putting Lazarus to death could ye put away the Lord's power? If it seems to you that a dead man is one thing, a man put to death another, behold, the Lord did both: both Lazarus who was dead, and Himself who was put to death, He raised to life again."—AUGUSTINE. . . . 11. *By reason of him*—A converted soul is a standing and powerful reason for the truth of God. *Went away*—To see Lazarus and Christ. *And believed on Jesus*—Such will be the result to all who with sincere heart seek to know the truth as it is in Jesus. How the sad ending of our Lord's life links itself with this Bethany family! His deliverance of Lazarus from death brings to a climax the hostility of the rulers; his gentle defence of Mary against the rude manners of Judas brings to culmination the traitor's purpose.

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#### A N A L Y S I S.

##### THE ADORATION OF MARY OF BETHANY.

##### I. The Character of the Act.

It was "a good work," therefore prompted by faith and love. . . . It was an act of true adoration, in that it truly acknowledged Jesus to be Messiah King. . . . It was an act of grateful consecration of her substance, the sacrifice of a costly luxury for the honoring of her Lord. . . . It was an act of self-abnegation, marked by the deepest humility.

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drew the people to Bethany? What did they see there? What effect did this have upon them? Why were not the chief priests also convinced? What influence should this story have upon *you*?

## II. The Opposition to the Act.

Led on by Judas, the patron saint of grumblers, prompted by avarice and envy. . . . The other disciples, through spiritual ignorance, were led to join the complaint. . . . "Let her alone," Jesus said. But they had only *murmured*, Lord! Aye, but to many sensitive hearts there is no more exquisite torment than such upbraidings of acts that spring consciously from the holiest motives.

## III. The Justification of the Act.

1. "*She hath done what she could.*"—Let the humblest toilers in the vineyard have good heart; the Master notes and approves your work. The world may not look upon you to applaud, but THE EYE whose approving look is most desired beholds you. . . .

2. "*Me ye have not alway.*"—There come to us all *rare* opportunities for putting honor upon our beloved Lord. They come only once, or again, it may be, and then they glide away from the sphere of our influence and activities to return nevermore. They are the fairest pearls of our heaven-given opportunity, brought out of the unseen depths of the Divine Purpose and laid before our footsteps to test us, and, if so be, to bless us. Alas! how often, lacking the sweet spiritual perception of Mary, we trample them under our feet instead of stooping to gather them from the dust and weave them into the coronet of our Lord's glory and our own eternal reward! . . .

3. "*She hath come aforehand.*"—Verily, there are in the world more God-inspired deeds than even apostles wot of! . . . There is true wisdom in yielding to the impulses of the heart when the heart has been consecrated to Christ and is under the sway of those virtues which are the gift of the Holy Ghost. We need not fear the acts of an "impulsive nature" if that nature has been renewed by the Spirit of God.

## IV. The Reward of the Act.

The Lord himself was her Defender. . . . Her opposers were silenced and confounded. . . . Her act was accepted, her motive appreciated. . . . Her name became for ever linked with the name and glory of the divine Lord. . . . The best and most enduring monument to our memories is the one which ourselves

have builded by our own good deeds, not that which our friends shall rear above our mouldering bodies.

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### SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her. *Matt. xxvi.*

**THEMES.**—*For Thought:* Jesus is worthy to receive our best offerings. *For Prayer:* Lord Jesus, help me to bring to Thee the offering of a broken heart and a contrite spirit! *For Practical Life:* Do I give my best to Jesus, like Mary, or, like Judas, do I grumble at others' gifts?

**CATECHISM.**—Q. 101. What do we pray for in the first petition? A. In the first petition, which is, *Hallowed be thy Name*, we pray that God would enable us and others to glorify Him in all that whereby He maketh himself known, and that He would dispose all things to his own glory.

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### SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK.

**BLACKBOARD.**—In teaching this lesson to the children of the infant class or in the review before the main school, the following plan may be pursued: As each fact in the narrative is brought out by question or recitation, write upon the board the words printed in boldface letter in the following lines, placing them in the position which they will bear when each line shall be written out in full. Thus: What was it that this people of Bethany made for Jesus? (*A feast.*) Write the word *feast* in its proper place upon the board. Where was it made? (*At Simon's House.*) Write *Simon's House* in its proper position in the line. So with the entire lesson. The first two lines will appear on the board as follows:

|              |                      |              |
|--------------|----------------------|--------------|
|              | <b>Simon's house</b> | <b>feast</b> |
| <b>honor</b> | <b>Holy Guest;</b>   |              |

These words should be written with colored chalk. At the close (during the singing of a hymn) let some one fill up the lines

as below with white chalk. The whole presents an *acrostic*, which, with the words at the top of the board, will read, "Our Memorial to Mary of Bethany." If it is thought better to avoid the delay of filling up the lines, and the board can be reversed, the opposite side may be prepared before school-hours as below, and after the words have been arranged during the review as has been shown above, let the board be reversed and the lines recited. With the *last three lines omitted*, the lesson may be sung to any familiar long-metre tune. For a more detailed method of treating this class of blackboard lesson (the Verse Lesson), see the author's "OBJECT AND OUTLINE TEACHING."

### OUR MEMORIAL

They made at Simon's house a feast  
Of honor for the Holy Guest ;

Mary, from love of her dear Lord,  
Approached Him with a box of nard,  
Rare ointment of exceeding worth,  
Yet o'er her Lord she poured it forth.

O shameful waste ! the traitor said,  
Far better this the poor had fed.

But Jesus said : Let her alone !  
E'en for My burial this is done.  
Thus hath she wrought good work on Me,  
Her act shall her Memorial be  
As through the world men learn of Me.  
Near you the poor shall ever stay :  
Ye have not Me with you alway.

May 4<sup>th</sup> 1873

## LESSON XLII.

### CHRIST ENTERS JERUSALEM AS KING.

**Matt. xxi. 1-11.—Parallels, Mark xi. 1-10; Luke xix. 29-44; John xii. 12-19.**

#### HISTORICAL CONNECTION.

The supper at Bethany was given on the evening following the last Sabbath of our Lord's life. The repose of night succeeded, under the roof of Simon the leper, or in the more familiar Bethany home. The next morning Jesus, with his disciples, prepared to enter the Holy City. Bethany was situated just at the point in the main road from the Jordan valley to Jerusalem where the rapid mountain descent begins. It was a convenient point, for those who had come to the Passover feast, to halt and take rest, and make suitable preparations, after a long, dusty journey, for entering the city in becoming style. Accordingly we find (John) "much people" ready to accompany Jesus. Rested by the Sabbath, refreshed and cleansed, in the full tide of hey-day feeling which stirs in a vast crowd about to enter a strange city on a festal occasion, they are all the more ready to sympathize with the purpose which Jesus evidently had to enter Jerusalem in Triumph as the Messiah. Blind Bartimeus, we may believe, was still following Jesus "in the way;" Lazarus was there, and many of those who had seen him raised from the dead by Jesus were in the train. Heretofore the aspirations of the disciples to greet Him publicly as the Messiah, Jesus had checked. And when the people would have taken Him by force to make Him a King, He quietly stole away to midnight prayer. But now the end

was near. The shadow of Calvary fell that morning upon the sunlit brow of Olivet; none saw it, nor felt it, but Jesus Himself. It was the 10th of Nisan, the day when the paschal lamb, by legal appointment, must be led into the Temple. And in his heart the Lamb of God said, "Lo, I come as it is written of me!" None knew it but the Holy Victim Himself. Yet He knew; and in the face of these certain seeming humiliations it was well that this glimpse of the true character and glory of Christ should be given. No fear now that it would be abused; it would be a golden lining of glory to yon gathering cloud of shame and grief, that would not only be cheer to the memory of his disciples, but would be strength and instruction to their faith. Jesus is the Messiah-King! He is to win his crown and establish his kingdom this week in yonder city below the brow of Olivet. Therefore will He enter the royal city, now, at least, at the last, as becomes the Royal Son of the House of David! And so, with full purpose, He prepares for a becoming entrance. For a table of the events of Passion Week (which here begins) see under Lesson xliii.

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#### NOTES.

1. And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the Mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two

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1. Passing the limits of Bethany, after a short half hour's travel, they *come to* the little suburb of *Bethphage*, "the House of Figs." The village lay a few rods below the summit of *the Mount of Olives*, the point from which the Holy City burst upon the view of the traveler, who, approaching from that road, felt that he now *drew nigh unto Jerusalem*. Halting on the eastern side of the village, Jesus *sent two disciples* forward into the vil-

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On what day did the entrance into Jerusalem occur? What had occurred the night before? How account for such multitudes being in the vicinity of Bethany? How had Jesus heretofore received all efforts to publicly honor Him as King? What were his reasons for this? What change now appears in this action? What fulfillment here of the prophetic symbolism of the Passover lamb? Why did Jesus now wish to have a public triumphant entrance and recognition as Messiah? 1, 2.

disciples, 2. Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose *them*, and bring *them* unto me. 3. And if any *man* say aught unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. 4. All this was done, that

lage over against them, to procure the animal upon which to make his entrance. . . . 2. *Go*—So our King bids us all to go forth seeking the means for promoting his royal triumph in the earth. *Straightway*—At the entrance of the town. *Tied*—Both the colt and the mother; it would seem that the owner was either upon a journey, or about to start upon one, as the beasts were found standing in the street tied to the door. *Ye shall find*—The Lord knew that the ass was there ready, and that the owner would freely give her up for his use. Let the Christian worker learn that He who bids him “Go!” sees farther than himself, and will provide the means of accomplishing his own command. *Bring them unto Me*—And there all our possessions must be brought before they can honor our Saviour by advancing his reign. . . . 3. *If any man say aught*—*i. e.*, Why do ye loose them? *The Lord hath need of them*—Christ has ordained the success of his Church by agents and means. We are the agents and we possess the means, and at this word our all ought to be given up. Oh what need has the dear cause now of the money which lies “rusting” in the hands of God’s professed children! *Straightway*—A model for every Christian “steward” of worldly goods. He gives twice who gives promptly. Many a good cause dies while men are *getting ready* to help it. . . . 4. *Fulfilled*—The disciples did not recall this until after Jesus was glorified. John xii. 16. Thus often we can look back and see how a holy divine plan has been directing all our actions, and that our humble

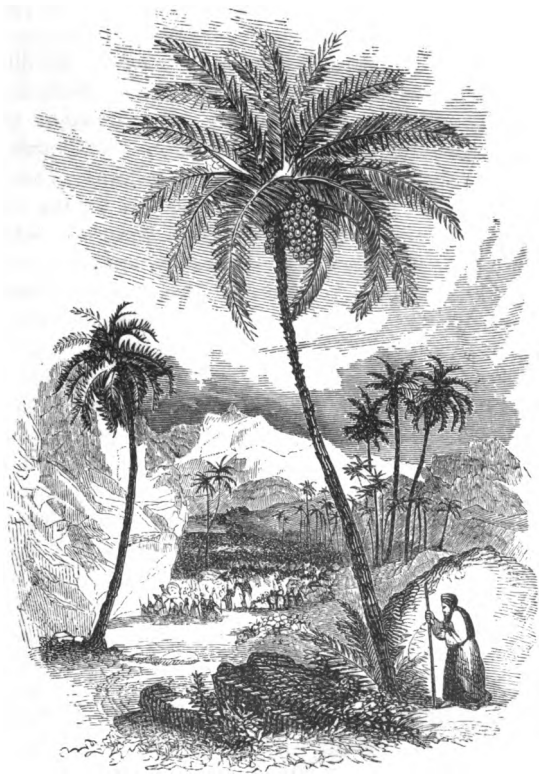
What time of day when Jesus left Bethany? How far to Bethphage? Meaning of name Bethphage? Location of the village? Why did He send forward his disciples? For what? Where were the beasts to be found? What was the part of these two disciples in the subsequent triumph? How may I follow their example? What encouragement had they to go? 3. Why does the Lord need the Church’s possessions? What have I that Christ needs? What lesson does the owner’s prompt response teach? 4, 5. Where is this prophecy found? Did the disciples know

it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,  
**5.** Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.  
**6.** And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them.  
**7.** And brought the ass and the colt, and put on them their

works of love and faith have been the warp for the filling in of the woof of sacred prophecy. *The Prophet*—Zech. ix. 9. . . .  
**5. Tell ye**—Glorious news, this, to tell! *Daughter of Sion*—Poetical name of Jerusalem, referring to the Church of God. *Behold*—Attend, listen to the news, believe! *Thy*—O soul, Jesus is thy Sovereign, and *shall rule thee* for thy everlasting Redemption, or for thy eternal Ruin. **KING**—To subdue thee to himself, to reign in thee and over thee, bringing into captivity every thought and act; to defend thee from all thine and his enemies; to give thee the victory, the crown and the kingdom with Him at last. *Cometh*—By the Holy Spirit; by the Word of God, preached, taught and read; by providences both sad and sweet; by the still, small voice of conscience. *Cometh now*; cometh in death; cometh when you know not; cometh in the clouds to the judgment of Glory or of Shame! Lord, may I be ready when Thou shalt come! *Unto thee*—Whoever thou art, wherever thou art, whatsoever thou hast been. Dear child, He comes *to thee*, the Great Eternal King stoops to ask thy love and thy allegiance. What dost thou say? Wilt thou acknowledge Him? . . . **6, 7. Did as Jesus commanded**—Not ashamed, at God's bidding, even to lead an ass and her colt through the street. *Their clothes*—Cloaks, as a saddle. *Set Him thereon*—On the colt; no man had ever sat on it before, Luke says. "This characteristic of the animal was symbolical, as all the procession was symbolical. A new time; a new Prince; a new animal to ride upon."—LANGE. "We may compare the new grave, in which no one was ever yet laid, and from the Old Testament the

at the time that they were fulfilling it? Do you have any part in fulfilling God's purposes? What part? Repeat the Golden Text. Is Christ your Sovereign? Can you escape his rule? Wherein is He your King? How is He ever coming to men? How shall He come at last? **6, 7.** What reason for choosing an ass upon which to ride? Why take a colt? What





Palm Tree.



clothes, and they set *him* thereon. 8. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way: others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed *them* in the way. 9. And the multi-

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young heifers, on which never yet a yoke had come, which, upon a new wagon, drew the Ark of the Covenant. 1 Sam. vi. 7."—OOSTERZEE. The ass was both an animal of peace and a Judean animal, as opposed to the horse, who was used chiefly in war, and by the heathen people in the lowlands of Egypt and Philistia. Although Jesus rode upon the colt, the mother was not useless, for her presence quieted her foal. "By the ass's colt *on which no man had sat*, we understand the people of the Gentiles, which had not received the Law of the Lord; by the ass, however, his congregation which was coming out of the people of Israel, not altogether unbroken, but which knew her Master's crib."—AUGUSTINE. In considering all this imagery, surely the Sunday-school teacher will not fail to conceive some reference to the fact that the subduing of the children and youth to the service of Jesus will be the foretold of the Coming Triumph of our King. When the world's children are converted to Christ, the dominion shall be his from the river unto the uttermost parts of the earth; for upon their young hearts He will ride on victoriously into his kingdom! . . . 8. *A very great multitude*—Pilgrims. *Which came to the feast*, John says. See Geographical Reference. *Spread their garments*—The usual mode of showing honor to kings on entering cities. So to-day, on state occasions and at grand weddings, carpets are spread down. Many a person whose wardrobe expands with superfluous and luxurious garments might learn from these good people a lesson in honoring Jesus. *Branches*—Of palm. Hence Palm-Sunday; hence the Redeemed in Heaven represented with palms in their hands, as badges of triumph. It was spring-time, and the trees were in the full glory of their foliage. Thus the willing, loving heart can always find *something* to cast before the Dear King in token of allegiance. . . . 9. *Hosanna*—Hebrew, *save, now!*

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interesting fact to the Sunday-school teacher is suggested or symbolized by this? What part had the mother in the procession? 8, 9. What rea-

tudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. 10. And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? 11. And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

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First it was a prayer, and then a joyous acclamation, especially at the Feast of Tabernacles. On that occasion the Great *Hallel*, consisting of Ps. cxiii. and cxviii., was chanted by one of the priests, and at the first and last verses of Ps. cxviii. the multitude joined in the responses, waving their branches of willow and palm, and shouting Hallelujah, or Hosanna, or O Lord, I beseech Thee, send now prosperity! Ps. cxviii. 25. On each of the seven days of the feast the people marched in procession once (but on the seventh day seven times) around the great altar in the temple, shouting meanwhile the *Hosanna* to the sound of the trumpets of the Levites. (See *Bib. Dict.*) The peculiarities of this festival naturally appeared in the spontaneous utterance of the people on other joyous occasions, such as the present. *Son of David*—A well-known title of the Messiah, whom, beyond doubt, the people believed and declared Jesus to be. *Hosanna in the highest*—"May it be also ratified in heaven! (See 1 Kings i. 36.)"—ALFORD. "Let the hosannas raised on earth, in honor of the Messiah, be also acclaimed in heaven by saints and angels. (See Ps. cxlviii. 2.)"—OWEN. . . . 10, 11. Before the incident related in these verses occurred that of Luke xix. 39, 40. The Pharisees rebuked Jesus for allowing himself to be honored as the Messiah. "Rebuke thy disciples!" said they. The answer was: "I tell you that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out!" There

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son for spreading their garments in the way? Why did some take palm branches? What time of the year was this? Of what is the palm an emblem? Have I anything to cast in the way of my Lord in his honor? Meaning of hosanna? Of hosanna in the highest? How did the Pharisees regard this demonstration? What request did they make? What Christ's answer? Luke xlix. 39, 40. *See* Show from the Analysis how each class referred to aided in the triumph of Jesus, and show how each teaches a lesson to us.

are not wanting those now-a-days who re-enact these Pharisees' part, and would rebuke those who give honors to Jesus as the Divine Messiah. Let the Master's answer suffice for such, also. Yet their very opposition revealed their weakness, and helped swell the triumph of Christ. *All the city*—Including the throngs of paschal visitors. *Was moved*—By the shouts of the people, apparently proclaiming a new king. It was enough to excite all classes, surely. *Who is this?*—Asked by the people from house-top, and doorway, and street-corner of those in the procession. Who is this whom you proclaim Messiah-king? Who is this who rides in such triumph in the midst of the train? And thus the advent of Christ and his Gospel has ever stirred up the human intellect to inquiry. Happy the inquirer who seeks in the spirit of an earnest, humble lover of truth! *This is Jesus*—The one answer for all time to the religious inquirer. Lord Jesus, Thou Infallible Prophet, help us and all ours to learn of Thee!

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#### ANALYSIS.

#### PROMOTING THE ROYAL RULE AND TRIUMPH OF JESUS—WHO MAY DO IT, AND HOW IT MAY BE DONE.

##### I. The Two Apostles.

So Pastors, Teachers, nay, every one "that heareth," is sent out to "Prepare the way of the Lord," by giving Christ's message, The Lord hath need of you and yours!

##### II. The Owner of the Colt and its Mother.

At Christ's command our substance, money, lands, homes, influence, our all, must be given up.

##### III. The People.

So all men should openly confess and acknowledge Jesus as Christ, and praise Him and follow Him, and cast in his way some token of loving allegiance.

##### IV. Lazarus and Bartimeus.

If nothing more, we may be silent witnesses to others of the amazing grace which hath saved us from sin and death.

**V. The Contrast.**

The offended Pharisees, who would have had the Lord silence his disciples. Luke xix. 39.

**SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.**

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—Behold, thy King cometh unto thee. [Hosanna to the Son of David!]

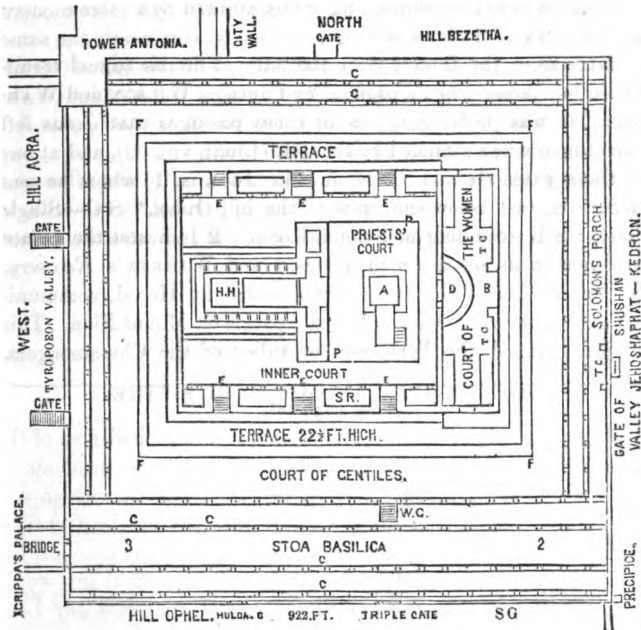
**THEMES.**—*For Thought* (Doctrinal): The Kingly character of Jesus Christ. *For Prayer* (Devotional): Thy kingdom come. *For Practical Life*: Am I a loyal subject of Christ? Am I a faithful subject? Shall I reign with Him?

**CATECHISM.**—Q. 26. How doth Christ execute the office of a King. A. Christ executeth the office of a King, in subduing us to Himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

**GEOGRAPHICAL REFERENCE.****THE TEMPLE IN OUR LORD'S TIME.**

**EXPLANATORY NOTES.**—This sketch of the ground-plan of the temple will assist the teacher to locate some of the incidents of passion week. The lines C C C represent the Corinthian columns that ran around all sides of the Court of the Gentiles. On the south there were four rows forming the Stoa Basilica, the magnificent portico of Herod. The road from Bethany would lead directly into the Gate of Shushan, and doubtless our Lord frequently entered and passed out of this gate during the last week. On the occasion of his triumphal entry it would appear that He entered at the Water gate south of the temple area, and, passing through the city, entered the temple by the main entrance from the west over the bridge. The Court of the Gentiles in which the scene with the traders occurred was separated from the sacred enclosure by a marble screen or wall, F F F F, over five feet high, beautifully ornamented with carving, and bearing inscriptions in Greek and Latin forbidding any Gentile

to pass within its boundaries. T C—The treasure chests on each side of the Beautiful Gate; in one of these the widow's mite was cast. B—The Beautiful Gate, Acts iii. D—The steps of Degrees. A—The Great Altar. P—The partition, about one and a half feet high, which separated the officiating priests and the altar from the people. H H—The Holy of Holies within the



temple proper. E E E E—Steps leading up from the Court of the Gentiles to the terrace or platform of the temple, an elevation of about twenty-two and a half feet. W G—The Water Gate. Gates of Huldah or Double Gate—A double archway opening into a square vestibule measuring forty feet each way, and leading into a double tunnel running under the Court for about two hundred feet (one hundred and ninety-two), which rises to

the surface in the Court of the temple at the Water Gate. Triple Gate.—This and the Double Gate divided the southern wall into nearly equal sections. Like the Double Gate, this led by an underground passage into the temple court. "The passage rises at about an angle of one in twelve; at the sill of the Gate it is thirty-eight feet below the level of the Sanctuary; at one hundred and ninety-two feet from the Triple Gate to the north the original passage terminates, and it is continued by a more modern arch and wall. It is to be remarked that at very nearly the same distance from the Double Gate the original double tunnel terminates."—*Recovery of Jerusalem*, by Captains WILSON and WARREN. It was probably by one of these passages that Jesus left the temple when attacked by the Jews (John viii. 59), and at one of these gates He met the blind man (John ix. 1) whom he sent to Siloam, just below the brow of the hill Ophel.\* S G—Single Gate. S R—Sanhedrim Session-Room. 2 Indicates the palace of Solomon as set down in WILSON and WARREN'S *Recovery*. 3, The section of the temple area added by Herod, communicating by the bridge with Agrippa's palace on Mount Zion. This bridge spanned the Tyropœon or valley of the Chessmongers.

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\* See page 181.



## LESSON XLIII.

### LAMENT OVER THE CITY; REJECTED VISITATION.

Luke xix. 41-44.

#### GEOGRAPHICAL REFERENCE.

A ridge, broken into four rounded knobs, sweeps around the eastern side of Jerusalem in the form of a semicircle. This is the Mount of Olives. The northern knob is separated from the city by a mile of tolerably level ground. This is the ancient Mizpeh. The central knobs—the Mount of the Ascension and the Mount of the Prophets—are essentially one, being separated by a slight depression, along which runs one of the paths to Bethany. This section is Olivet proper. It is separated from the Temple mount by the narrow ravine of the Kidron; extends north and south along the eastern side of the city for more than a mile; is 2724 feet above the Mediterranean, 300 feet above the Temple mount and 100 above Mount Zion. The southern division is called the Mount of Offence, from the supposition that here Solomon built the high places for the gods of his foreign wives. Around the southern shoulder of the central part of the mount, according to Mr. STANLEY (*Sinai and Palestine*), the triumphal procession passed toward Jerusalem. If, as is implied by Luke xix. 37 compared with vs. 41, two successive views of the city are referred to, one at which the Hosanna of the multitude was raised, and the other at which Christ wept, this road fully satisfies this condition, for at one point a view of the southern part of the city and the hill Zion is had, and farther on a full view of the city and Temple breaks abruptly upon the eye. Although this seems to be the most probable location of the Triumphal Way and the Place of Weeping, yet it is to be noted that the passage does not really require the supposition of two distinct views of the city. If we suppose that the van of the procession, at a considerable distance in advance of the Lord and his immediate company, began their Hosanna-shout, as would be most natural, upon catching the first glimpse of the city, and that the cry ran along the line until the long train that "followed after" caught it up, we have satisfied the requirements of the

text if we suppose that Jesus, in *coming up to this same point*, "beheld the city and wept over it."

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### HISTORICAL CONNECTION.

With the entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem (Lesson xlii.) begins what is commonly known as the "Passion Week." The most momentous events of human history were crowded into that brief period. It is not therefore to be wondered at that Christian people have felt a strong desire to set before their minds in due order these incidents around which the world's hopes are clinging. Happily, the sacred narratives of the Evangelists afford at this point material to satisfy this strong desire with a good degree of certainty. The subjoined table presents in a connected view the facts which are embraced in the studies of this first series of the Westminster Lessons. A complete table on a similar plan will be presented at another time. The ordinary reader meets a great difficulty in attempting to group the facts of the Gospels, from the difference in the Jewish and our own modes of reckoning time. The following table is arranged with the design to remove that difficulty as far as possible. It is necessary to remember that the Jewish day was reckoned from sunset to sunset; so that each one of their days would coincide with *parts of two days* according to our mode. In the table, that part of our day [evening hours] which corresponds with the beginning of the Jewish day is represented in ordinary type; that part [day hours] which corresponds with the latter part of the Jewish day, in boldface type. Otherwise, it is thought that the table sufficiently explains itself. After consulting many authorities, and weighing all the probabilities, I have thought the following schedule to be the most satisfactory. The history has been carried back to the 8th Nisan [March] in order to give in connection the incidents introducing Passion Week. The arrangement here departs from that of Dr. Robinson, whose Harmony, for the convenience of teachers, has been taken as a

## LAMENT OVER THE CITY ; REJECTED VISITATION. 421

general guide in the selection of these lessons. He makes the Sabbath stay of Jesus at Jericho, instead of at Bethany. ~~It~~ It is recommended to Superintendents that this Table condensed be presented in sections from time to time upon the blackboard. Thus the eyes of the scholars will be brought to the aid of their memories in the important work of retaining the historical events of the Last Days of Jesus.

### CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

#### OF THE INCIDENTS AND TEACHINGS OF PASSION WEEK.

| JEWISH RECKONING. |             | MODERN RECKONING.        | INCIDENTS AND TEACHINGS.  |
|-------------------|-------------|--------------------------|---|
| Nisan.            | Day of wk.  | Day of wk.               |   |
| 8                 | 6th.        | { Th. 5th.<br>Fr. 6th.   | Lesson 39. Stay with Zaccheus at Jericho. L. 40. Par. of the Ten Pounds; Journey to Jerusalem; Arrival at Bethany.  |
| 9                 | [Sab.] 7th. | { Fr. 6th.<br>Sat. 7th.  | Night spent in Bethany. Jewish Sabbath spent in Bethany.  |
| 10                | 1st.        | { Sat. 7th.<br>Sun. 1st. | L. 41. Feast at Beth.; Anointing by Mary. Beginning of PASSION WEEK; L. 42. Triumphal Entrance into Jer.; L. 43. Lament over the City; Jesus returns to Bethany.  |
| 11                | 2d.         | { Sun. 1st.<br>Mon. 2d.  | Night spent in Bethany. [L. 45. The Barren Fig Tree cursed while going in the morning to the city]; L. 44. The Temple cleansed, Lame and blind healed, The Children's Hosannas; return to Bethany.  |
| 12                | 3d.         | { Mon. 2d.<br>Tu. 3d.    | Evening and night spent at Bethany. L. 45. Returning to Jericho, the disciples see the fig tree withered; discourse on faith. L. 46. Jesus teaching in the temple speaks the parable of the Two Sons. L. 47. The parable of the Wicked Husbandman. L. 48. Makes the applications, The Corner-Stone and Stone of Stumbling. L. 49. Christ confounds the Politicians; God and Cæsar. L. 50. Christ confounds the Legalists; the Lord's Summary. L. 51. The Pharisees denounced for shutting up the kingdom of God. L. 52. Pharisees denounced for being Outwardly Righteous. L. 53. Stoning the prophets. |

## NOTES.

41. And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, 42. Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day the things *which belong* unto thy peace! but now

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41. *Wept over it*—The incident is properly connected with that recorded of certain Pharisees in vss. 39 and 40. The discordant murmuring and censure of these men, in the midst of the joyous acclamations of the loyal hearts surrounding them, fitly represented that perversity which called forth the Lord's Lament. *The Testimony of Christ's tears*: They testify—(1.) Of his deep grief over human grief. (2.) Of the fearful danger of souls. (3.) Of the dreadful perversity of the sinner who can resist such love. (4.) Of that infinite tenderness which stands ready to save us *now* if now we will repent. He shed his blood as well as tears, but neither tears nor blood will avail if thou wilt not repent and believe. Behold here a key to that mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh; although surrounded with hosts of angels, who hailed Him King in Heaven, yet Jesus looked down in compassion upon a lost world and hastened, in human form, to bring to it redemption. And here is a picture of our own life; for how often do our tears follow closely in the footsteps of our triumphs! . . . 42. *If thou*—Would that thou hadst known! "Not willing that any should perish." *Even thou*—As well as these faithful disciples. *At least*—Though thou hast rejected often God's messengers, and often been punished, yet if only now in this, thy chiefest day of favor and thy last, thou hadst been wise, thou mightest have been spared temporal and eternal ruin. God for-

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What direction is Mount of Olives from Jerusalem? What is its height above the sea level? Above the city? By what road did Jesus probably enter Jerusalem? What reasons for this supposition? 41. What incident occurred just before? What would these skeptical murmurs suggest to Christ's mind? How did the first view of the city affect the people? How affect Jesus? Why did Christ weep? What do his tears testify as to his compassion? As to his view of sin? As to the danger of souls? Why ought I to weep over sinners? Over myself? Do I ever weep over my perverse scholars? 42. What is the force of "if thou?" How had the Salemites dealt with the prophets? Would this have been forgiven had they accepted Jesus? What are the things belonging to peace? How and why were these hidden? What is the final effect of refusing to consider,

they are hid from thine eyes. **43.** For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side. **44.** And shall

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bears long, but there comes to the sinner at last the *last call*; and often this last is the loudest of all. *Thy peace*—Jerusalem, City of Peace, thou art called, but thou knowest not true peace. And now thy people may no longer pray, "Peace be within thy walls!" For "there is no peace, saith my God." Yea, though they may cry, Peace, Peace! yet is there no peace. *Hid*—By the cloud which thine own folly hath raised between thee and the Sun of Righteousness, which would have revealed them. Continued carelessness, or refusal to observe spiritual opportunities, by and by produces a habit of indifference that amounts to spiritual blindness. One who will not look might (for all practical benefit of vision) as well be blind. . . . **43.** *The days shall come*—It was a lovely sight that lay under his eyes now, Jerusalem and the hills round about her smiling in the rays of the sun and green with the verdure of spring. But to the Omniscient eye there comes the vision of that passover-time when Roman soldiers surrounded the city on every side. *Trench*—Literally an earthwork bordered with palisades or sharp stakes. *Compass*—This was accomplished in the fifth year of the siege. *On every side*—And thus comes punishment as mercy had come; and the battle-cry and the death-shout are heard at every gate, where once the sweet voice of grace gently called. . . . **44.** *Thy children*—Inhabitants generally. All these things were literally fulfilled at the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. "Then indeed shall the *stones cry out* (vs. 40.), each saying: I too am from the walls of desolated glory; a witness that He whom this city rejected was and is her King."—STIER. *Because*—Temporal disasters often are the results of moral guilt. "The Jews have

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to look? **43.** How was all this fulfilled? When? **44.** What was the cause of all this woe? Does like cause now produce like effect? Were the Jews excusable because they knew not? Why? When is ignorance guilt? What are times of visitation? What responsibilities do they bring? Have such ever come to you? How have you used them? What is the only safe rule to avoid sinning away the gracious day? How does God regard those who thus sin? Prov. i. 28-33.

lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

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sought in various sins various causes for the destruction of their city; the true cause is here indicated."—BENGEL. *Thou knewest not*—Yet how many vainly fancy that simple neglect, ignorance of Christ, failing to know Him by faith and confess Him openly, are but *little sins!* Nay, they are set here as the very root of guilt out of which grew the crimes whose fatal fruit was Jerusalem's dreadful doom. Dare you continue a moment longer in such guilty *neglect?* "Thou knewest not" was not the ground of *excuse*, but of *sentence*; for Jerusalem *might* have known. *Thy visitation*—The time when thy Saviour-King came unto thee. Every call of God is a visitation. But there are special seasons of grace; in the spiritual world as in the natural, there seems to be a seed-time and a harvest. And at the seed-time one must sow or he may not reap, and at the harvest one must reap or he may not eat. And so there come to nations, churches, Sabbath-schools, families, individuals, *crises*, periods of determination, at which as they determine so lies the future, until another period, or until all allotted periods, of preparation be passed. How shall we know these periods? How act in view of them? There is but one safe rule: *Act now* as though this was *the day* of thy visitation, the set time to favor thee! O impenitent one, this may be the crisis of your soul, the point in your history around which, as around the key of a battle-field, gather the issues of life! Such came to Esau, to Belshazzar, to the Rich Young Ruler, to the Foolish Virgins. May God save you from the folly and sin of yielding the day to the power of Satan! Teachers, such periods come to you. You may stand now as Israel stood on the very borders of the Promised Land. Do not turn back! Press forward; pray, watch, plead with your scholars as for the life of their souls, and may God give your Revival! We shall have the most fitting comment upon the *prophetic character* of these verses (43, 44), and also can better understand the bitterness of our Lord's lament over Jerusalem, when we recall (even with due modification) the record which Josephus has left

of the woes of Jerusalem during the last siege. The holy and beautiful temple then became a field of fierce and stubborn combat; the courts and cloisters were reeking with human blood and heaped with the bodies of the slain. Round about the sacred altar, even upon it, where many a holy sacrifice had smoked, the dead and wounded lay. The hiss and crackle of the devouring fires above mingled with the horrid clangor of the devouring sword, the shouts of the furious combatants and the cries of the wounded and perishing. And thus, despite the efforts of the Roman emperor to stay the destruction, the temple passed away. When the Romans had finally become masters of the walls, they rushed through the narrow streets of the city and slew all whom they overtook, without mercy. They set fire to the houses whither the Jews were fled, and burnt every soul in them. In many of the houses which they entered for plunder they found entire families of dead men, and the upper rooms full of the corpses of those who had died by famine—a sight that so horrified even the war-hardened veterans of Rome that they turned from the buildings leaving the booty untouched. The aged and infirm were put to death, the dangerous and seditious were executed, the tallest and most beautiful of the young men were set aside to grace the triumph at Rome, and the rest put in bonds and sent to the Egyptian mines. A great number were distributed as presents to the provinces, that they might be destroyed upon the theatres by the sword and by the wild beasts. Those who were under seventeen years of age were sold for slaves. The city was burnt to the ground and the walls entirely demolished, excepting a portion of the western wall, which was reserved as quarters for the Roman garrison, and the towers of Phasaelus, Hippicus and Mariamne, which were left as monuments of the vast fortifications against which Roman arms had prevailed. Thus were the prophecies of our Lord Jesus literally fulfilled. And this fulfillment is one of the strong evidences given to us of his divine character and mission. For it could only have been the prescience of One sent of God that enabled Him, in the face of every improbability, to predict of Jerusalem and her mighty bulwarks: *They shall lay thee even with the ground; they shall not leave in thee one stone above another.*

## ANALYSIS.

## I. The Tears of Jesus.

Why doth my Saviour weep  
 At sight of Sion's bowers?  
 Shows it not fair from yonder steep,  
 Her gorgeous crown of towers?  
 Mark well his holy pains:  
 'Tis not in pride or scorn  
 That Israel's King with sorrow stains  
 His own triumphal morn.

"If thou hadst known, e'en thou,  
 At least in this thy day,  
 The message of thy peace! but now  
 'Tis passed for aye away:  
 Now foes shall trench thee round,  
 And lay thee even with earth,  
 And dash thy children to the ground,  
 Thy glory and thy mirth."

And doth the Saviour weep  
 Over his people's sin,  
 Because we will not let Him keep  
 The souls He died to win?  
 Ye hearts that love the Lord,  
 If at this thought ye burn,  
 See that in thought, in deed, in word,  
 Ye hate what made Him mourn.

KEBLE'S *Christian Year*.

. . . For the lesson of these tears see Notes under vs. 41. . . .  
 It is written of our Lord on another occasion, "Jesus wept." It  
 was the involuntary expression of his human sympathy with  
 Mary and Martha in view of their distress and in anticipation of  
 the sudden and joyful revulsion of feeling which his purposed  
 boon would produce. And now at the sight of Salem's hardened  
 heart and blinded mind, and in anticipation of the dreadful doom  
 which unbending Justice should prepare for her, again the tears  
 of Jesus flow. He weeps *with* his friends, He weeps *over* his  
 foes. O soul, is it with thee or over thee that thy Saviour weeps  
 this day? . . .



“ Did Christ o'er sinners weep,  
And shall our cheeks be dry?  
Let floods of penitential grief  
Burst forth from every eye!

“ The Son of God in tears!  
Angels with wonder see;  
Be thou astonished, O my soul:  
He shed those tears for thee!”

## II. The Ignorance of Unbelief.

There will be many in the day of judgment who may truly say: Lord, we knew not because we never heard. But thy ignorance, impenitent man, like that of unhappy Salem, is in the very sight and sound of Christ and his ambassadors. It is an ignorance that will not be enlightened, because it loves darkness rather than light. O Holy Spirit, pierce through these hardened hearts, penetrate these dark souls with thy healing rays! . . . How true is it of divine things also: “There are none so blind as they who will not see!”

## III. The Rejected Visitation.

And art thou guilty of Jerusalem's sin? Is it not said of you, Behold, I stand at the door and knock? Have you refused to open your heart to the heavenly Stranger? Have you said, Go thy way for this time? Then thou hast rejected Christ. Oh haste thee to call Him back, lest He leave thee to visit thee no more!

## IV. The Prophecy of Woe Fulfilled.

And over the cities of America, and over the cities of England and France and Germany, hangs the peril of the same prophetic woe: “And whosoever will not receive you, when you go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them.” Luke ix. 5.

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## SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.” 2 Cor. vi. 2.

**THEMES.**—*For Thought:* The Soul's Responsibility in Choosing or Rejecting Christ. *For Prayer:* Saviour, visit Thy People, and Deliver us all from the Evil of Rejecting Thee! *For Practical Life:* Does Jesus visit and call for me to-day? Shall I reject Him? Shall mine be such awful guilt and doom as that over which Christ wept?

**CATECHISM.**—Q. 55. What is forbidden in the third commandment? **A.** The third commandment forbiddeth all profaning or abusing of anything whereby God maketh himself known. Q. 56. What is the reason annexed to the third commandment? **A.** The reason annexed to the third commandment is, that however the breakers of this commandment may escape punishment from men, yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgment.

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**SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK.**

During the school exercises the board should read,

**Don't Reject Him**

**JUST NOW!**

The remainder as below is to be filled in as the review proceeds.

|                         |   |                       |
|-------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| <b>Don't Reject Him</b> |   |                       |
| <b>N</b> -eed to        | } | <b>Come JUST NOW!</b> |
| <b>O</b> -ught to       |   |                       |
| <b>W</b> -ill you       |   |                       |

## LESSON XLIV.

### CHILDREN'S HOSANNAS IN THE CLEANSED TEMPLE.

**Matt. xxi. 12-16.—Parallels: For the first Part, Mark xi. 11-17; Luke xix. 45, 46.**

#### HISTORICAL CONNECTION.

Matthew records the cleansing of the temple, the healing miracles and the adoration of the children in the same connection. Mark omits the latter incident, and places the casting out of the traders upon the following day. This seems to be the true order of events. The triumphal procession might have entered the temple area directly from Mt. Olivet by the gate of Shushan, but Matt. xxi. 10 indicates that the route was by the Sheep Gate, into the upper city on Hill Zion, and thence into the temple across the bridge that spanned the Tyropœon valley, and linked the royal palace with the Royal Portico or Stoa Basilica of the temple. Among the Corinthian columns of this magnificent porch, or in the open court of the Gentiles, the tables of the traders and exchangers were probably located. In the temple porches also the beggars were wont to gather at the festival times in order to solicit alms from the worshipers. The lame and blind healed by our Lord on this occasion appear to have been of this class.

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#### NOTES.

12. And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the ta-

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12. *And Jesus went*—Accompanied by the jubilant crowd that had come with Him from Olivet; others, moved by curiosity, doubtless followed; the rulers came, filled with jealousy and wrath, to watch Jesus and cavil and oppose; some, with faith in his power, came to be healed and taught. And such to-day are the various motives, good, ill and indifferent, that impel men to God's house. *Temple of God*—It was always open, but at this passover season

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12. What was the *temple of God*? Where was it situated? Was this the same temple that Solomon built? Did Jesus go into it alone? Who were with Him? What were the motives of these various classes? What motives should we have in going to God's house? What articles were being *sold and bought* in the temple? What need was there to get money

bles of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves. **13.** And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.

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the place was unusually thronged. The driving out of the traders and money-changers occurred within the Court of the Gentiles; the healing and the incident with the children probably in one of the porticos or in the court of the women. *Cast out*—Drove out. *All*—There was no partiality in Christ's discipline. *Those that sold and bought*—A market had been established in the Court of the Gentiles for the sale of articles needed for the service, such as wine, oil and incense. But other articles of traffic seem to have been also exposed. Mark adds that He would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel [such as a basket, bucket or other article for the common uses of packing and carriage] through the temple. *Money-changers*—As the law (Ex. xxx. 13) required the half shekel of atonement money to be "after the shekel of the sanctuary," the current Roman and Greek coin, and the money brought by the strangers from all parts of the world (see Acts ii. 9-11), would have to be changed into the sacred half shekel. The greed of these brokers after the small profits of the exchange urged them to set up these tables among the people in the porches and open temple court rather than keep to their proper places of business and allow the people to come to them. *Doves*—Which were permitted to the poor for trespass-offering instead of the lambs. See Lev. v. 7; xiv. 22. The lawful use of these articles did not justify the unlawful sale and purchase. . . . **13.** *It is written*—Isa. lvi. 7, "For my house shall be called the house of prayer for all nations," is combined with Jer. vii. 11, "Is then this house, which is called by my name,

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changed? Ex. xxx. 13. What were the *doves* sold for? Lev. v. 7; xiv. 22. Why was this trade wrong? Why did the rulers of the temple allow it? Why did not these merchants oppose Jesus? **13.** What reason did Jesus give for his conduct? Where is this Scripture found? Isa. lvi. 7; Jer. vii. 11. What is meant by a *house of prayer*? Was this temple for the Jews only? In what part of it were these booths and tables set up? Why there? How was the Court of the Gentiles separated from the rest of the temple? What is a *den of thieves*? Of what had these people robbed God? What had they stolen from the Gentiles? Of what had they despoiled the temple? What does this act of Jesus teach as to conduct in God's house? What as to our duty to the heathen?

14. And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. 15. And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the son of David, they were

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become a den of robbers in your sight?" The robbery was not in the matter of extortionate charges, and perhaps had no reference to money, although since the gain was from an unlawful trafficking it was dishonestly gotten. But the thieving was the more serious one of robbing God's house of its sanctity and the Gentiles of their place of prayer. It was the Court of the *Gentiles* that these Jews defiled, forgetting in their caste-contempt of foreigners that God's house was not only a place of worship for Israelites, but *for all nations*. This was the great and characteristic offence of these people. The spirit of exclusiveness, on whatever ground based, when exhibited by our churches and schools, is a sin of like nature. *Den*—The robbers of Palestine were wont to secure themselves and hide their booty in the caves with which their country abounded. Jesus declares the temple to have been made in like manner a storehouse for ill-gotten goods and gains. . . . 14. *The blind and the lame*—These are our Lord's last miracles, excepting the blasting of the fig tree. While the cleansing of the temple was wrought on Monday, the day following the Palm Sunday, these acts of mercy and the incident with the children appear to belong to that day of triumph. . . . 15. *Chief priests*—The priests were divided into twenty-four courses for the service of the temple (Luke i. 5), and the heads of these courses were called by courtesy *archiereis*, chief priests, as were also all who had ever held the high priesthood. These persons had a seat in the Sanhedrim, and were doubtless present with their scribes to gather evidence against Jesus, whom they had already resolved to slay. *Saw the wonderful things*—The miracles of healing which Jesus the true Shepherd had wrought upon the poor flock of Israel while these hireling shepherds were

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14. How came these blind and lame unto the temple? Did Jesus work any miracles after that? What? 15. Who were the *chief priests*? For what were they watching Jesus? What *wonderful things* had He done? How should the sight have affected them? By what power had Christ wrought these wonders? How came these children in the temple? What

sore displeased, 16. And said unto him, Hear<sup>est</sup> thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea, have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?

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conniving at the temple traffic and exchanges with a single eye to the fleece. The sight of these wonderful things wrought no faith in the wonderful Doer. It was prophesied (Isa. ix. 6) that the Messiah should be called **THE WONDERFUL**. *The children*—There were always children dedicated to the temple service, as was little Samuel, part of whose duty was to assist in the singing. It is not unlikely that some of these may have been the children here spoken of, but it is more probable that they were the children who had followed with the procession. At the feast of tabernacles, during the celebration of which *the Hosanna* was shouted, the children who were able to wave palms were expected to join in the ceremony; so that they, on that occasion also, imitated their elders in greeting our Lord. But, with the usual susceptibility of children, even after they had reached the temple they were unable to restrain their admiration at *the wonderful things* which Jesus did, and shouted the same cry that had been raised upon the mount and in the city. *Hosanna to the Son of David*—Glory, praise, honor to Jesus the Messiah! The true character of children's praise is indicated here. There is no reason why the dear old "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" that have carried up to God the devotions of the parents should not also be the medium of the children's worship. Let our Sunday-school hymns have for their keynote, Hosanna to Jesus the Christ! . . . 16. *Hear<sup>est</sup> thou what these say?*—It was not because they sang, but because they sang to Jesus as divine. So others of them had wanted Jesus to stop the shouts of the people upon Mt. Olivet. There are not wanting even now those who, for better reasons indeed, but just as wrongfully, hold back the

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were they *crying*? Where had they learned this shout? What does *hosanna* mean? What *the Son of David*? Did the children understand what they were doing? Why were the rulers displeased? 16. Why did they speak thus to Jesus? Did Jesus stop the children? What passage did He refer them to? Ps. viii. 2. Why had these learned men never got the true meaning? How should we read our Bibles? Had Jesus heard the

children from the open acknowledgment of their divine Lord. *Yea*—Yes, yes, Jesus does hear the children's praise. Sing on, sing on, dear babes of Christ! *Have ye never read*—He comes to the children's defence; He pleads their cause and vindicates their right to a share in his worship. And surely He looks down approvingly upon the pastors and teachers who to-day, in such numbers and with such zeal and love, plead and work to give religious privileges to the children. The passage referred to is Ps. viii. 2. *Babes and sucklings*—Infant teacher, even your little ones may be converted and learn intelligently to praise God. *Thou hast perfected praise*—The original is, *hast ordained strength*, but Jesus quotes (as usual) from the Septuagint. What a thought is here! Our Lord hears and desires and approves the praise of children. The Almighty God has ordained his praise through children, even babes. *Yea*, the very perfection of praise among all the adorations of the family of God in heaven and on earth is the song that comes up from the sincere, guileless hearts, upon the small, sweet voices of holy children. How the anger of the Lord must burn against those who withhold from Him this worship by discouraging the public and private homage of the young! JOHN CALVIN, whose gentle human heart has been less acknowledged than his princely intellect, has, I think, been led to the sense of the original passage by an instinct as true as it is tender: "God to set out his own providence hath no need of the great eloquence of rhetoricians, no, nor so much as distinct speech, because He hath the dumb tongues of infants ready and eloquent enough to set it forth. . . . David says that babes and sucklings are patrons of sufficient ableness to avouch God's providence. He would show that infant tongues, before they are able to speak one word, nevertheless utter aloud how bountiful God is to mankind. From whence is nourishment ready for them as soon as they are born but because God wonderfully changeth blood into milk? From whence also have they skill to suck but that the same God by his

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children's praise? Was it pleasing to Him? What should be the keynote of all our Sabbath-school songs? How can you make your praise pleasing to God? In what ways has God ordained that children should bring praise to Him? How may children take part in the public worship of God? Ought they to attend church? In what spirit? Ought they to publicly acknowledge Jesus? How soon?

secret instinct maketh their tongues apt to do it? Therefore hath David very good reason to avouch that although the tongues of all that be men grown should cease, yet the speechless mouth of infants is able enough to set forth God's praise. But when he not only brings in babes as witnesses and publishers of God's glory, but also attributes mature strength unto their mouth, it is not without great force, for it is as much as to say that God's soldiers are invincible and shall early disperse and overthrow the whole host of the ungodly when it comes to the encounter."—Comm. on Ps. viii. 2. The fulfillment of this prophecy of David by the children in the temple was thus in that channel of God's holy ordination and administration of human affairs through which the children, even the babes and sucklings, contribute to the Messiah's praise. And to the workers among the young this incident should be, as indeed it has been, the indication of the divine pleasure concerning those who are the object of their labors and care. It would be well for us all, in considering God's purpose to glorify his Son Jesus through the hosannas of the children, to review the position of our own Church. See DIRECTORY FOR WORSHIP, Ch. ix., Sections 1, 2, 3. It is to be feared that too many fail to teach our children that they are Presbyterians by birthright, children of the Covenant, and that the full privileges of the Church may be and ought to be theirs at an early age. Our obligations as Sabbath-school teachers to urge all our children to be "young Christians" are in good degree fulfilled. But do we not fail, when their lives give evidence of renewed hearts, to obey the behest of the Church:—"They *ought to be informed* it is their duty and privilege to come to the Lord's Supper?" The practice is too largely to wait for the children to move in this matter themselves, nay, to hold them back when they do desire to come. The child requires not only faithful preparation for the sealing ordinance of the Supper, but also discreet encouragement to ask to receive it. This lesson also affords the sufficient ground and opportunity to protest most earnestly (while teaching most truly the real purpose of God) against the pernicious notion that has invaded many minds, that children may lawfully be excused from the public worship of the Almighty because they cannot fully comprehend the sermons. But God is



not worshiped by sermon-hearing alone. The young can surely join in the hymns and devoutly follow the Scripture readings and the prayers, and there are few sermons from which they may not glean a suitable portion of truth. And if their minds sift out of the whole discourse *one little morsel* which they can assimilate, it is probably as much as could be desired for their good. Who expects them (or any individual adult, for that matter) to comprehend and appropriate the entire part of every discourse? Why, then, should they be withheld from public worship because of such inability? It would be well, however, if ministers would consider that, in conducting the public service of God's house, they have to do with tender hearts whose *hosannas* are sacrifice as well-pleasing to God as the devotions of the adult, and that it therefore becomes them, as impartial leaders of the worshipping people, to so adapt their leadership that the children also shall be able to reach and grasp the cords of help, and be drawn upward to Him who inhabiteth the praises of Israel.

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#### ANALYSIS.

##### I. The Temple Defilers Driven Out.

The incidents grouped within these few verses present a miniature of the various scenes and manifestations of our Lord's life and character. The holy indignation against sin and the assertion of his divine prerogative of judgment upon sinners, are followed quickly by the dispensing of divine mercy and power to the suffering and poor. The simple-hearted children adore Him as the Son of David, and almost in the same moment the high priests and scribes confront Him with that opposition which the worship of Christ as God has ever met in this world. Through all the events runs the central truth of the Gospel of Christ, that God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. James iv. 4. The Hand that in righteous anger banishes the avaricious polluters of his Father's house is laid with blessing upon the blind and crippled beggars; the Sacred Heart that sends forth burning words of reproof against priests and doctors inflated with pride of intellect and position, thrills with affection and pleasure at the simple praises of children. . . . Good St. AUGUSTINE has

these practical reflections upon the similar act of cleansing recorded John ii. 13-17: "Who are they that sell sheep and doves? Even they which *seek their own* in the Church, *not the things which are Jesus Christ's*. To sell is all their count, these men who do not wish to be redeemed; to be bought they have no wish, and they would fain sell. Good is it, truly, for them that they be redeemed with the blood of Christ, that they may attain unto the peace of Christ. For what boots it to acquire in this world any temporal and transitory thing whatsoever, whether it be money, whether it be pleasure, whether it be honor in the praise of men? Are they not all smoke and wind? Do they not all pass by and fleet away? And woe to them who shall cleave to things that pass away, for they themselves pass away along with them! Are not all these a river in its headlong course fleeting into the sea? And woe to him who shall fall, for he shall be swept into the sea! Therefore we must hold all our affections from such lusts. My brethren, they that seek such things, these are they which sell." . . . And on the sellers of the doves he has these words, which, although but an "accommodation" of the text, yet are not without a truth which is of application in our own times: "It was in a dove that the Holy Spirit appeared. They then which sell doves, who are they but they that say, '*We give the Holy Ghost?*' For why do they say this, and at what price do they sell? At the price of honor to be paid unto them. They receive as their price seats temporal. Let them beware of the scourge of small cords! The dove is not for sale; it is freely given, because it is called (free) grace. Therefore, my brethren, just as ye see them which sell, them that expose their wares in stalls, how each praises what he sells, so what a number of rival stalls these men have set up!" . . . Let us stop and think: were the paltry gains of these poor men sufficient recompense for the deep shame of being driven out of God's house, like a herd of unclean dogs, by the blessed Son of God? And shall *we* be content to work a like shame for a like gain?

## II. The Blind and Lame Healed.

These were our Lord's last miracles of healing. . . . In the midst of wrath He will remember mercy. Therefore let not the suffering, the penitent and the faint-hearted be withheld from

seeking his face by his judgments upon the ungodly. . . . God's house was defiled by merchandising, but it was not too sacred for the uses of the hospital and the dispensary. Are not all our Christian hospitals true temples of the Most High?

### III. The Children's Hosannas.

"It was not the intention of our Saviour in these expressions to disparage wisdom and theological learning, or to set up young children with an inflated idea that they knew more than their seniors. The true doctrine which we are to learn from the history is this: Pride and malignity blind men so that they cannot rightly discern religious truth. The human soul may be compared to a fountain. While the waters are still and limpid every object appears clearly and in its right proportions, but let evil passions come in to stir up the mud and sediment, and everything becomes at once distorted or obscured. In other words, the heart must be right before we can see rightly in religious matters. There are great fundamental truths of Christianity which the most subtle theologian, the profoundest biblical scholar, may miss if his heart is not right with God, which the babe in the infant school may see and accept whose heart has been attuned thereto by the inworking of the Holy Spirit. A child-like and teachable disposition, a perfect willingness to take God at his word, either in regard to what we are to believe or what we are to do, is the indispensable condition to a proper acceptance and understanding of the teachings of the Gospel. This is no disparagement of age or learning. Many of the greatest theologians that the Church has ever known have had this very child-like disposition in the most eminent degree. . . . This incident has a double lesson. Let the babes and sucklings learn to shout hosanna; let the wise and prudent learn to become as babes and sucklings."—HART.

But should thankless silence seal  
Lips that might half heaven reveal?  
Should bards in idol-hymns profane  
The sacred soul-enthraling strain,

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Then waken into sound divine  
The very pavement of thy shrine,

Till we, like Heaven's star-sprinkled floor,  
 Faintly give back what we adore!  
 Childlike though the voices be,  
 And untunable the parts,  
 Thou wilt own the minstrelsy  
 If it flow from child-like hearts.—KEBLE.

. . . He who hath blessed the children will bless the patient hearts and loving hands that tend them. He who carries the lambs in his bosom cares for those who minister unto them, and will reward them grandly in that day when our little things shall be seen as God's great ones. Many a heroine greater before God than Semiramis or Joan of Arc is sitting to-day at the hearthstone murmuring the cradle-hymn:

"Sleep, baby, sleep! Dear Jesus loves the sheep,  
 And thou his little lamb shalt be,  
 And in his breast He'll carry thee:  
 Sleep, baby, sleep!"

And the Father-God who listens kindly to the children's praises hears kindly, too, the lullaby songs that soothe our babes to sleep.

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#### SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" vs. 16.

**THEMES.**—*For Thought:* The public worship of children pleasing to Almighty God. *For Prayer:* Lord Jesus, teach my heart and tongue to praise Thee aright! *For Practical Life:* Has Jesus ever heard *me* praising Him?

**CATECHISM.**—Q. 46. What is required in the first commandment? A. The first commandment requireth us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God, and to worship and glorify Him accordingly. Q. 47. What is forbidden in the first commandment? A. The first commandment forbiddeth the denying or not worshiping and glorifying the true God as God, and our God, and the giving of that worship and glory to any other which is due to Him alone.

## LESSON XLV.

### THE BARREN FIG TREE CURSED—"LEAVES ONLY."

Matt. xxi. 18-22.—Parallel, Mark xi. 12-14, 20-26.

#### HISTORICAL CONNECTION.

According to Mark, Jesus, on the Day of Entrance, simply went into the Temple, looked round about upon all things, and, as eventide was come, returned to Bethany. The miracles of healing and the incident with the priests concerning the children's Hosannas had, however, first occurred. On the following (Monday) morning the blighting of the fig tree occurred as Jesus was hurrying on to the city. The typical judgment upon the fig tree was thus in notable harmony with the casting forth of the defilers of the temple, which was not only a fulfillment of Malachi iii. 1, 2, but was also a type of the final casting forth of the Jews from the special guardianship of the oracles and ordinances of God's House. The incidents of the previous day, beginning even with the feast in Bethany (reckoning by the Jewish mode), had been marked with joy and triumph, and words and acts of grace and mercy and peace. But the Day of Palms is past. The blighted fig tree henceforth is the symbol of unhappy, guilty Jerusalem! That evening, as the company returned, the withered condition of the tree was not observed, but on the next (Tuesday) morning it was noticed, and made the subject of remark. Matthew gives the whole incident in one section, in order to preserve the unity of the narrative. Mark apparently records the details in their exact order.

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#### NOTES.

18. Now in the morning, as he returned into the city, he hun-

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18. *He hungered*—The acts of desecration which He had noticed in the temple on the evening before had so fired his soul

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18 When did this incident occur? Had Jesus (probably) broken fast

gered. 19. And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it,

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that, in his zeal to suppress them, He seems to have been unwilling to wait for the morning meal. Behold the humiliation of our Holy King! And thus He is able to sympathize with the hungry poor. . . . 19. *He saw*—Afar off, Mark adds. *A fig tree*—A single one. *In the way*—They were often planted by the roadside, that the falling dust might absorb the sap, and by checking the overgrowth of leaves increase the crop of fruit. "Fig trees may still be seen overhanging the ordinary road from Jerusalem to Bethany, growing out of the rocks of the solid mountain."—STANLEY. The fig was very abundantly cultivated in Palestine. The general crop ripened in August; the winter fig matured only after the leaves were gone, and during a mild winter would hang upon the tree into the spring. Then there was the early spring fig, which was thought a great delicacy. This is referred to in Jer. xxiv. 2, and in Isa. xxviii. 4 is called "the hasty fruit before the summer." It was probably one of these, "the figs that are first ripe," that Jesus expected to find upon the tree. For although (Mark) "the time of figs was not yet," as the earliest figs were not ripe before June, and it was now March, yet the abundant show of leaves gave promise of fruit in advance of the season, as it is the habit of the fig tree to put forth the blossom and fruit before the leaves. As the leaves on this tree were out so fully as to be seen "afar off," it was not unreasonable to look for "hasty fruit" among this "hasty" foliage. It is well to bear in mind the great object which Jesus had before Him in these last hours with his disciples. Whether or no we enter into the question, Did Christ *really expect* to find fruit? yet the whole outward precocious appearance of the tree justified such expectations even in the face of the improbability which the season suggested. It there-

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that morning? Why not? What comfort may the poor take from this suffering of our Lord? 19. Why were fig trees planted by the way-sides? What time of the year was this? When did figs ripen? How could Jesus reasonably expect to find figs at that time? See Jer. xxiv. 2 and Isa. xxviii. 4. Of what is the tree often the symbol in Scripture? Matt. vii. 18. What did this fig tree signify? What the leaves? What was signified by

Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently

fore gave an entirely fitting occasion for a most striking lesson, of which Jesus immediately availed Himself. It is a case of Object Teaching which recalls the methods of the old prophets, notably those of Ezekiel and Jeremiah. The *principle* that underlies such teaching is one which Sabbath-school instructors are largely recognizing and applying. The Oriental mind was peculiarly open to such methods—a susceptibility which the *children* of the Occident decidedly possess. *Nothing thereon, but leaves only*—“This miracle was wholly typical and symbolical. The fig tree was the Jewish people—full of the leaves of an useless profession, but without fruit; and further, all hypocrites of every kind, in every age.”—ALFORD. “The sin of Israel under this tree was symbolized, that sin being not so much that they were without fruit as that they boasted of so much. Their true fruit would have been to own that they had no fruit, that without Christ they could do nothing, to have presented themselves before God bare and naked, and empty altogether.”—TRENCH. “The tree, as having leaves, had the *appearance* of extraordinary fruitfulness, nay, of a tree bearing fruit even before the ordinary season, and thus was a sad representative of Israel, which in appearance displayed extraordinary legal righteousness, but in truth bore no fruit of righteousness.”—OLSHAUSEN. *Said unto it*—He came, hungering as a man; He stood, speaking as a God. “He was wont to unite together the greatest proofs of both manhood and Divinity. Thus his lowly birth—the angel’s testimony; his purification—the hymns of Simeon and Anna; hunger and temptation—the ministry of angels; the announcement of the Passion—the Transfiguration on the Mount.”—BENGEL. *Let no fruit grow*—The curse of Christ upon the fruitless is to be *fruitless for ever. Henceforward*—Death ensues from the moment that Christ’s blessing is withdrawn. *Withered away*—Jesus Christ is

its barrenness? What by Christ’s coming to the tree? Show how this parabolic act applies to us as well as to the Israelites? What are the “leaves,” or circumstances, in every Sunday-school scholar’s life which give promise of Christian fruit? What are these fruits which the Lord Jesus regularly expects from all who have such advantages? Gal. v. 22, 23. Are these natural fruits of the heart? Gal. v. 19. In what way only can

the fig tree withered away. **20.** And when the disciples saw *it*, they marveled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away! **21.** Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this *which is done* to the fig tree, but also, if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. **22.** And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

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Lcr? of Nature also. O my soul, art thou fruitless? Then shall the curse of Christ fall on thee as a withering blight! The *leaves* are the outward profession and promise; the *figs* are those fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, temperance. Gal. v. 22, 23. The *tree* itself is the frequent symbol, in the Bible, of the professor, *good or bad*, as the case may be. Matt. vii. 18. . . . **20.** *Marveled*—Although they had seen so many marvelous works. It was Peter who expressed their wonder to the Lord. *How soon*—The Lord's condemnation comes no less surely, although less slowly, to the fruitless soul. When the curse of heaven falls upon a man, how swiftly he rushes to destruction! . . . **21, 22.** *I say unto you*—A blight for the fruitless tree, a blessing for the faithful disciple. *Faith*—By which the soul takes hold of the Omnipotent God. It will hardly do to say (with CROSBY), "Jesus implied that it was his faith which wrought the wonder, by this reply," for the miracle was wrought by his own Divine power. And by *the oneness with Himself* which, according to the Divine plan, faith accomplishes, this power was to come to the disciples also. *Ye shall not only do, etc.*—Faith, in the disciple, is, as to its effects, equivalent to the Divine power in the Master, for thus the soul becomes one with Christ. *Mountain*—

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the soul be made to bear fruits of the Spirit? John xv. 4-7. When one cannot show such fruits in his life, what should he do? And what should he *not* do? **20.** What caused the wonder of the disciples? Did they notice the withering immediately? When? What is signified by this act of Christ? When shall Christ's wrath fall upon all the ungodly? Rev. vii. 16. **21, 22.** In what sense is the expression, "say to this mountain," etc., to be taken? What is the essential grace for doing these humanly impossible things? How does faith clothe the believer with such power? In what act is this faith most to be exercised? (Prayer.) How is the promise, "all things," to be limited?



Mount Olives. Some refer it to the temple mount, and suppose that Jesus signified to his disciples that by their faith they should overthrow the temple system as the scribes held and perverted it, and should bring in the dispensation of the Gospel. *Be thou removed*—A proverb meaning that things impossible to human power, from the human stand-point, are possible to him that believeth. See John xv. 16. Thus *faith* is the great essential of *fruitfulness*; he who would *do* much must believe much. Lord Jesus, help me to abide in Thee by faith, that I may bring forth fruit. Thus, when Thou comest to me by thine ambassadors, or in the person of the needy, seeking fruit, suffer me the sweet privilege of giving of my substance to Thee and Thine! *All Things*—Fitting for us to have and for God to give. *In Prayer*—And thus the words of the praying believer, uttered to the God of heaven, are made as the words of the Lord Jesus, uttered against sin and in behalf of holiness. What a power is prayer! Let the godless and unbelieving beware when the prayers of Christians are lifted against their iniquities.

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#### ANALYSIS.

##### I. The Hungering Lord.

Jesus suffering for and sympathizing with us.

##### II. The False Promise.

NOTES FOR THE CLOSING ADDRESS.—When one looks at the outward circumstances of our children, he cannot but note how various, how many and how great are the advantages which they have, and how much more abundantly they are favored than are the children of many other lands, or were those of other generations. These greater advantages demand greater results. Like the multitude of leaves upon the fig tree, they are the outward promise of much fruit; they justify their teachers, parents, friends, the Church, the world in expecting lives of great piety and usefulness. What are some of these advantages—these leaves of promise? 1. God has cast your lot in a Christian country; one may therefore rightly look to see you living Christian lives.

Do we not justly expect more from such than from heathen boys and girls? . . . 2. Many of you, like Timothy, have been taught religion and virtue from earliest childhood, are surrounded by the holy influences of Christian homes. Do we not expect, will not the Lord ask, more from such than from the waifs of the street or the wilderness whose parents are not God-fearing? . . . 3. The Church of God is open to you; you have been accustomed to its worship, and have heard oftentimes from the Lord's minister the way of salvation and holiness. Will not Jesus look to find on such more good fruit than upon those who have never heard "the sound of the church-going bell," or who have never been led like little Samuel to the House of God? . . . 4. Many of our youth have been solemnly given up to God and have received the sign of the covenant, and these baptismal vows are leaves of promise that bid us look for fruit unto life eternal. And how many times have our dear children promised and vowed in their hearts to be the Lord's! Are those vows fulfilled? shall they prove "leaves only," or shall they develop into fruit? . . . 5. There are some poor youth who grow up in sin and go down to destruction with no one to care for them, no one to grieve, no one to warn, no one to pray for them, no one to entreat and woo them to the paths of virtue and religion. But you, dear children, how often, how tenderly, by how many friends who love you and watch you and entreat God for you, have you been entreated to give your hearts to Christ! . . . 6. And here is your Sabbath-school! These officers, teachers, friends, how much they have done and are doing to lead you to God, and train you for happiness and usefulness! Oh, our Sabbath-school tree is *full* of leaves and blossoms, blossoms and leaves! Shall the blossoms drop away and bring no fruit? Shall our tree be found year after year bearing "leaves only?" Lord Jesus, give us thy Holy Spirit, that we may by faith be grafted into Thee, that by faith we may abide in Thee, and thus bring forth fruit abundantly unto thy glory here and our great joy hereafter! . . . Let teachers and officers and pastors and parents honestly and anxiously consider what is *their* responsibility for the lack of fruit in the Sunday-school. Why are there so few conversions? Why do so many of our youth grow up, wander off *unsaved*, become alien-

ated from the ordinances of God's house and perish in unbelief?  
O God, let us no longer be laborers in a fruitless vineyard!

"Nothing but leaves!" The Spirit grieves  
Over a wasted life,  
O'er sin committed while conscience slept,  
Promises made, but never kept,  
Folly and shame and strife.  
Nothing but leaves, nothing but leaves!

"Nothing but leaves!" No ripened sheaves  
Garnered of life's fair grain.  
We sow our seed: lo, tares and weeds,  
Words, idle words, for earnest deeds!  
Reaping, we find with pain  
Nothing but leaves.

And shall we meet the Master so,  
Bearing our withered leaves?  
The Saviour looks for perfect fruit;  
Stand we before Him sad and mute,  
Waiting the word He breathes,  
"Nothing but leaves!"

*Morning Star.*

### III. The Wrath of the Lamb.

See Revelation vi. 16. . . . "As it regards a very senseless objection advanced by some against his thus cursing an inanimate tree, as though it had been guilty of wrong-doing, we may reply, as we did to the objection against the destruction of the swine, that had ten thousand trees been stricken dead of vegetable life, it would have been as nothing in case some truth having reference to the salvation of men could thereby have been impressed more strongly upon the mind. That the most impressive lessons of instruction have been drawn from this fig tree no one will pretend to deny; and this is an ample reason why our Lord selected this method of showing the doom of graceless professors of religion."—OWEN. . . . "The *wrath* of the LAMB!" It was no chance blunder that originated this seemingly self-contradictory phrase. No combination of words could so well express the two opposite sides of our Lord's character. He is

most truly the LAMB of God. But he is also the LION of the tribe of Judah. He is the Saviour of the world. But he is also to be its final Judge. The same lips which now utter the words of entreaty, which say "Come unto me, ye that labor and are heavy laden; take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart," shall then say, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire!" He who bore the penalty of the broken law for such as believe on him will also himself execute its penalty on such as are rebellious and disobedient. He is King as well as Priest. He executes vengeance as well as dispenses mercy."—HART.

#### IV. The Source of Fruitfulness.

Abiding in Christ by Faith. See John xv. 4-7 and 16. Indeed this incident of the withering of the barren fig tree is an apt illustration of that entire passage in John's Gospel; the negative teaching of the truth—the barrenness and blighting of the tree; the positive teaching—the power for good works which should come through faith in Christ, each has its parallel in the parable of the Vine and Branches.

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### SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"If a man abide not in ME, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered." John xv. 6.

**THEMES.**—*For Thought:* The soul's guilt and punishment increase as its privileges and professions give promise of better things. *For Prayer:* Lord Jesus, dwell in me by thy Spirit, and help me by faith to abide in Thee! *For Practical Life:* What has my Saviour a right to expect of me? What have I done for Him?

**CATECHISM.**—Q. 1. What is the chief end of man? A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever. Also Q. 35. What is sanctification? A. Sanctification is the work of God's free grace whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK.

BLACKBOARD.—Let the board stand as below, with only the phrase, "Nothing but L-E-A-V-E-S," upon it. For the closing talk, call up the various advantages which Sabbath-school children have, and which are the leaves of promise that justify the hope from each one of much fruit. Fill out on the board, as each point is made, abbreviating words, and finally review all.

**NOTHING BUT****L**-ife in Christian land.**E**-arly training at home.**A**-ttendance upon church.**V**-ows to be holy.**E**-ntreaty of friends.**S**-abbath-school instructions.

## LESSON XLVI.

### THE SONS THAT CHANGED THEIR MINDS.

Matt. xxi. 23-32.—Parallels, Mark xi. 27-33; Luke xx. 1-8.

#### HISTORICAL CONNECTION.

The parable was spoken on Tuesday, the third day of the Passion Week. The discourse on faith, suggested by the sight of the fig tree, had immediately preceded. It is important to remember that the Sanhedrim, who now interrupted our Lord's teachings by their captious questions, had already decreed Christ's death (John xi. 57), and would unhesitatingly have executed it had not—as DE PRESSENE puts it—"the enthusiasm of the pilgrims come up to the feast enforced more cautious proceedings. The new-comers were less easily led than the habitual population of Jerusalem. Jesus, when He appeared in the Temple, upborne, in a manner, on the popular tide, was not an enemy to be crushed at a single blow. It was needful to temporize and have recourse to artifice." Hence we find the various parties uniting to form a temporary party of hostility to Jesus, and to manufacture out of his own words and acts a public sentiment sufficiently hostile to allow the quiet execution of their murderous decree. The invariable issues of these successive intellectual conflicts are among the most notable evidences of Christ's divine superiority.

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#### NOTES.

23. And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching,

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23. *Chief priests and elders*—Mark includes the Scribes also. It was an official visit of the Sanhedrim by committee. So they had interrogated John Baptist. John i. 19. And indeed a similar commission seems to have visited our Lord in Galilee, de-

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23. Whence had Jesus come? vs. 17. Who were the chief priests and elders? Why did they come to Jesus? What did they mean by *these*

and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? **24.** And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things.

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manding a sign from heaven. Mark vii. 1. It was their duty and right to determine as to the character and credentials of any one claiming prophetic authority; much more to judge the claims of a professed Messiah. But that they were not moved by a spirit of honest and serious inquiry was soon made plain. They sought to draw out from Jesus an acknowledgment that would give them some form of law for their proposed persecution. Luke xix. 47, 48. It may be also that they had put forward their most learned representatives with the hope of confounding the Master before all the people. *As He was teaching*—As He was walking in the temple (says Mark), perhaps in the favorite porch of Solomon, preaching the Gospel. (Luke.) *By what authority?*—By thy natural powers? by magic? by Beelzebub? or by the living God? The question implied a doubt as to the source of such “power to men.” The blind beggar of Siloam, whom they had so illegally tried and condemned, had taught them better than that. See John ix. 31–33. *These things*—From the triumphal entrance to the present prophetic work of preaching, including the cleansing of the temple and the miracles of healing. But they would not bring their tongues even to recognize by a mention the wonderful character of those deeds. It was just such an indirection as the lawyer used after the parable of the Good Samaritan. Luke x. 37. The question implied that Jesus acted as a subordinate to some superior teacher, as did the disciples to Him. Did they hope thus to touch a cord of self-glorying in the Lord’s heart, and call forth the assertion that He had wrought, by his own unaided power, what men believed could be done alone by the divine Help, and thereupon base their charge of blasphemy? . . . **24.** *I also will ask you*—He

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*things?* Had they themselves any authority to put such questions? How could they have known by whose authority Christ wrought miracles and taught? **24.** Why did Jesus answer them in this way? Were they honest inquirers after religious truth? How did these questions give them a

**25.** The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then be-

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does not as yet deny their authority and right to question, but rather recognizes it by submitting to them in their official character a question which implies their *duty to know* the truth concerning the false and the true prophets. In the intellectual and particularly the theological polemics of that period this was a legitimate mode; hence the commission could not but concede its propriety, and respond accordingly. *If ye tell me*—O men of authority, this is your hour of trial; if ye are wise and truthful, if ye deal justly and sincerely, if ye keep a good conscience toward God and the people in the use of your high office, it shall be well with you and well with the people! But if not, the Lord of the Temple will depose the faithless rulers of his flock from their dishonored seats! *I in like wise will tell you*—Thus acknowledging, yea, and confirming, their high and holy prerogatives. For then they would have proved themselves worthy of their place, and have shown a fit spirit for the due receiving of the true Messiah. To all in official places, and to all men of whatever degree, come just such test questions, pivotal eras in their history; as they decide, so for weal or for woe their destiny turns. . . . **25. The baptism**—The whole teaching and work of John. *With themselves*—Among themselves; they withdrew and conferred together. *If we shall say, From heaven*—Here was this horn of their dilemma: they had sent to John officially to find out whether or no he was the Messiah, and he had plainly testified that not he but JESUS was Christ. By admitting John's prophetic character, they admitted the truth of this witnessing and therefore also the Messianic authority of Jesus, whom they were now opposing and seeking to slay. They likewise condemned their own indifference to John's preaching of repentance

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chance to show that they were such? **25.** What all does the phrase *baptism of John* include? How would you answer these questions? why so? Why did they consult among themselves? What had John testified of Jesus? John i. 26-35. To whom was this testimony given? John i. 19. Were these chief priests of the same party there spoken of? What kept



lieve him? **26.** But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. **27.** And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell

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and their guilty acquiescence in his imprisonment and death; for they had lifted up no voice either to save him or to condemn his murderer. Let the impenitent and the unbelieving think of the coming day when the Judge of men shall bring their souls face to face with his ministers, and say: Why did ye not believe them? . . . **26.** *If we say, Of men*—Which they wanted to say, no doubt. *We fear*—Lest we be stoned. (Luke.) *The people*—The crowd, the mob; spoken contemptuously. Even over bad rulers the people can, if they will, exercise a wholesome influence. And thus these men trifled with the words by which Jesus would have proved their consciences and led them to repentance and faith! O triflers with holy truths, beware! *All hold John as a prophet*—Was it not amazing then that so few held Christ as the Prophet of whom John bare such plain witness? Alas, there are many to-day who say of preachers and teachers, *They are prophets!* but turn not to the Jesus of whom they prophesy. . . . **27.** *We cannot tell*—We do not know. This was their only escape, then—a bold *untruth* and a humiliating public acknowledgment of *ignorance!* What infinite pains men often take rather than bow repentant before Christ! The shame of acknowledging their sin they could not endure, but they could heap upon their souls the shame of falsehood, and of scorning and denying Christ and his ambassadors. O soul, hast thou ever felt such conflict of holy with sinful shame? Yield thee to that godly humbling which is unto life! *Neither do I tell you*—They had failed in this last test; the Lord had come to the fig trees fullest of leaves of promise—even to the rulers of Israel; He found on them no fruit, and now He dissolves for ever their authority, He

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them from saying, *From heaven?* **26.** Why would they not say, *Of men?* Which answer did *they* think the true one? Why did they not speak their mind? **27.** What did they decide to answer? Was this the truth? What did they thus prove themselves to be? What did they thus confess themselves to lack? Could a *false* and *ignorant* Sanhedrim judge righteously and surely of Christ's authority? Why did Jesus now refuse to acknowledge their authority to question Him?

I you by what authority I do these things. **28.** But what think ye? A *certain* man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. **29.** He answered and

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stays the function of their office, He sends upon the barren Sandhedrim the blight of eternal barrenness. Henceforth the Lord of the temple, who came to fulfill all righteousness, is exempt from even the form of obedience to these men whom He now deposes from being rulers of the people. . . . **28.** *But what think ye?*—He will no longer admit their authority, but He will again strive, as the loving Shepherd, to seek and save even these lost sheep of Israel. *A certain man*—Representing the Lord Jehovah. *Two sons*—As in the case of the Prodigal Son, the Pharisees are represented by one son, the publicans and harlots by the other. *He came to the first*—Perhaps the order of coming is not meant to be significant; but, as a matter of fact, the messages of John and of Jesus did first come to common people and the grosser class of offenders. *Said*—How many voices of love and warning, in providence, in nature, in the word, in the Sabbath-school, in the pulpit, has the Good Father bidden tell us of his grace and our duty! *Son*—How sweet the thought! God is not ashamed to call us *sons*; Christ is not ashamed to call us brethren. *Go*—Seek the place of labor. *Work*—And toil in it when thou art there. *To-day*—God's commands admit of no delay; "*Now is the accepted time.*" And with each new-coming day comes this renewed command: there is no morrow of suspended toil save the eternal morrow. *My*—And yet the fruits and the vintage were to be for the children, yea, and the inheritance also should be theirs. *Vineyard*—See under Lesson xlvii. . . . **29.** *I will not*—The brusqueness of the reply is characteristic of the class here represented. The requirements of religion are flung off with no pretence of acknowledgment. And yet they are not more wicked, but only more honest, than many whose conduct says quite as plainly, *I will not!* Indeed, here is uncovered the sole reason

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**28.** Whom does this first son represent? Who the certain man? What the *vineyard*? Did God ever call you thus? when? how? **29.** Have you ever thus answered? Why did you do so? In what way do men and children often make this answer? What is repentance? How did the son

said, I will not; but afterward he repented, and went. **30.** And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir; and went not. **31.** Whether of them twain did the will of *his* father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the

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why men are not Christians: "Ye will not come to me," said Jesus. John v. 40. *But afterward*—The voice of the father seemed to have died away from the son's heart, but some echoes of it lingered there still, and in a happy hour they were awakened, and filled the soul with invitations and pleadings and arguments to *Go, go, go work!* Teacher, thou art the Heavenly Father's voice to the little flock who listen to thee; often thy words seem lost upon unwilling hearts. But keep on calling, calling in the Father's name! There shall come a blessed "afterward" when words forgotten by them, and forgotten by thee, it may be, shall have a new life, and shall be the Holy Spirit's instruments of the soul's effectual call. *He repented*—He changed his mind; he became willing; the power of his Father reasserted itself over his will, conscience, desires. *And went*—Which was not only part but proof of his repentance. So the true penitent begins instantly to work in the path of obedience. . . . **30.** *The second*—The Pharisees and Scribes. *Said likewise*—It is the same call to grace and labor that comes to lowly and high, to the strict moralist and the outrageous sinner. *I go*—With a great emphasis on the "I," as contrasting his answer with that of his rude brother. *Sir*—Lord, a mark of respect which the bluff sinner had omitted. Here was open, cheerful, prompt and complete assent. What better *profession* could have been? But there it ended. *He went not*—His life belied his lips. It was his way of saying, *I will not*, and all his polite professions could not gainsay such witness of his guilt. He added perjury to his rebellion. . . . **31.** *The first*—Most true; for the Father God is not "willing

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show his repentance? Did he do right to break his promise? What did he lose by having made such a promise? what sin did he commit? **30, 31.** Whom does the second son represent? What professions did the Pharisees make? What position did these priests and lawyers occupy? What advantage did this give them for knowing truth and duty? How does the

harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. **32.** For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen *it*, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

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that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance;" and "Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." *Publicans and harlots go*—Are going even now. *Into the Kingdom*—They are by faith receiving the Messiah of God and thus becoming subjects, sons, heirs of his kingdom. *Before you*—Thus the flock are leading the shepherd, the people showing the way to the priest. The words imply that even these *may* yet enter, as indeed some of them did afterward enter. . . . **32.** *John came unto you*—Unto *you*; there was especial reason to expect that the ascetic practices of John would find sympathy with persons of such severe outward morality as the Pharisees, so that in a peculiar sense he was the prophet of the Strict Legalists. But *you* is general, including all the Jews. *In the way of righteousness*—"Prepare ye the way of the Lord," was the burden of John's preaching; and in this he fully expressed the mission of the "righteousness which is of the law," which in like manner was to prepare the way of, to lead to, Christ. In the sense, too, that John taught the people the duty of reform, repentance (see Luke iii. 10-14), he could be said to have come *in the way of righteousness*. *Ye believed Him not*—For they liked not that repentance which began with the heart. The people and the publicans, Luke tells us (ch. vii. 29-33), had been baptized with the baptism of John, but the Pharisees and lawyers had not been; indeed, they had said of him, He hath a devil! But more particularly they had refused to believe John's testimony as to the Messiahship of Jesus. They had sent a commission to John (John i. 19), and he had clearly borne witness of Jesus. John v. 33. They then for themselves *had seen* the works that Jesus (John v. 36) did, which confirmed John's word. *Ye, when ye had seen*—The sight of these repenting and entering the king-

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professor of religion show that he *is not* a Christian? Why do the very greatest sinners sometimes go first into the church? **32.** How should the

dom should have shamed their rulers into like action. *That ye might believe him*—And so, through him, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus by their great pretensions, their exalted opportunities and high positions, which gave ground for great expectation as to their usefulness in the vineyard of the Lord, they showed themselves to be like the second son, who made fair promises and fulfilled them not. And by their failure to repent and undo their error after fuller evidence and maturer thought, they proved themselves to be *unlike* the first son, who promised ill, but repented and did well.

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#### ANALYSIS.

##### **I. The Chief Priests Challenge our Lord's Authority.**

They came as open inquirers after truth, but in heart they were only cavilers against the truth. How many bring like feelings to their searchings after the truth as it is in Jesus! . . . In the depths of affliction, in the extreme of poverty, in hours of great bereavement, hast thou not been guilty of lifting thy thoughts in rebellion against the blessed Saviour, saying, "By what authority doest thou these things?" Stay thy cry; it is the voice of unbelief!

##### **II. Our Lord Confounds the Chief Priests.**

And these are the fitting types for all time of learned men (and unlearned too) who abuse their reason and their reasonings together, to pervert or disguise the truth, that they may cover their own faithless lives or withhold from Christ the acknowledgment of his authority and power. . . . What perversity! They stop not at falsehood, they blush not to be counted foolish, but they will not brook the fancied shame of confessing that they had sinned against the Lord Jesus!

##### **III. The Son who Promised Ill but Ended Well.**

But it was an ill promise, nevertheless. Had he gone when bidden, he would have been spared the stain of the sin and the sorrow of the repentance. He would have been spared the grief over wasted years; over influence and example cast against God;

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faith of the publicans and harlots have influenced the rulers? How did it affect them? Show how John came in the way of righteousness.

over injury done his fellow-men, even, it may be, to their eternal undoing. The vineyard lay untilled while he idled, and he lost the precious fruits, the works of love and piety, the treasure laid up in heaven. The vineyard lay untilled, and as he entered it he found the thorns and briars sprung up, the vines wasted, the vintage damaged. And withal, notwithstanding the greater need of skill and strength and industry for the vineyard's culture, his hands had lost their cunning, his powers were undisciplined and decayed, his habits of mind unsettled, careless, and stubbornly bent toward sloth and the paths of sin outside the vineyard's bound. Oh how much better had he gone when the Father said, Son, go work to-day! . . . But all is not lost. Even at the eleventh hour much can be done, much can be undone, much fruit can be gathered unto eternal life.

#### IV. The Son who Promised Well but Ended Ill.

"Better is it that thou shouldst not vow than that thou shouldst vow and not pay." Eccles. v. 5. . . . See how those whose ways you have despised go into heaven before you! Thou art wrapped up in thy morality, and the dews of grace penetrate not thy soul. Thou sittest with unweeping eyes, and heart dry and hard, under the very droppings of the sanctuary. O man, cast away thy rags; come out of thy gospel-proof casement; open thy soul to the truth, and flee *as a sinner* unto Christ!

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#### SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Son, go work to-day in my vineyard." Matt. xxi. 28.

THEMES.—*For Thought*: Religious vows should only be made after serious thought. *For Prayer*: Lord, help me, when refusing Thee, to repent and choose Thee! Save me, when choosing Thee, from the sin and shame of refusing Thee! *For Practical Life*: Have I the guilt of *broken vows* upon my soul?

CATECHISM.—Q. 87. What is repentance unto life? A. Repentance unto life is a saving grace whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience.

## LESSON XLVII.

### THE HOUSEHOLDER AND WICKED HUSBANDMEN.

**Matt. xxi. 33-41.—Parallels, Mark xii. 1-12; Luke xx. 9-19.**

#### HISTORICAL CONNECTION.

This parable was spoken immediately after that of the Two Sons, and followed up the impression which that lesson was meant to make upon the minds of the hearers. The conduct of the son who proved faithless to his open covenant with the Lord of the vineyard, and simply left his duty undone, is carried in this parable to its inevitable conclusion; for broken vows and neglected duty lead on to open rebellion against God and opposition to his Son—the climax of human guilt. How this faithful picture of the end of their unbelief should have pierced their hearts and awakened to repentance!

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#### NOTES.

**33.** Hear another parable: There was a certain householder

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**33.** *Hear*—To the people, Luke says, but in the hearing of the Sanhedrim folks. *Vineyard*—“In Judah, more than elsewhere, are to be seen on the sides of the hills the vineyards, marked by their watch-towers and walls, seated on their ancient terraces—the earliest and latest symbol of Judah. The ‘vine’ was the emblem of the nation on the coins of the Maccabees, and in the colossal cluster of golden grapes which overhung the

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**33.** When was this parable spoken? What called it out? What was

which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. **34.** And when the time of

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porch of the second temple."—STANLEY'S *Sinai and Palestine*. The vineyard represents the kingdom of God, at first contained within Israel, with the True Vine, planted in Moses' time, within it. This parable has an Old Testament parallel in Isa. v. 1-7. *Hedged it*—By the law, against the immoral and idolatrous practices of the surrounding heathen. Even now the restrictions of the church are wisely based upon this idea. See Zech. ii. 5. Even physically, Palestine was hedged round about by its remarkable geographical position and geological conformation. *Winepress*—Or rather vat or trough into which the juice of the grape was drained, through a grated opening in the press or trough in which the grapes were trodden. This vat was usually "digged" in the rock or ground. *Tower*—Watch-tower, used, especially when the grapes were about ripe, to watch against spoilers and thieves. These details, showing the complete furnishing of the vineyard, represent the perfect equipment of the Church for outer defence and for the inner life. "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?" Isa. v. 4. This is true of every soul under the Gospel; the penitent has every possible help, the ungodly is stripped of every plea of excuse, and God is justified when He judges. *Let it out*—On shares, as we would say. *Husbandmen*—Farmers, representing the Jewish Church, but especially her authorized guardians, the priests and scribes. *Went*—Which simply says, in the fit imagery of the parable, that God, having given men all advantages possible, left them to improve them—to "work out their own salvation"—in the expectation of a final account. . . . **34.** *When the time of the fruit*—God asks nothing unreasonable or untimely, only what

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the motive of the Sanhedrim? What had led to this course? To whom was the parable addressed? What did the vineyard represent? When had God "planted" it? What similar parable in the Old Testament? Isa. v. 1-7. What is the "hedge"? How did the law serve as such? What is the use of the winepress (vat) and tower? What do these details signify? Is this true of us? Who are the husbandmen? What is signified by the householder's withdrawal? **34.** Were these demands just? Who



the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. **35.** And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. **36.** Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. **37.** But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.

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is due and in the due time. *Servants*—The prophets, whose call was special, and whose work was peculiar, as compared with the priests and scribes, whose office was prescribed and perpetual. The prophets began to appear about four hundred and thirty years after the Exodus, continuing until John the Baptist. *Receive the fruits*—“Not certain *works*, or a state of integrity and rectitude, but repentance and the inward desire after that true spiritual righteousness which the law could not produce.”—OLSHAUSEN. . . . **35, 36.** *Sent other servants*—“The *different sendings* must not be pressed; they probably imply the *fullness and sufficiency of warnings* given, and set forth the long-suffering of the householder; and the increasing rebellion of the husbandmen is shown by the increasing ill-treatment of the messengers.”—ALFORD. *Killed*—The tradition was that Jeremiah was stoned by the exiles in Egypt and Isaiah sawn asunder by King Manasseh. See Heb. xi. 36. *More*—“Superior in number, virtue and authority. The increase of *the call* is no sign of a more faithful people.”—BENGEL. . . . **37.** *Last of all*—How often our noblest blessings are our last opportunities! The superiority of Jesus to the prophets is here most plainly brought out. See Heb. iii. 5, 6. The words of St. Mark are here most touching: “Having therefore one son, his well beloved, he sent him also last unto them.” Here is the climax of divine love, its highest conceivable manifestation to men. This is the measure of God’s love to the world. John iii. 16. This is the eternal and unanswerable commendation of God’s love. Rom. v. 8. *They will*

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are the “servants?” What the difference between the office of *prophet* and of *priest*? When did the prophets begin to appear? What are the “fruits” which God asks? **35, 36.** What is taught by these different sendings? How were the prophets usually received? Heb. xi. 36. **37.** How does Christ’s superiority here appear? How God’s love? John iii. 16;

**38.** But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. **39.** And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. **40.** When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those

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*reverence*—Spoken from the standpoint of *man's duty*; reading the thoughts of God as they *seem* to us from his providences. . . .

**38.** *Saw the son*—These are they who were bidden: "Behold the Lamb of God!" *Among themselves*—The ungodly strengthen each other in council. *This is*—They sinned with full knowledge of their guilt. *The heir*—See Heb. i. 2. "The Lord Christ is Heir of all things, not as God, but as man; for, as God, He is Maker of all."—THEODORET, in TRENCH. *Come, let us kill him*—So said Joseph's brethren of him. See Gen. xxxvii. 19. The beginning of crime is the sinful *purpose*. Lord, help me to keep my heart with diligence! *Seize on his inheritance*—The law, with its types and shadows, was "until John;" its purpose was to "lead to Christ." But when Christ had indeed come, and when He sought to take away the old and to bring in better things, the "Husbandmen," the Jewish officials, were unwilling to have their prerogatives and privileges taken from them. The old system gave them *material advantages* which the new would take away. Hence the priests and doctors wanted to hold the Church *in their own interests*, and withhold it from Him who came to perfect it. How often since has the glorious Gospel—the Kingdom of God, the inheritance of Christ—been seized, usurped by selfish priests and rulers, for their own aggrandizement! . . . **39.** *They cast him out of the vineyard and slew him*—So Jesus was led forth, and slain without the gate. See John xix. 17 and Heb. xiii. 12, 13. Here is the climax of human guilt! Yet, O my heart, how often has the dear Lord been slain within thee and cast out from thee! . . . **40.** *Cometh*—At

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Rom. v. 8. What reasons could have been given why these should reverence the son? **38.** Did they act knowingly? In what sense is Christ "heir?" Heb. i. 2. What likeness here to Joseph's brethren? Gen. xxxvii. 19. What is Christ's "inheritance?" How could the priests seize upon that? **39.** Where was Jesus slain? John xix. 17; Heb. xiii. 12, 13. Can

husbandmen? **41.** They say unto him, he will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out *his* vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

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the destruction of Jerusalem.—**BENGEL.** In the person of that murdered *Son*, risen from the dead—**STIER.** *What will he do?*—What remains to be done but to *execute judgment?* Mercy's sweet resources have all been exhausted; neither divine love nor human guilt can go farther; the cup of mercy is drained, the measure of guilt is full. There remaineth therefore judgment and fiery indignation. Heb. x. 27. . . . **41.** *They say*—Thus out of their own mouth God condemns the rejecters of Christ. *Other husbandmen*—The Gentiles. *Which shall render*—The abusers of divine mercies are deprived of them, and the despised blessings given to others, who shall render God “the fruits in their seasons.” But the seasonable rendering of fruits is the unalterable condition of possession of the Kingdom. Lord, help me to sow beside all waters, that I may not fail of fruit for every season!

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### ANALYSIS.

#### I. The Election of Grace.

Here we see Israel chosen and endowed with every blessing. And so of us all, at this day, our blessed Lord may say: What more could I have done to my vineyard? The Church has been organized, the good seed of the word has been sown, the True Vine planted in our midst, every needful spiritual *provision* has been made. We have been set about with every needful “*hedge*” of *restraining and protecting* influence. The best advantages for *internal culture*, for utilizing the fruits of the vineyard, are ours (the wine-fat). And our “Strong Tower,” our place for “refuge,” for watch and ward—the Mercy-Seat sprinkled with the blood of Christ—this too is ours. And the Lord of the vineyard hath

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you be guilty of this crime? How? **40, 41.** Cometh—when? Was such punishment just? Could anything more have been done? Show from the text the progress of sin; the patience of God; the justice of the sinner's doom.

“let it out” to us, chosen us keepers of the oracles of life, the truth as it is in Jesus. Manifold gifts; solemn charge; awful responsibility!

## II. The Progress of Sin.

The successive steps are more clearly marked in Mark's account. *First step*—one servant caught, beaten, sent away empty. *Second step*—The next servant stoned, wounded, sent away shamefully handled. *Third step*—The next servant killed. *Fourth step*—Many others beaten and killed. *Last step*—The Son killed and cast out of the vineyard! And what was the sin that gave the first downward impulse? Withholding the due fruits in the season! And the impulse to the last unholy crime was: “let us seize on his inheritance!” So the sinner begins by keeping back from God the fruits of faith and holiness. That is very little, he thinks. But in that “little” lies the germ of rebellion against the God of heaven. . . . O soul, beware of the first step! He who starts upon a course of sin has started upon an inclined plane whose ending overhangs the bottomless pit.

## III. The Patience of God.

Side by side with the progress of the soul in sin, we see running that wondrous patience of the Holy Father which causes Him to bear so long with us, to send again and again to us with long-suffering forbearance. O merciful Lord, have patience with me also, but turn me quickly to thyself that thy patience may be no longer tried!

## IV. The Climax of Divine Love.

God sends his Well-Beloved. The cup of mercy is drained. Love can give, love can show, no more. Here the divine Love reaches the greatest height which is conceivable in its manifestations to men. To these robbers, outlaws, rebels, murderers, God sends his Son! Well may we sing:

“Amazing pity, grace unknown  
And love beyond degree!

Who can look upon this marvelous testimony, this epistle of commendation to us concerning God's affection for sinners, and

doubt that He loves them, that He would save them, that He is "not willing that any should perish?"

#### V. The Climax of Human Guilt.

Christ crucified by those whom He came to save! Do you crucify the Son of God afresh? Guilt has no deeper depth than this rejection of Christ, this usurping of his inheritance, this casting even of the remembrance of Him out from our hearts.

#### VI. The Righteous Judgment.

Heb. x. 27. Self-condemned. Out of their own mouths the Master judged them. And thus shall we all be judged. In "that day" the hail shall sweep away every refuge of lies.

#### VII. Transferred Blessings.

Cast me not away from thy presence! Take not thy Holy Spirit from me! For then indeed shall the vineyard with its fair possessions be taken away from me! . . . Notice that it is not only *fruits* that God requires of us, but fruits *in their seasons*.

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### SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Having yet therefore one Son, his well-beloved, He sent Him also last unto them." Mark xii. 16. Or John iii. 16.

THEMES.—*For Thought*: The Long-suffering Love of God toward sinners. *For Prayer*: Lord, give me the hearing ear, that I may attend to thy message, reverence thy messengers and revere thy son! *For Practical Life*: What have I rendered unto God for all his benefits? How do I receive the Word and messengers of God? Have I cast out Jesus from my heart?

CATECHISM.—Q. 27. Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist? A. Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.

LESSON XLVIII.  
THE CORNER-STONE AND STONE OF STUMBLING.

Matt. xxi. 42-46.

HISTORICAL CONNECTION.

This passage is connected with the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen. After the utterance of the wretched fate of those unhappy men, the people (Luke xx. 17) exclaimed: God forbid—let it not be! At which Jesus looked upon them and spoke the words concerning the Corner-stone.

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NOTES.

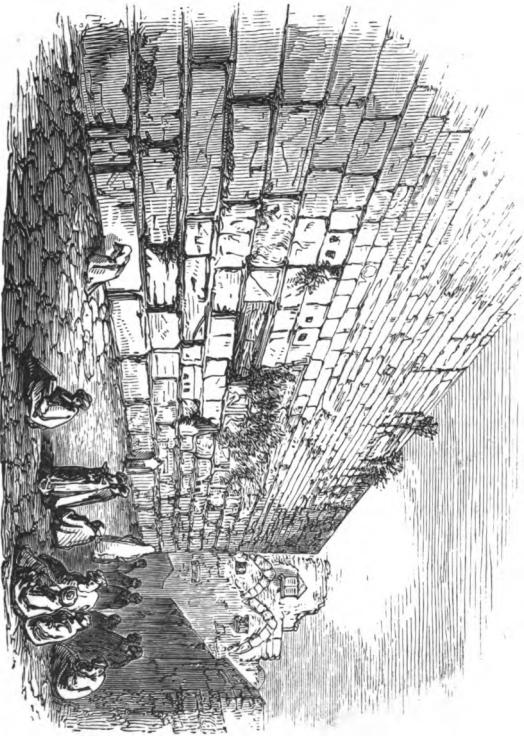
**42.** Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the

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**42.** *Did ye never read*—The language is framed with reference to the *God forbid* of the people, and that had more particularly referred to the transfer of the oracles of God from Israel to other nations, as indicated by the words, “He will let out his vineyard to other husbandmen.” Jesus establishes his position by an appeal to the Word itself. Why should you marvel? Is it not a matter of prophecy? *Scriptures*—Of the Old Testament. The regard which Christ here shows for its authority should lead us to value and reverence it the more. Jesus here appeals to the Scriptures from the protest of both Sanhedrim and people. A “Thus saith the Lord” must settle all points of faith. *The stone*—The quotation is from Ps. cxviii. 22, 23, the very Psalm from which (vs. 26) the people had greeted Jesus during the triumphal entry. In the Psalm the primary reference is to David, the typical to Christ. When Samuel came to Jesse’s house to anoint a king in Saul’s stead, David was rejected from the thoughts of his father and brethren, but was elected of God. Afterward he was rejected by Saul, pursued and outlawed from his nation. Even the Gentiles, among whom he found refuge, cast him out of their

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**42.** What called forth this saying concerning the Stone? What caused this *God forbid* of the people? Why did Jesus appeal to Scripture? What does this show as to the authority of the Old Testament? What is the final authority in religious inquiries? Where is this text found? What does the *Stone* there refer to? Show wherein David was thus a type



The Jews' Wailing Place, showing some of the Foundation Stones of the Temple.





head of the corner? this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes. **43.** Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God

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company when advancing to the battle of Gilboa. Yet David became the great king and corner-stone of the Jewish nation and Church. And thus he was a true type of Jesus Christ, who was rejected by his brethren, by his king and countrymen, and finally by the (Gentiles) Romans. *Builders*—The Jewish priests and rulers. "David had an eye to their *office* and not to their *intent*, for although underminers of God's Church, yet were they builders in respect of their calling."—CALVIN on Ps. cxviii. *Rejected*—The Bible never covers the crimes of church authorities: yet some "through ignorance did it," St. Peter said. Acts iii. 17. *Is become*—IS! for in the purpose of God the triumph of Christ is ever present. *The Head of the corner*—"The chief Corner-stone." Eph. ii. 20. "Understand by these words that He is the very Foundation of the Church, which bears up the weight of the whole building, because the chief strength of buildings ought to be in the corners; for I like not this curious device of AUGUSTIN's that Christ is the Corner-stone because He hath knit the Jews and Gentiles together like as a corner in the common part between two different walls."—CALVIN. For St. Peter's interpretation see Acts iv. 11, 12: "Neither is there salvation in any other," etc. *This*—The exaltation of the rejected Stone. *The Lord's doing*—God has glorified his own Son; no human wisdom, or skill, or wealth, or power can take credit for either electing or elevating this Corner-stone. *Marvelous*—Yet it would seem almost the invariable method of God's providence to raise from the rejected of men his most illustrious instruments of good. How natural for our vanity to marvel that one who is under the ban of *our* censure should be highly honored by God! Lord, help me not only to wonder, but to praise! . . . **43.** *Therefore*—Because I the Messiah shall be made head of the corner according to this Scripture. *Given to a nation*—"Not the Gentiles in

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of Christ. Who are the *builders*? How can they properly be called builders? Explain the metaphor, Head of the Corner. Give St. Peter's interpretation, Acts iv. 11, 12. What was that which seemed marvelous to the people? **43.** Who are the "nation?" 1 Pet. ii. 9. **44.** To whom does the *Stone* refer in Isa. viii. 14? To whom in 1 Pet. ii. 8? To whom here?

shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. 44. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to

general, but the Church of the truly faithful, the 'chosen generation,' the 'holy nation,' the 'peculiar people' of 1 Pet. ii. 9." —ALFORD. The reference is here again to the parable of the husbandmen. Indeed, "with a mere change of metaphor, the *builders* answer to the *husbandmen*, the *Stone* to the *servants* and the *Son*, the *rejecting* to the *slaying*."—OLSHAUSEN. . . . 44.

*Whosoever shall fall on this Stone*—In the preceding parable Christ was left as slain and cast out; here He is represented in his exalted character as King and Judge, executing judgment upon his enemies. In Isa. viii. 14 the "Stone of Stumbling and Rock of Offence" is Jehovah of hosts, who becomes a stumbling-stone to Israel by their refusal to sanctify Him, *i. e.*, regard Him as a holy God, who alone is to be trusted in. In Rom. ix. 32, 33, the stumbling-stone is plainly Salvation by *Faith in Christ* instead of by the works of the law. So, also, in 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8, Christ as the elect and precious object of saving faith is the "Rock of offence." A comparison of these texts shows that the "falling on the stone" here spoken of is the *refusal to accept Jesus Christ as the divine Messiah*. After the death of Jesus, a *crucified* Messiah (Christ crucified) was the stumbling-block of the Jews. 1 Cor. i. 23. *Broken*—"Even the most glorious exhibition of God's holiness, *i. e.*, of his infinite perfection, may occasion the destruction of the believer."—J. A. ALEXANDER.

*On whomsoever it shall fall*—The unbeliever *falling on* the Stone represents his own agency in his destruction; the Stone *falling upon* the unbeliever shows the part of Christ in his destruction. The Stumbling-stone is Christ as He abides on earth, in his Church, in his Word, in his providences; here the sinner's eye may fail to see, his foot may strike upon, yet can he not dislodge nor move it, and himself will be broken. The Stone of Crushing is Christ in heaven, far beyond the reach of hostile hands, out of

What does this show as to the nature of Christ? What is the meaning of *fall upon this Stone* as explained by Rom. ix. 32, 33, and 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8? The sense of the whole phrase? Is the stumbler responsible for his fall? From what is the imagery, *on whomsoever it shall fall*, taken? Dan. ii. 44,

powder. **45.** And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. **46.** But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.

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which He shall come to destroy his enemies. Better that the mountain should fall upon the sinner, then, than this Stone. The reference is evidently to the dream of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. ii.), in which the stone cut out of the mountain, without hands to hurl it, smote the image of gold, silver, brass and iron mixed with clay. See especially Dan. ii. 44, 45. The expression, *will grind him to powder*, is proverbial, indicating irremediable punishment and the entire loss of organized and individual power to oppose or assault; just as the grains of a pulverized stone, having lost cohesion, are useless as weapons of offence or defence. The smooth stone in David's sling, had it been first *ground to powder*, would have wrought no damage against the Philistine. The figure proved prophetic as to the Jewish commonwealth and hierarchy, whose civil and ecclesiastical cohesion was broken completely, and the fragments blown to the ends of the earth. And such shall be the doom of all nations who finally reject Christ—disorganization. . . . **45.** *They perceived*—So many now see the application of the truth to themselves, but go on in sin. *Spake of them*—Speakest Thou such things of me, O Lord Jesus? Lift me, then, from under the overhanging Stone of threatening and establish my stumbling feet upon the Rock of Ages! Save me, O Lord, save me from the madness of rushing to destruction against this Rock! O Rock of Refuge, I would fall down before Thee, not fall upon Thee! . . . **46.** *They sought to lay hands on Him*—That is, to arrest Him according to the decree and warrant which they had already issued. These words so plainly reasserted his claims to be the divinely-appointed Messiah, and so strongly set before his opposers their guilt and threatened doom, that their religious scruples against the Messianic claims of Jesus were aroused into fiercer fanaticism and their personal animosity into

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**45.** To what does it refer? For what did God lay this Stone in Zion, and what is its character? Isa. xxviii. 16. What hope here for the penitent? For the believer? For the Christian worker? How can we build upon this Stone? Have you built upon it?

an intenser hate. Nothing now could satisfy them but his blood. And that they would have shed without further delay had it not been for a wholesome dread of the populace. *Because they*—The multitude. *Took Him for a prophet*—They considered Him to be a prophet, but seem to have fallen short of the truth that Christ was *the Prophet*, the One like unto Moses, who, as the Lord's Anointed, should deliver his people from their sins.

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#### ANALYSIS.

##### I. Jesus the Corner-stone.

Tried, Precious, Sure, Elect, the Chief Corner, the Foundation. Isa. xxviii. 16; 1 Pet. ii. 6. Built upon by faith. (1) Hope to the penitent—Christ is the Head Stone; you can build on Him without fear. (2) Hope to the Christian worker—Christ shall destroy sin and “fill the whole earth.” Dan. ii. 35.

##### II. The Stumbling-stone.

Such He is to the unbelieving, the disobedient, who refuse, reject, disallow, set Him at naught.

##### III. The Stone of Destruction.

Such He shall be to all the finally impenitent at the Day of Judgment.

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#### SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—“Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.” 1 Pet. ii. 6.

**THEMES.**—*For Thought:* The excellence and exaltation of Jesus Christ, the aggravated sin of rejecting Him. *For Prayer:* Lord, help me to build all my hope for eternity upon Jesus Christ! Let not the Rock of Refuge be to me a Rock of Offence! *For Life:* Have I believed upon the Rock of Ages? Have I stumbled at the Cross of Christ? Shall the Stone grind me to powder in that day?

**CATECHISM.**—Q. 83. Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous? A. Some sins in themselves and by reason of several aggravations are more heinous in the sight of God than others. Q. 84. What doth every sin deserve? A. Every sin deserveth God's wrath and curse both in this life and that which is to come.

## LESSON XLIX.

### GOD AND CÆSAR; CHRIST CONFOUNDS POLITICIANS.

Matt. xxii. 15-22.—Parallels, Mark xii. 13-17; Luke xx. 20-26.

#### HISTORICAL CONNECTION.

The teaching concerning the Corner-stone and the stone of Crushing, which appears to have been directed chiefly to the rulers, "the builders," was followed by the parable of the Marriage of the King's Son. This has already been given (Less. 27) in the connection of the similar parable of Luke xiv. 15-24. The scope of that parable included also the people, who, although they had given Jesus a royal reception to the city, and were now inclined to take sides with Him against the priests and pharisees, yet themselves were little inclined to accept the Messiah and his kingdom in the spiritual sense and power which Jesus continually set before them. Immediately after the utterance of the parable of the Marriage of the King's Son occurred the incident of this section.

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#### NOTES.

15. Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in *his* talk. 16. And they sent out unto him their

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15. *Then*—Their own resources failing, and the people still favorable to Christ. *Counsel*—With other parties of the Sanhedrim, Sadducees and Herodians. The common platform of this coalition was hostility to Jesus. Ps. ii. 2 is here fulfilled. *How*—Seventy wise doctors *deliberating* "how" to entangle *one* man in familiar discourse! What a testimony to Christ's wisdom! How weak is falsehood in the face of truth! *In talk*—Drop the italicized *his* of the English version; it was *by talk*, both their own and his, that they hoped to catch (entangle) Jesus, like a bird in the fowler's net. . . . 16. *Disciples*—Young men, stu-

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15. With whom did these Pharisees counsel? What led to this step? What was their object? How was Ps. ii. 2 here fulfilled? 16. Who were

disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any *man*; for thou regardest not the person of men.

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dents, who, like St. Paul, "sat at the feet of Gamaliel," and other learned doctors at Jerusalem. Luke calls them spies, and says that their plan was to "feign themselves just men," *i. e.*, devout inquirers after truth, who should worm themselves into Christ's confidence, and find his very inmost thoughts, "that so they might deliver Him unto the power and authority of the Governor." They plainly thought that Jesus would lay himself open to the governor's censure; they likely judged of his private views by their own, which puts a still darker color upon their conduct. These young men were poor "decoys" in the hands of wicked masters. How many a young person to-day is put to just such base uses! O youth, spurn the advances of the great, and of the politician, and of plotters of whatever sort, when they would make you a *decoy* for snaring Christ's truth and people! *Herodians*—The more zealous partisans of Herod the Tetrarch, who was then in Jerusalem for the approaching Passover. This party favored the sovereignty of Herod, as opposed to the *direct* rule of the Romans; while respecting some of the deeper prejudices of the Jews, they yet desired the introduction of many of the Roman and Greek customs. *We know that Thou art true*—Poor blinded youth, whose hearts belied their lips, over each one we may sigh our Lord's lament: "Would that thou *hadst* known!" Yet with what joyful, hopeful sincerity may the true believer utter their words! It is lawful to learn from an enemy, and the scriptural teacher may here learn some of the qualities which a teacher sent of God should have: (1) Truth in the heart—"art true," and Ps. li. 6. (2) Truth in conversation—"Thou sayest truth," see Mark. (3) Truth in teaching—"Thou teachest in truth." (4) Teaching impartially, without

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these "disciples?" What was the work given them to do? Luke xx. 20. What is the modern name for such characters? (Decoy.) When do young people now act a similar part? Who were the Herodians? Where was Herod at this time? What was the purpose of these complimentary words? In what sense is it *right*, and in what *wrong*, to regard not the person of

**17. Tell us, therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to**

consulting fear or favor. (5) And finally, here is the true Matter of Teaching—The way of God, *i. e.*, the way appointed of God, through which, aided by God, the soul here and hereafter comes to God. Brother worker, study here your qualifications to teach! *Neither carest Thou, etc.*—A not uncommon way of tempting men by appealing to their pride of independence; and the class of men (youth) who used it were peculiarly open to it. The truest independence is honest, humble dependence upon God, “whom most to serve is most to be a man and free.” This is the hypocrite’s praise of Jesus. O Lord, save me from rendering such praise! “The devil never lies so foully as when he speaks the truth.” . . . **17. Lawful**—This question was very seriously and fiercely discussed by the Jews, large numbers of whom held that since the Jewish government was a Theocracy its people could not lawfully pay any other taxes than those due to the Temple of God and its various officials, since this would plainly be acknowledging another king than Jehovah. Especially was it unlawful thus to recognize a heathen ruler. This feeling broke out into open rebellion in the days of the taxing. See Acts v. 37. Concerning this view, OLSHAUSEN says: “There was not the slightest ground for the support of it in Scripture; for the Jews always had paid taxes to their sovereign, *in addition to the Temple and its officials, and Palestine had also had to raise its tribute as a province of Babylon or Syria. Moreover, the passage (Deut. xvii. 15) does not, in itself, forbid that a stranger should reign over Israel—indeed the prophets foretold that the unfaithful people should be subjected to foreign rule—the passage only prohibits the Jews from themselves choosing a foreigner as king. Hence it is evident that Jesus could not, by any means, coincide with the ultra party, because their rebelliousness was a horrible fruit of sin.*” *Tribute*—The poll-tax levied upon each

men? Show the difference between true and false independence? What lesson can the Sunday-school teacher learn from these words? 17. What special tax is here referred to? What were the Jewish notions on this point? What authority did they quote for them? Deut. xvii. 15. What had the agitation led to? Show this position to be erroneous. What basis

give tribute unto Cæsar, or not? 18. But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? 19. Show me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. 20. And he saith unto them, Whose *is* this image and

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Jew, as a Jew, and therefore more obnoxious as a special badge of servitude than the customs which were levied upon goods. *Cæsar*—Tiberius was then emperor, but the general name is used as expressing the principle. Underneath all these questionings there was a very deep spiritual truth which these men, digging in the thin surface-soil of the letter, failed to uncover. It is this: God's children, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, dare not be, ought not to be, will not be, in bondage or vassalage to the prince of this world. The fellow-citizens of the saints *must* stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free. No yoke but that of Jehovah may rest upon them. But the real vassalage is—*sin*; the foreign usurper is—*Satan*. It is in respect of *holiness* that God's people are "a peculiar people" and dare not pay tribute to the prince of evil. Yet, alas! these men, while they hugged to their hearts the fetters of sin, thought they pleased God by throwing off the yoke of Cæsar! . . . 18. *Jesus perceived*—"Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!" Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24. *Wickedness*—Hypocrisy (Mark), craftiness (Luke). *Tempt*—And captious questioning in the class over the great concerns of eternity is still open to this rebuke. *Hypocrites*—"Jesus shows them that *He is true*, as they had said."—BENGEL. . . . 19. *Show me*—Jesus does not seem to have carried money, and besides it was important that the coin should be found in their possession. *Penny*—Denarius, fifteen cents, the prevailing currency. . . . 20. *Image*—The denarius of that date has on one side the head of Tiberius, crowned with the laurel wreath, on the other a female

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of spiritual truth in it? What is the peculiar character of God's people? 1 Pet. ii. 9. What *is* the vassalage which we should cast off? Who the prince to whom we may *not* pay tribute. 18. How was this tempting Jesus? How may you fall into a like error? 19. Why did Jesus ask *them* to show the coin? 20. What was the image and superscription on the denarius of



superscription? 21. They say unto him, Cæsar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are

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figure, sitting. There were many Jewish coins, but they *never bore the image of any king* or other man, the devices being such as the vase (pot of manna, probably), budding rod (Aaron's), branch bearing three flowers (perhaps the same as Aaron's rod), the sheaf, single and double, wreath of olives, bunch of grapes, etc. *Superscription*—That upon the penny shown to Jesus was probably this: on the obverse, surrounding the head of Tiberius, TI. CÆSAR DIVI AVG F AVGVSTVS. On the reverse, surrounding the sitting female figure: PONTIF MAXIM. The first may be freely translated: Tiberius Cæsar, by the most holy gods made emperor; the latter (Pontifex Maximus) means chief priest. *They say unto Him, Cæsar's*—Thus they show themselves to be possessing and passing the coin of Cæsar's government as if it were their own lawful and ordinary currency, and so, according to their own maxim, "he whose likeness is borne by the coin is lord of the land," they had *already* acknowledged the lawfulness of Cæsar's government, and hence could not question the lawfulness of obedience to it. . . . 21. *Render therefore to Cæsar*—Since ye have received this from him, you surely may return it to him. *The things which are Cæsar's*—This tribute, with the allegiance which it implies. This is our Lord's plain command, to submit to established government; and in a free government it means much more than mere submission. *Unto God*—They had not come to learn their duty to God, but Jesus points them to this, which is the foundation and the measure of all duty. Man owes to God—himself, all his faculties, powers and possessions. Man owes to Him, as Supreme Ruler of the world, Love, Fear, Obedience, Trust, Worship, Service. And all these he owes to Him in and through Jesus, his Messiah. How many, alas! repudiate their obligations to The Eternal! How many are honest toward men, but dishonest toward God; loyal

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that date? What devices were excluded from Jewish coins? 21. What duty do we owe to the civil government? 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14. What are men to render to God? Why render him worship—obedience—love—service—trust? How may all this be done? What sin is ours if it be not done?

Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's. 22. When they had heard *these words*, they marveled, and left him, and went their way.

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to the Civil Ruler, but rebels against the divine authority! O Christ, this fair creation, with all its ten thousand beauties, is thine; help thy servants to reclaim it from the bondage of sin under which it travails until now, and to render it, no longer soiled by sin, to Thee! O Christ, the souls of men are thine; send out thy Spirit, thy Truth, thy subjects, human and angelic, to reclaim the captives and bring them back to thy sweet allegiance and service! "This answer also gives them the real reason why they were now under subjection to Cæsar, viz., because they had fallen from their allegiance to God; they would not have God to reign over them, but a king, therefore were they subject to foreigners. 2 Chron. xii. 8."—ALFORD. "The question concerning the tribute was very absurd; as if an adulterer should ask whether it were right to pay the legal penalty fixed against adultery."—CLAUDIUS, in OLSHAUSEN. . . . 22. *Left Him and went their way*—Their treachery was completely unmasked, their shrewdness completely worsted. Wondering and confused and ashamed *they went their way*, to report their ill success, it may be, to those who had set them on.

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#### ANALYSIS.

##### I. The Devil's Decoys.

Our Lord was in all points tempted like as we are; and in the incident of this lesson we may learn some of the methods by which the tempter seeks to destroy our souls. He sets before us men and women who seem outwardly to be fair enough people, but who disguise their real characters and motives. They are the Devil's Decoys, and he has many of them. Often they are themselves unconscious of the base use which is made of them, but none the less, nay, rather the more, do they tempt us. Idleness comes to us disguised as Ease; Dissipation as Pleasure; Covetousness as Thrift; Rejecting Christ as Convenient Confession. There are *Decoy Hopes* that lure men on farther and

farther from Christ and virtue, calling back to us continually, You can turn at your will; there is no danger here; you can easily get back to safe ground; you will come out all right *in some way!* And following the will-o'-the-wisp, the soul at last sinks in the deep mire! There are *Decoy Faiths*—faith in our good works, faith in the forms of religion, faith in our orthodoxy, faith in our pious parents, faith in our ministers or church—instead of faith in Jesus Christ alone! Lord, save our youth from all these false lights that tempter hands, wreckers of souls, have kindled upon the cliffs, to lure them upon rocks of eternal ruin! Save them from being decoyed! Save them from being decoys!

## II. The Flatterer's Snare.

The temptation of flattery by which these young men sought to ensnare Jesus is one which assails us all, and particularly the young. "Thou art true," men say to us, thinking to throw us into such a conceit of our own wisdom and virtue and strength that we shall be off our guard and thus be overthrown more easily. Let young people beware of those who puff them up with praises of their great wisdom or beauty or excellence! And then others say, "Thou carest for no man;" and many youth yield to a false sense of independence, and cast off needful and honorable restraint. Parents are dishonored and distrusted and disobeyed for fear of the silly charge of being "tied to mother's apron string." The church and Sabbath-school are forsaken because some foolish and godless person has sneeringly said, "Priest-ridden!" The laws of society and of school, all the proprieties of life, are thus wrecked upon the vain fancy of being high-spirited, independent, and what not. "He cares for no man," is a sad thing to be said of any youth. . . . There is a coarse sort of flattery that disgusts very soon, and which is easily detected. But our tempters know how to conceal the barb under a delicate bait, which we are too prone to seize eagerly. Watch for these daintily-served flatteries! Read Bunyan's account of the way in which Christian and Hopeful, after they had left the Delectable Mountains, fell into the flatterer's snare in spite of the Shepherds' warning. . . . The true touchstone by which we may detect all deceit and deceivers, all decoys and flattery, is *Christ in*

*the heart.* Just as Jesus knew at once the snares of his tempters, so we, with the spirit of Christ within us, shall best shun tempters and their snares. The touch of a Christ-like soul, like the touch of Ithuriel's spear, will resolve every deceit of the devil into its real shape.

### III. Allegiance to Cæsar.

Our Lord here clearly teaches the duty of obedience to the lawful civil authority. Our republic requires of every youth not only defence in time of peril, but the prompt, hearty and intelligent discharge of every other duty, especially that of protecting the purity of all branches of government by the choice of none but the wise and good as candidates for offices of trust.

### IV. Loyalty to God.

Faith in Christ is loyalty to God; for Him hath God appointed King in Zion. . . . Christ alone is Lord of the Conscience; no ruler may come between Him and our souls, and no subject dare suffer such a lordship. But let us beware lest we yield to the temptation which these young men put to our Lord, and make a perverted conscience an excuse for lawlessness.

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## SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." vs. 21.

**THEMES.**—*For Thought:* The nature and obligation of Spiritual allegiance, and the great guilt of Spiritual rebellion. *For Prayer:* Thy will be done in earth; in my heart; by me! *For Practical Life:* Have I made my peace with my Sovereign God? How can I escape from the state and the doom of the rebellious? What shall I render unto God for all his benefits?

**CATECHISM.**—Q. 64. What is required in the fifth commandment? A. The fifth commandment requireth the preserving the honor, and performing the duties belonging to every one in their several places and relations, as superiors, inferiors, or equals. Also Q. 65.

## LESSON L.

### THE LORD'S SUMMARY; CHRIST CONFOUNDS LEGALISTS.

**Matt. xxii. 34-46.—Parallels, Mark xii. 28-34; Luke xx. 39-44.**

#### HISTORICAL CONNECTION.

Jesus had completely broken the snare of the Pharisees concerning the tax paying. As these enemies retired discomfited, their rivals, the Sadducees, came forward, no doubt animated by the desire to triumph where their theological opponents had failed, and thus to vindicate their claims to intellectual superiority. The question which they put concerning the relations which a certain woman, who had been married to seven brothers successively, would have to her husband in the world of spirits, was intended to show the absurdity of the doctrine of the Resurrection, to which the orthodox Jews held. It was doubtless a hypothetical case (although not outside the bounds of probability), and fairly exemplifies a class of questions upon which the Jewish theologians delighted to exercise their own and puzzle their rivals' ingenuity. Our Lord's memorable answer opens to us a glimpse of the pure, spiritual and angelic nature of the fellowship of the Redeemed, when the universal race, as one family of God, children all of the Eternal Father, shall stand together upon the spiritual plane of the Love and Service and Enjoyment of God. Having thus shown the possibility and reasonableness of a spirit existence (such as the angels') independent of the ordinary natural relations, He referred them to Moses, whose authority the Sadducees acknowledged fully, and cited the testimony of the Almighty Himself to the present and perpetual existence of the patriarchs, and so by implication of all men. It was at this point, when the Sadducees had been put to silence, that the Pharisees, hearing of the incident, and in no wise displeased thereat, again essay a trial of the weapons of colloquial controversy with the Great Teacher.

## NOTES.

**34.** But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. **35.** Then one of them, *which was a lawyer*, asked *him a question*, tempt-

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**34.** *Put the Sadducees to silence*—By the answer touching the relations of the resurrection life. See vss. 30-32. *Gathered together*—Well satisfied at the Sadducees' defeat, but jealous of the triumph of Jesus, and anxious to prove their own superiority, both as theologians and as polemics. How unworthy the feelings that caused that gathering about the Lord! Are such the motives, Lord, that lead me to Thee! . . . **35.** *A lawyer*—One learned in the law of Moses, which was also the Jewish civil code. They appear to have been consulted, as are modern lawyers, in matters involving the civil bearings of the law, and in their ecclesiastical relations were something like our theological professors. This man was also a scribe. *Tempting*—Testing Him as to his knowledge of divinity; he seems to have been a fair-minded man, according to Mark's account. xii. 28. And in this very fact may have lain the adversary's power; for when one's position on some great question places him in sympathy with a sect or party whose principles *in the main* must be eschewed, there is a very great temptation to yield to good-fellowship, to seeming policy, and to compromise with gross errorists for the sake of the little truth they hold. May it not, therefore, have been the cunning snare of the tempter first to disarm Jesus of opposition to the Pharisees, by putting forward this amiable Scribe, to show how great were their agreements? Thus the enemies of Christians would destroy their influence by showing that there is not so much difference between them, after all. LANGE'S view is this: "They knew that Christ made Himself the Son of God. They intended, therefore, to found upon his expected answer, 'To love God above all,' a charge of blasphemy in making Him-

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**34.** What fact led to the gathering of the Pharisees? How had Jesus silenced the Sadducees? vss. 30-32. What motives did the Pharisees have in gathering about Jesus? With what motives *ought* people to gather about Jesus? **35.** What was the business of the Jewish lawyers? What was the character of this man? Mark xii. 28. What temptation would his

ing him, and saying, **36.** Master, which *is* the great commandment in the law? **37.** Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. **38.** This is the first and great commandment. **39.** And the second *is* like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor

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self equal to that Supreme God by pretending to be his Son." . . . **36.** *The great commandment*—The one which most fully underlies and embraces what God requires of man. *In the law*—The whole law of Moses, moral and ceremonial. The Jewish doctors greatly delighted in these nice distinctions between the various commandments. . . . **37, 38.** *Thou shalt love*—Quoted from Deut. vi. 5. The duty of loving God rests upon a *positive* command, and its neglect is fatal sin. *The Lord thy God*—Original, Jehovah thy God. *With all thy heart*—With all thy spiritual, emotional and intellectual powers, and with the whole energy and capacity of each one. This is one of the passages which the Jews had written upon their phylacteries, and was therefore more familiar and more authoritative to them. *The first and great*—And so the religious life, like the domestic, the social, the civil, begins and dwells and grows in *love*. . . . **39.** *The second is like*—See 1 John iv. 20, 21. "By this answer Jesus not only penetrated and convicted the wicked design of the Pharisees, but also reprovèd the error which lurked in their question. He elevated the human nature into a higher relation to the divinity; and He said, in effect, As the second commandment is subordinate to the first, and yet like unto it, so the Son of man is subordinate to the Father, and yet like unto Him. The Pharisees felt at once that his addition of the love to man had traversed their whole design."—LANGE. *Thou shalt love*—This, too, is a positive command. *Thy neighbor*—See Christ's inter-

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apparently fair and friendly spirit place before Christ? **36.** What answer did the Pharisees expect Jesus to make to this question? In what way did they hope thus to involve Him in a self-contradiction? What was meant by *the law*? **37.** From what is this quoted? Deut. vi. 5. What made this text especially familiar to the Jews? [On their phylacteries.] What is meant by this use of the words *heart, soul, mind*? Why is loving God a positive duty? Can any one perfectly keep this command? Is it one's duty to try? How may one know that he loves God? **38.** What is the sense of *first and great*? **39.** Wherein is the likeness between the *first* and

as thyself. 40. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

41. While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, 42. Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose Son is he?

pretation in the parable of the Good Samaritan. Luke x. 29. The Jews limited the obligation of neighborly duty to their own nation and immediate friends. *As thyself*—The whole text is a summary of the Second Table of the Moral Law; it may be found in Lev. xix. 18. That man should love himself, nature teaches; that he should love him *as* himself, even the Old Testament taught; that he should love him more than himself is nowhere so plainly taught as in the life and death of Him who now uttered these words. Yet he who most unselfishly gives himself to the loving service of his fellows exhibits, after all, the noblest love and appreciation of self. . . . 40. *Hang all the law*—Hangs the whole law, as a coat hangs from a nail. Remove these, or either of these, and both law and prophets lose their spiritual power and moral obligation. Yet the Jews had reversed the matter, and made the whole duty of man to God and to his fellows depend rather upon outward conformity to the law. Every point of human duty may be safely tested by this Summary of our Lord, for "Love is the fulfilling of the Law." For the interesting conclusion of this interview with the Scribe, see Mark xii. 32-34. 41. *The Pharisees were gathered together*—Confused, and doubtless consulting as to what next to do, for Mark says that no man durst question Him. *Jesus asked them*—The question laid bare the inconsistency of their opposition to Christ's views of the Messiah, and exposed their own ignorance of the Scripture view of the nature of Messiah. . . . 42. *What think ye of Christ?*—Lord, save me from showing by my life that I think *little* of Him, think *nothing* of Him or think *ill* of Him! *Whose Son*—Whose

*second* commands? Who is my neighbor? Of what commandments is this a summary? Does this hinder proper love for one's self? What is the noblest kind of self-love? 40. Why may this summary of our Lord be used to test every human duty? How did the Scribe receive the answer, and how did Christ close the interview? Mark xii. 32-34.

41. What did this second gathering mean? 42. What was Christ's object in asking this question? Sense of the word *son* here? And what



They say unto him, *The Son of David*. **43.** He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, **44.** The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? **45.** If David then call him Lord,

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descendant. *The Son of David*—They could reckon the Messiah's genealogy, but how little they knew of his nature and his grace! How many, like these men, are prompt to confess the historic Christ, but reject the living Messiah who walks among them with salvation! . . . **43.** *How then*—If the Christ, the Messiah whom you expect, is to be simply a lineal descendant of King David, as you say. *Doth David*—Who is his ancestor and superior according to the flesh. *In Spirit*—That is, speaking by the Holy Ghost (Mark), and therefore speaking infallibly, and speaking in anticipation, prophetically. *Call him*—[the Messiah] LORD, *saying*—Ps. cx. 1. . . . **44.** The LORD—Original, JEHOVAH. *Unto my* [David's] LORD—The Messiah. *Sit Thou*—On the throne. *Right hand*—Thus placing the Son above the ancestor. Not David, not the highest archangel, no created intelligence could be placed of God in such an exaltation. Jesus sits there as God—to rule and to be worshiped for ever. See Heb. i. 8-13; Rev. v. 6-14. *Thine enemies*—Lord, am I such? *Thy footstool*—An allusion to ancient custom of conquerors placing the foot upon the neck of the vanquished. O my soul, if thou dost not take the Loving King's hand, outreached to raise thee and to crown thy head, thou shalt feel the Angry King's foot spurning thee and crushing thee for aye! . . . **45.** *How is He his Son?*—The question required them to explain how it came, if the Messiah (as the Scribes taught) bore to David only the ordinary and natural relations of a descendant, that David had addressed Him in the language of an inferior to a superior, and had prophetically

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think ye of Christ? **43, 44.** Wherein was this question contradictory of the Pharisees' views of the Messiah? Show its harmony with the Christian view of the Nature of Jesus Christ. What is shown as to the divine nature of Jesus by the position here assigned Him? For what purpose is He placed on the Throne? What is the nature of the worship given to Jesus in heaven? Rev. v. 6-14. What shall be the fate of Christ's enemies? Who are his enemies? Show the difference between the soul's willing subjection to Love and unwilling subjection to Power. **45.** *It*

how is he his son? **46.** And no man was able to answer him a word; neither durst any *man*, from that day forth, ask him any more *questions*.

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revealed the decree of JEHOVAH by which this Messiah-Son of his had been exalted to the right hand of the divine Majesty, far above David, far above all kings, both friendly and hostile. . . . **46.** *And no man was able to answer him a word*—For they saw a new light upon the old view of the Messiah's Sonship; He was to be not simply another David, but a higher than David; not another Solomon, but a greater than Solomon. They were familiar with the Messianic views which Jesus Himself had held, viz.: that the Messiah was of both *human* and *divine* nature; that in his human nature He was the son of David according to the flesh, in his divine nature He was David's Lord and Lord of all. As Jesus had announced Himself as the Messiah, as the people had greeted Him *Son of David* and believed Him so to be, the inference would have been plain that the great commandment of the law, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God*, obligated the affectionate allegiance and devotion of all hearts to Jesus of Nazareth. Even so, Lord Jesus, win Thou and hold Thou our souls to love for Thee! *Neither durst any man, etc.*—That is, any of Christ's adversaries. They had been discomfited at every hand; all classes and parties and sects had been compelled to confess the incomparable superiority of this divine Leader. They feared to further measure strength with Him in intellectual encounter; they will try what physical force can do! They cannot catch in their toils the Lion of the Tribe of Judah; they will hunt Him to his death! It is but a step from the Pharisees' questioning to the inquisition of blood. On the other hand, Mark records that "the common people heard him gladly."

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what sense is Christ the *son* of David? What was the purpose and the need of Christ thus taking the form of flesh? How and for whom did Jesus fulfill the law? **46.** Why could no one answer Jesus? Were these Scribes now *convinced* that Jesus was the Christ? What title had the people given Jesus at the time of the triumphal entry? If then Jesus was the *Son of David*, what was he also according to this saying of David's? If He was David's *Lord*, how would the answer to the Scribes' question apply to Him?

## ANALYSIS.

- I. Love Fulfills the Law.  
 II. Christ is Lord of lords.  
 III. The Rulers' last Defeat.
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## SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.



GOLDEN TEXT.—“Love is the fulfilling of the Law.” Rom. xiii. 10.

THEMES.—*For Thought*: God in Christ made flesh, that Love might triumph according to Law. *For Prayer*: Lord, let me love and trust Him who through thy love was made the end of the Law to the believer! See Rom. x. 4. *For Practical Life*: Would I live according to my Lord's Summary of Duty? I must order my conduct after the example of my Lord's life.

CATECHISM.—Q. 42. What is the sum of the ten commandments? A. The sum of the ten commandments is, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbor as ourselves. Also Q. 21.

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## SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK.

BLACKBOARD.—On each side of the board draw guide-boards, on paths converging to the centre. On the right hand guide-board an index and the word  LOVE! On the left the same and word  LAW. In the centre erect a cross surrounded with a halo and inscribed JESUS.

LESSON LI.  
SHUTTING UP THE KINGDOM; BLIND GUIDES.

Matt. xxiii. 13-23.

HISTORICAL CONNECTION.

The Pharisees now left the Master to teach the people and his disciples undisturbed. With the Lord's irrefutable demonstration of the Messiah's divine Sonship ringing through their souls, they abandoned the thought of further attack. But now has come the Great Teacher's hour for assault; the rulers are worsted, the multitudes joyful and trusting; for the time He is free to utter the rebukes which the faithless leaders of the people so richly deserved. But lest his words should be abused by any of the people, He prefaced them with cautions against disregard of lawful authority. See Matt. xxiii. 1-12. He bade the multitude to observe the teachings of the Scribes and Pharisees, but to shun their example. He especially cautioned them that pride which coveted praise and sought high place above men, and enjoined upon them the cultivation of the old brotherly equality and simplicity of the early Hebrews, acknowledging only God in Christ to be their spiritual Father, Teacher, Master. And then He poured upon the Pharisees his utterance of *Woe!*

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NOTES.

**13.** But woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither

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**13.** *Woe unto you*—There are eight distinct woes here pronounced against Christ's enemies at the close of his ministry. Compare the eight beatitudes (Matt. v. 1-11) addressed to his disciples on the commencement of his ministry. Blessings for his friends, woes for his foes. "His Gospel has its woes as well as the law, and Gospel curses are, of all others, the heaviest."—HENRY. *Hypocrites*—The word originally means a stage-player.

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**13.** Upon whom had Jesus pronounced his blessings? Matt. v. 1-11. What fact gives peculiar bitterness to the woes of the gospel? What is a hypocrite? Upon whom does the hypocrite build his spiritual foundation? On whom the true believer? What was the *ground* on which these woes were

The religious hypocrite is one who enacts a character which is not his own. His design may be either good or bad, but the results are always bad. The father of lies dwells with his children, and he whose profession of religion rises from an untruthful heart may know that the devil is in his spiritual foundation, and that the whole building will be "sensual, devilish." Sincerity, honesty of soul, *must* be at the bottom of a holy life; the foundation must be He who is "The Truth." *For*—No curse of Christ's is without amplest cause. Their sins were born of their insincerity, but the *sinful acts* are made the ground of condemnation. *Ye shut up the kingdom*—Which implies that God has set the kingdom wide open. He sent his Son Jesus, "He that hath the key of David" (Rev. iii. 7), to "set before" the people and to point them to this "open door." The Pharisees, by rejecting and opposing Jesus, shut this against (or before) men, even when at the voice of Jesus they were coming in crowds, and on the very threshold, *entering to go in*. Thus the crime was aggravated. The shutting up was done—(1) by refusing to go in themselves. Every man who stays outside the Church, by the mighty power of his *example* shuts up the kingdom against others; (2) by active opposition: *neither suffer ye them*. The careless word, the thoughtless jest, the cold look, the irreverent act, the ungodly counsel,—how many ways there are by which men now-a-days keep their fellows from entering heaven! And how many who bear God's name push back the poor, the lowly, the stranger and the children from *entering to go in* by practically barring churches and Sunday-schools against God's poor! Lord, Lord, deliver me from this blood-guiltiness! Teach my hands to open, not to shut, this door! Teacher, failing to hold up Christ to your scholars is shutting up the kingdom against them, for Jesus says, "I am the Door." Yet no truly earnest, penitent and anxious soul need keep back from venturing because of wicked or faithless men, for

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pronounced? Who had opened the door of the kingdom? In what ways had the Pharisees shut up the kingdom? What is the effect of the *example* of those who are out of Christ and of the Church upon others? Does this involve guilt and woe? Are you thus guilty? What are some of the *means* by which the impenitent oppose the entering of men into the Church? Are men responsible for being thus kept from Christ? Can any power

go in *yourselves*, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. **14.** Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. **15.** Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, ye make him two-

to the believer Jesus is always "He that openeth and no man shutteth." . . . **14.** *Ye devour widows' houses*—By fraud in administration of estates, or by so working upon their superstitious fears and their religious confidence as to obtain legacies from dying men of property which should have gone to the needy widow. This was the more hideous because—(1) done against those who were peculiarly helpless, and (2) done in the name of religion, or rather under its guise—for a *pretence making long prayer*. The Pharisees used a liturgy in public service, and would continue three hours in repetition of their formulas. . . . **15.** *Ye compass sea and land*—Go round the world. The Jews had great zeal in proselyting. *Proselytes*—There were two classes—(1) *Proselytes of righteousness*, who were circumcised, admitted to the privileges of the commonwealth of Israel, and undertook and were held bound to obey not only the moral, but the ceremonial, law; (2) *Proselytes of the gate*, who renounced idols, acknowledged Jehovah, worshiped in the synagogues and had sacrifices offered in the temple. The first class are here referred to. *Make them twofold more*—Sin tends to multiply itself. When men make perverts to their erroneous views, the result is not a *sum* simply, but a *product*. *Child of hell*—In sympathy, in likeness, in temporal and eternal belongings. "The proselytes were many of them so bad that they were called the scabs of Israel. They brought with them their heathen vices and notions, and in order to display the sincerity of their conversion outdid the Pharisees in acts of big-

keep back the truly penitent? Who is the Door of the kingdom? **14.** What methods did the Pharisees take to get possession of widows' estates? What added to the guilt of this? **15.** Describe the two classes of proselytes. Which class is here referred to? What is the usual tendency of proselytes as to their new views? How does this add to the guilt and responsibility of those who hold and spread error? What is it to be a

fold more the child of hell than yourselves. **16.** Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! **17.** Ye fools, and blind! for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? **18.** And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. **19.** Ye fools, and blind! for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? **20.** Whoso therefore sweareth by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. **21.** And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. **22.** And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.

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otry and superstition.”—OWEN. . . . **16, 17.** *Blind guides*—See Matt. xv. 14. “Lord, open thou mine eyes!” This straining after trifling distinctions always disqualifies one to be a teacher. *The gold of the temple*—The gold offered to the temple treasury. *Debtor*—Bound to fulfill his oath. *Whether is greater*—The Pharisees’ teaching was designed to encourage offerings from the people and to screen themselves from any suspicion of tampering with the gifts, yet it sprung naturally from their real feelings, in which reverence for the gold far exceeded reverence for the temple. *Sanctifieth*—Sanctified wealth is that which is consecrated to God. . . . **18, 19.** *It is nothing*—Not binding to keep, not involving guilt to break. *Guilty*—The same word as a *debtor*, vs. 16. *The altar that sanctifieth the gift*—It is so with our hearts, so with every gift laid upon the altar. . . . **20.** *Who shall swear*—The nature and obligation of an oath are here shown. It is a solemn calling upon God to witness the truth of the statement made. Whatever may be the *outward form* of an oath, he who honestly takes it must take it as in the presence of God. “The Pharisees were ‘fools and blind’ not to know and see that *no inanimate thing can witness an oath*, but that all these things

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child of hell? **16, 17.** What *gold* is referred to? Meaning of *debtor*? What purpose had the Pharisees in encouraging such views? **18, 19.** By what alone are our charities and all religious gifts made sacred? **20–24.** What is an oath? Wherein consists its sacredness? What is it that makes

are called in to do so because of the sanctity belonging to them, of which God is the primary source.”—ALFORD. . . . 21, 22. *By him that dwelleth therein*—In these verses our Lord goes a step farther toward the true source of all holiness, and reaches the Holy One himself; as the temple sanctified the gold and the altar the gift, so both temple and altar themselves are made holy by the indwelling presence of God. And they are only holy as God is truly therein, and where God is, even though upon the bare mountain-side, there is “holy ground.” And he completely shuts up the kingdom who shuts God out of his own temple and ordinances. The expression *dwelleth therein* had, until the time of the captivity, a peculiar meaning, since the Shekinah dwelt in the holy place up to that period. But even without that visible emblem or manifestation of the divine Presence our Lord would have us understand that the temple was still God’s dwelling-place. Even then, as He stood before them the “God manifest in the flesh,” He himself best illustrated the truth that God dwelt in his temple. This new Shekinah, the image of the invisible God, was the glory of the second Temple, greater even than that of the first. But these rulers, in the very name of the temple, banished the true Shekinah. And thenceforth *their* house (not God’s now!) was left unto them desolate. The Lord dwelt in his temple no more.

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#### ANALYSIS.

#### How Men Shut Up Christ’s Kingdom Against their Fellows.

1. By themselves refusing to enter. . . . 2. By hindering or actually opposing the entrance of others. . . . 3. By acts of fraud and oppression in private, aggravated by austere and pretentious public piety. . . . 4. By officious, indelicate and sectarian proselyting, striving to bring men to some particular sect rather than to the one common Saviour, more anxious and zeal-

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the temple of God itself to be holy ground? How do men shut up the kingdom of God by giving undue sanctity to the externals of his worship and service?



ous to stamp a soul with the impress of a denomination than with the image of the divine Head of the Church. . . . 5. By exalting the material helps to God's service to a sanctity due to God alone. . . . 6. By making many and fine distinctions as to the fulfillment of oaths, vows and religious obligations, thus sapping the foundations of truth and godly reverence, and civil order and legal justice. Thus the Church, the bride of Christ, is clad in unsightly rags, and men turn from her in disgust.

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#### SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"Come! and let him that heareth say, Come!" Rev. xxii. 17.

**THEMES.**—*For Thought:* The responsibility and guilt of those who have the Gospel for the spiritual loss of their fellows. *For Prayer:* "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God!" Ps. li. 14. *For Life:* Gen. iv. 9, 10, 11. "And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not, am I my brother's keeper? And HE said, What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto ME from the ground. And now art thou cursed!"

**CATECHISM.**—Q. 50. What is required in the second commandment? A. The second commandment requireth the receiving, observing and keeping pure and entire all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in his word. [The corruption of God's spiritual worship was one of the crying sins of the Pharisees.]

## LESSON LII.

### OUTWARDLY RIGHTEOUS.

Matt. xxiii. 23-28.—Parallel, Luke xi. 37-44.

#### NOTES.

**23.** Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier *matters* of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these

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**23.** *Woe unto you*—Not to the Pharisees only does this curse come, but to you, to all with whom purity is a form, piety a fiction. *Pay tithe*—A tenth part of the income of the fields and trees; this was enjoined by the Law. See Lev. xxvii. 30. Commentators for the most part take it that the herbs here referred to were not tithable, but our Lord's words, "These ought ye to have done," seem to imply that they were subject to tithe. *Mint*—Like our garden mint; the Jews used it with roast meat, and perhaps it was one of the "bitter herbs" with which the passover was eaten. *Anise*—The common dill, the seed of which resembles caraways; both plant and seed were used as a condiment. *Cummin*—A cultivated plant (see Isa. xxviii. 25, 27), something like fennel, the seeds having a bitterish, warm taste, with an aromatic flavor. It was used with salt as a sauce. These herbs were so abundant and of so little worth that they had little or no market value, so that practically the tithing of them was a mere form. Yet if done with a good conscience it was commendable. *Have omitted*—Their scrupulousness in small matters should have given assurance of yet greater scruples in observing weighty matters, which being omitted, the failure stood out only the more terribly conspicuous. *Judgment*—Right de-

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**23.** To whom are these *woes* applied? What is a tithe? Lev. xxvii. 30-32. Describe mint; anise. Was *cummin* cultivated? Isa. xxviii. 25, 27. Were these plants properly tithable? What was their value in the market? What would such scrupulousness in small matters suggest as to great ones? Were the facts in accord with this? Explain the terms Judgment, Mercy, Faith. Why were these called "weightier matters?" Could

ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. **24.** Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

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cision concerning and right dealing toward God and man; righteousness. *Mercy*—The exercise of love toward all; this was indeed the fulfilling of the law. *Faith*—Rather faithfulness, fidelity, sincerity, truthfulness of heart and life. See Mic. vi. 8 and Hos. xii. 6. The *acts* of righteousness, mercy and fidelity were omitted simply because the *qualities* of judgment, love and truth were omitted from their religion. And in this total absence of spiritual graces was the Pharisees' sin. *These ought ye, etc.*—Men often make doing of one duty the excuse for failure to do another, thus: I pay my debts, I am a good citizen, a moral man, a faithful attendant upon church and Sabbath school, *therefore* I need not possess a saving faith, nor openly profess the Saviour. Let this word of Jesus be the answer to all such. The faithful discharge of one duty is rather a condemnation than an excuse of laxity concerning other duties. . . . **24. Blind guides**—Unnatural blindness, when men can see the tiniest fly, but cannot see a great camel! Truly, "None are so blind as they who will not see." *Strain out*—*At* is a misprint for *out*. The Jews strained their wine and other drinks in order to avoid uncleanness of eating "flying creeping things," prohibited in Lev. xi. 21-24. Doubtless regard was also had to the prohibition of blood (Lev. xvii. 10), since certain insects, as our mosquitoes and flies, are blood-suckers; even a gnat *might* contain a microscopic quantity of foreign blood. *Swallow*—With no question or scruple; of course the saying is proverbial and figurative. *A camel*—A large beast and an *unclean* one (see Lev. xi. 4), full of the prohibited blood. The idea is plain: you pretend to great scruple in shunning moral uncleanness in very small matters, but

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the Scribes have learned this from the Old Testament? Mic. vi. 8; Hos. xii. 6. Does Jesus here refer to the *qualities* or the *acts* of judgment, etc.? Does exactness in doing some duties excuse laxity in the discharge of others? Why so? **24.** What strange peculiarity of this blindness as to small things and great ones? How account for this? Why did the Jews strain their drinks? Lev. xi. 21-24. Why was this prohibited? Lev. xvii. 10. How much blood does a gnat contain? How much a camel? Why was the camel unclean? Lev. xi. 4. What was the idea here?

**25.** Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. **26.** *Thou* blind Pharisee, cleanse first that *which is* within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. **27.** Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of

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have no scruple at all in doing deeds of most aggravated wickedness, just as though one who filters his drink to avoid infinitesimal portions of unclean blood in a *gnat*, should gulp down unscrupulously the gallons of blood in the unclean camel. . . . **25.** *Ye make clean the outside*—The same thought as above is now given in two other figures. . . . **26.** *Cleanse first that within the cup*—This is the foundation maxim of Christian morals; out of the heart are the issues of life, and who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? A pure life issues from a clean heart. Therefore, first of all and chief of all, Christ says: “Son, give me *thy heart!*” Therefore, above all things, Christian teachers plead for the new birth, and attack oftenest and most earnestly *the hearts* of their disciples. How utterly worthless, nay, how utterly abhorrent, before God, is a *merely formal* religion! . . . **27.** *Whited sepulchres*—According to the law (Num. xix. 16), whoever touched a dead body, a bone or a grave was unclean seven days; in order to avoid this, the Jews used to whiten the tombs with chalk once a year, just before the passover, when the pilgrims thronged Jerusalem and were in danger of being ignorantly defiled. It is said that the Rabbins held Ezek. xxxix. 15 as authority for this custom, where travelers, seeing a dead man’s bone, were required to set up a sign by it, that the buriers might have it buried and thus cleanse the land. *Appear beautiful outward*—The beautifying of burial spots is not censured. He who is “The Resurrection and the Life” would neither ridicule nor censure the Christian sentiment which tenderly guards and adorns

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**25, 26.** How does this saying (vs. 26) apply to Christian morals? What is the only sure condition of a pure life? **27, 28.** What custom is here referred to? When was this done? Why? Num. xix. 16. What did the Rabbins quote to sustain the custom? Ezek. xxxix. 15. Does Jesus

dead *men's* bones, and of all uncleanness. 28. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

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the last earthly resting-place of "the goodly company of the just." . . . 28. *Within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity*—If merely to *touch* a bone, or even the grave in which a bone lay, wrought uncleanness, what was the state of one who was *filled* with the corruption of death! "This goes to the root of the mischief at once: 'Your heart is not a temple of the living God, but a grave of pestilent corruption; not a heaven, but a hell. And your religion is but the whitewash—hardly skin-deep.'"—ALFORD.

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## ANALYSIS.

### FORMAL RELIGION.

#### I. Its Outward Developments.

1. Hypocrisy in *Giving to God*. vs. 23. . . . 2. Hypocrisy in *Resisting Evil*. vs. 24. *E. g.*, The gnat and the camel. . . . 3. Hypocrisy in *Personal Reform*. *E. g.*, The cup and platter. . . . 4. Hypocrisy in *Public Reforms and Benefactions*. *E. g.*, The whited sepulchres.

#### II. Its Nature.

1. Destructive of the very Foundations of Religion and Morality—Judgment, Mercy, Faith. . . . 2. It is the Nurture and the Cloak of extortion, excess and iniquity.

#### III. Its Remedy.

Vs. 26: "Cleanse first that which is within." This is the central dogma of the philosophy of Jesus Christ, and it is true wisdom. The world is well enough; what is wrong in Nature is man himself. The discord is *within*. The pitcher is broken at

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here censure the adorning of graves? What is censured? What did Jesus mean to teach by this metaphor? How does God regard mere formal religion? See Ps. liv. 6-11,

the fountain. The fountain is tainted at its source. And to that point the divine Physician directs his cure. Like Elisha, who cast his healing salt into the bitter waters on the plain of Jericho, Jesus throws into the fountain itself, the very spring of all life-issues, the savor of heavenly grace. It was at this point that his teachings and life showed in greatest contrast with those of the Pharisees. "Fools," said the Master on another occasion (Luke xi. 40), "Did not He that made that which is without make that which is within also?" But men have ever been guilty of like folly, even the wisest of them, and have sought to regenerate the world by changing the outward circumstances of men rather than by cleansing and renewing their spiritual nature. Vainly do philosophers, poets and literati dream of some Arcadia, Utopia, Elysium in some golden age of learning, art, elegance and plenty. The real Arcadia is a holy heart. The only Utopia that is not wrought out of "the baseless fabric of a dream" is a conscience void of offence toward God and men. Jesus the Christ hath set up by the pathway of life the one veritable Guide-board to the true Elysium, and this is the superscription thereof: "Blessed are the PURE IN HEART, for they shall see God!" BURNS caught the true spirit of this Christian truth in his familiar lines:

"It's no in titles nor in rank,  
 It's no in wealth like Lon'on bank,  
 To purchase peace and rest;  
 It's no in making muckle mair,  
 It's no in books, it's no in lear,  
 To make us truly blest.

"If happiness find not her seat  
 And centre in the breast,  
 We may be wise, or rich, or great,  
 But never can be blest.

"Nae treasures nor pleasures  
 Could make us happy lang;  
 The heart aye 's the part aye  
 That makes us right or wrang."

## SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship *Him* in spirit and in truth." John iv. 24.

**THEMES.**—*For Thought:* The New Birth an unfailing condition of a New Life. *For Prayer:* O Holy Spirit, renew my heart, and thus make my life a true image of Christ Jesus! *For Practical Life:* Has my heart been renewed after the image of Christ? Has my soul been clothed upon with the Righteousness of Christ? Can I say, with the Apostle, "For me to live is Christ"?

**CATECHISM.**—Q. 1. What is the chief end of man? A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever. Q. 2. What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him? A. The word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him. [The Pharisees sinned in making their "chief end" the glory of themselves and their party, and in adding to the Scriptures the sayings and traditions of the fathers.]

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 SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK.

For an appropriate Object Lesson see the author's "OBJECT AND OUTLINE TEACHING," Lesson xx., p. 119.

LESSON LIII.\*  
STONING THE PROPHETS.

Matt. xxiii. 29-39.—Parallel, Luke xi. 47-52.

NOTES.

**29.** Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets and garnish the sepulchres

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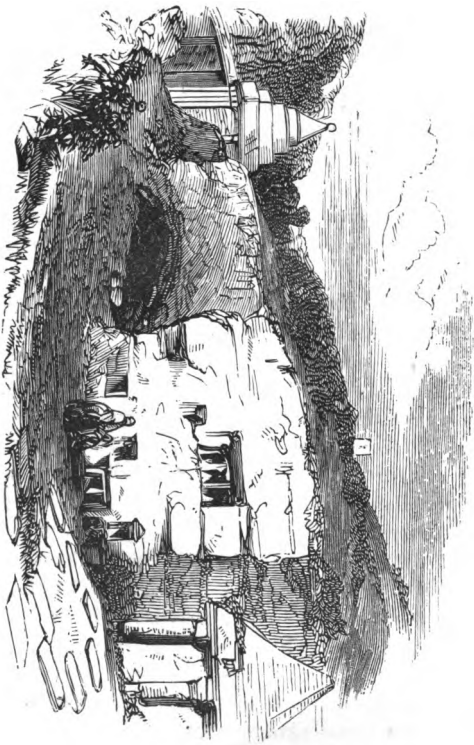
**29.** *Woe unto you*—This is the eighth and last woe. Compare the eighth blessing (Matt. v. 10) and our Lord's application of it to the disciples (Matt. v. 11, 12), "Blessed are ye, . . . for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." *Tombs*—The Jewish tombs were chambers cut out of the rocky sides of the hills, around the walls of which were hewn niches or graves, into which the bodies were shoved, and the opening closed or sealed with a stone. The present so-called Tombs of the Prophets are in the western flank of Mount Olives. It seems to have been a natural cavern improved by art. The chambers are cut into the hill, somewhat in the shape of a half wheel, the diameter being inward, the circumference, which is toward the entrance, being a gallery some 140 feet in extent, into which twenty-seven of these graves (*loculi*) open. It is probably one of the most ancient of the sepulchres about Jerusalem, and yet is not older than the time of the Maccabees. The national impulse in the direction of building tombs for the prophets may have been given by the act of Simon Maccabeus in erecting a monument for his family at Modin. This Josephus describes (*Ant.*, Bk. xiii., ch. 6, § 6) as a very large monument of white and polished stone, raised to a great height so as to be seen a great way off. It was surrounded by cloisters set upon pillars, each cut from one single stone. Besides this, he built seven pyramids for his parents and brethren, one for each of them, which were made very surprising both for their largeness and beauty. These monuments were standing in the time of the historian, and so of course in the days of Jesus. Certainly our Lord's classifying these Jews as belonging to the

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**29.** Compare with Matt. v. 10-12, and show the difference between persecutors and persecuted. Describe Jewish tombs. State the difference between *build* and *garnish*. Distinction between *prophets* and *righteous*.

\* 1871 had fifty-three Sabbaths.





**Sepulchres of the Prophets. Tomb of Zacharias.**



of the righteous, **30**. And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. **31**. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto

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generation of tomb-builders was therefore according to the facts of history. *Garnish*—Implying that they did not build these, but repaired the works of predecessors. *Righteous*—Men who were great public benefactors, as soldiers, priests or kings, or who had fame for sanctity, although not prophets. . . . **30, 31**. *If we had been, etc.*—If not by words, yet their acts in honoring the deeds and perpetuating the memory of men whom their fathers dishonored and cut off implied this. And you, reader, who have felt your blood rise angrily against the Jews, have not you, as you read the story of the cross, again and again in heart crucified the Son of God afresh? How little one knows the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of his own heart! *Wherefore*—By these very acts and words praising themselves, but condemning while acknowledging their fathers, they made a visible and audible testimonial that they were the children of prophet-murderers. The emphasis is on *killed*. The Jews were very sensitive in the matter of an honorable ancestry, and yet Jesus put them before themselves in the light of men building lasting monuments to the infamy of their ancestors, and so (according to their own views) of themselves. As though a man who had great pride in his good blood and noble family should be convicted of boasting publicly that many of his ancestors had been *hanged* for murder. We may imagine the chagrin and rage of the Pharisees when their pretended piety, shown by pretended veneration for the pious dead, was proved to have wrought only a pompous memorial of their own shame. Thus hypocrisy condemns itself. How many imitate these Pharisees in glorying only in their shame! Making tombs for the murdered prophets did not undo the wrong nor avert the wrath of God. By living godly lives, by honoring those sent unto *them*, they should have brought forth fruits meet

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**30**. Show that their acts implied such thoughts. What do you think of the conduct of the Jews who crucified Jesus? Would you have done so? Do you do similar wrong now? Heb. vi. 6. **31**. What were the feelings of Jews as to an honorable ancestry? How did their tomb-building witness against themselves? What effect would this have upon their minds?

yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. **32.** Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. **33.** *Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the*

for repentance. . . . **32.** *Fill ye up then*—"As the individual man may fill up the measure of forbearance granted to him by God and thus come to destruction, so may a people, viewed as a body, or, as it were, a larger individual. In this point of view the Redeemer designates the sin of Israel as *one collective sin*, commenced in the fathers and brought to its climax in the dark deeds of the Pharisees toward the Lord."—OLSHAUSEN. These words of our Lord (1) account for the often seeming prosperity of the wicked; they are spared because their measure of sin is not filled. See Gen. xv. 16. (2) They show that the power and sway of the wicked is limited by God, who overrules man's wrath. (3) The dreadful character of sin; it is a *filling up* of a measure from which no guilty act is lost. Our sins *live* to witness against us. (4) The awful peril of the impenitent sinner—*the cup may be nigh full*. The great responsibility involved in our civil and social relations—"Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children." Yet the visitation would not come did not the children themselves *fill up the measure* so that it ran over with wrath. The measure can only be emptied by taking in Christ, who drives out the sin. Lord, spare me! . . . **33.** *Ye serpents*—"This verse repeats almost verbatim the first denunciation of the Baptist (Matt. iii. 7) in this the last discourse of the Lord, thus denoting the unchanged state of these men, on whom the whole preaching of repentance had now been expended."—ALFORD. This fact shows how fully they deserved these severe words. *How can ye*

What did Jesus thus show their pretended piety to be? In what way do men often imitate these Pharisees in this tomb-building? How alone could they have averted the national guilt? **32.** In what way were these men filling up the measure of their fathers' guilt? Were they responsible for this filling up? How do these words account for the seeming prosperity of wicked men? Show from them that the power of the wicked is limited. How do they show the dreadful character of sin? The peril of the impenitent? The responsibility involved in civil and social relations? How only could the measure have been emptied or kept unfilled? ~~Apply~~ Apply this text to the *closing of the year*. **33.** What facts justified these severe

damnation of hell? **34.** Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and *some* of them ye shall kill and crucify, and *some* of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: **35.** That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. **36.** Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this

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*escape*, since ye will not fly through Me the only Way? . . . **34.** *Wherefore*—Since ye *will* fill up the measure, I will not now hinder you—nay, will hasten your condemnation. So, when Pharaoh had hardened his own heart beyond remedy, God hardened his heart yet more, that his doom might be hastened and be so accomplished as to bring forth the greatest glory to Jehovah. Yet these messengers *might have been* the savers of life to them also, as they were to many who had received their word. *Prophets*—“Who are taught by special revelation, as David. *Wise men*—Who have an habitual taste for the true and the good, as Solomon. These are midway between prophets and scribes. *Scribes*—Who illustrate and apply the remains of the prophets and wise men, as Ezra. In these last the character is for the most part *acquired*; in wise men, *innate*; in prophets, *inspired*.”—BENGEL. Surely the godly Sabbath-school teacher may find himself included among these! *Ye shall kill*—All the apostles died violent deaths, save John. Peter was crucified, and, as to scourging and persecuting, see 2 Cor. xi. 23–25. . . . **35, 36.** *That upon you may come, etc.*—That is, the heaped-up wrath of ages should find its “day of wrath” during that generation; the accumulated guilt of the nation should then have its final punishment, and should break upon a people whose unparalleled iniquity invited and justified their doom. “*From Abel to Zacharias*, the first and last martyrs mentioned in the Old Testament, was a proverbial expression, including all the martyrs within these ex-

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terms? **34.** Who were referred to here? How was this fulfilled? What is the distinction between *prophets, wise men* and *scribes*? **35, 36.** Where was Abel killed? Where *Zacharias*? 2 Chron. xxiv. 20–22. What testi-

generation. **37.** O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gath-

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tremes."—OWEN. *Zacharias*—In 2 Chron. xxiv. 20-22, called also, in accord with Jewish usage, the son (*i. e.*, the grandson) of Jehoiada. "He was killed in the priests' court, where the altar of burnt offerings was. Abel also was killed *by his offering*."—ALFORD. "As the Saviour takes the two examples of unrighteously shed blood from the first and last book of the Old Testament canon, He gives testimony for the Scriptures of the Old Testament as being a whole."—OOSTERZEE. . . . **37.** O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!—Even in his wrath how tenderly our Lord remembers mercy! "Ridicule is unknown to compassionate love, for the broad contrasts which are food for the scoffer are in truth the tokens of vast calamities, marking the lamentable disproportion between what we are and what we might have been. Thus we shall find this terrible discourse closing with a tender lament."—PRESSENSE. *Thou that killest the prophets*—Thus they had despised God's best gifts, the men commissioned to call them to eternal life. How our hearts rejoice, in the warm glow of the *happy Christmas* times, over the gifts of our earthly friends! We do not despise them. How gladly the children gather about the Christmas tree, and how gratefully they take the gifts of "good St. Nicholas!" They do not despise them. Yet the good Father, who *gave* his only Son (John iii. 16), how many forget! He who is the *Gift* of God (John iv. 10), the holy child Jesus, how many reject! And Christ's own friends, ministers and teachers, who come bringing the heavenly gifts that hang from the Tree of Life (Rev. xxii. 2), how many neglect and despise! Remember the doom of those who despised God's prophets of old. Stop, think, pray! Maybe this closing year fills up the measure of your mercy and your sin. *Would I have gathered*—Teacher, pastor, learn from Jesus—(1) the *nature*—"gathered,"

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mony does Jesus give here as to the Old Testament canon? **37, 38, 39.** How does Jesus here show his love? What are some of God's best gifts to you? Why are the ministers and Sunday-school teachers among his good gifts? Why is Jesus his best gift? When and where was Jesus born?

ereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not! **38.** Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. **39.** For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!

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etc.—of your work among the child-souls. (2) The *disposition*—“I would”—which you are to bring to it—longing desire over souls. (3) The *spirit* in which you are to *prosecute* it—“how often!” (4) The carnal obstinacy which *opposes* you—“Ye would not.” O Lord God, hasten the day of thy power, that our little people may be willing to turn to Thee through Jesus! . . . **38.** *Your house*—The city. . . . **39.** *Till ye shall say*—Shall it ever be? *Blessed*—Yea, for He bringeth “on earth peace, good-will toward men.”

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#### SCHOLARS' DIRECTORY.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of THE LORD!”

THEMES.—*For Thought*: The duty of the scholar to receive the word of the minister and teacher as the word of Jesus Christ. *For Prayer*: Lord, teach me to know the measure of my days! help me to seize thy offered mercy and to shun thy threatened wrath! *For Life*: Who hath believed our report? Have my words been this year a savor of life or of death?

CATECHISM.—Q. 88. What are the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption? A. The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption are his ordinances, especially the word, sacraments and prayer, all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation. (Review Q. 90.)

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Why did God *give* Him, and for what? John iii. 16. How should you receive Him? How receive those who are his ambassadors? What lesson for the Christian worker from Christ's words, How often would I have gathered, etc.?

## SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK.

**BLACKBOARD.**—The following is an appropriate lesson for the closing of the year. It is based upon vs. 32, for thoughts upon which see the NOTES. Four cups or goblets are to be drawn upon the board, inscribed severally as below. Draw No. 1 in yellow (golden mercies), representing it as running over. Ps. xxiii. 5. No. 2 in green, the fitting emblem of the days of youth. Yet how quickly the *green* is changed to the *sere*! No one can see inside the cup to know whether or no it is full, but it is filling. Each year, day, moment, the allotted measure of days rises nearer and nearer the brim. See Ps. xxxix. 4; Job. xvi. 22; Ps. xc. 12. No. 3 in red; the question, *Is it full?* suggests the line of thought. No. 4 in white, the usual emblem of righteousness. Speak of treasure laid up in heaven; recall the duties of the past year, and ask for the verdict of conscience concerning them; speak of the Lord our righteousness, through whom alone all our works are accepted, by whose merits our shortcomings in duty are made complete, who is "made unto us righteousness" (1 Cor. i. 30), and who presents us at the throne clad in the fine linen which is the righteousness of the saints. Rev. xix. 8. For an appropriate lesson upon obedience to the calls of God, suggested by the figure of vs. 37, the gathering of the children together as the "hen gathereth her chickens under her wings," see the author's "OBJECT AND OUTLINE TEACHING," p. 361.

## THE FOUR MEASURES.

|                |               |                    |
|----------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 1.             | 2.            | 3.                 |
| OF MERCY.      | OF MY DAYS.   | OF GOD'S WRATH.    |
| [Fig. of Cup.] | [Cup.]        | [Cup.]             |
| Overflowing.   | <i>What?</i>  | <i>Is it full?</i> |
|                | 4.            |                    |
|                | OF DUTY DONE. |                    |
|                | [Cup.]        |                    |
|                | <i>What?</i>  |                    |



## A P P E N D I X .

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### A.

SYNAGOGUE, p. 261.—Some travelers have imagined that in the interesting ruins of the “white synagogue” at Tell Hum we have the remains of the very synagogue built by the Roman centurion (Lk. vii. 4, 5) in which the memorable discourse (Jn. vi.) of Jesus was delivered, and in which He was wont to worship during His abode in Capernaum. The following description is by Captain WILSON, *Recovery Jerusalem*, p. 268: “The synagogue, built entirely of white limestone, must once have been a conspicuous object, standing out from the dark basaltic background; it is now nearly level with the surface, and its capitals and columns have been for the most part carried away or burned into lime. The original building is 74 feet 9 inches long, by 56 feet 9 inches wide; it is built north and south, and at the southern end has three entrances. In the interior we found many of the pedestals of the columns in their original positions, and several capitals of the Corinthian order buried in the rubbish. There were also blocks of stone which had evidently rested on the columns and supported wooden rafters.”

### B.

HOUSE, p. 261.—The following (from the same authority, p. 271) is from the description of the remains of Capernaum: “Many of the dwelling-houses are in a tolerably perfect state, the walls being in some cases six feet high, and as they are probably the same class of houses as that in which our Saviour dwelt, a description of them may be interesting. They are

generally square, of different sizes; the largest measured was thirty feet, and had one or two columns down the centre to support the roof, which appears to have been flat, as in the modern Arab houses. The walls are about two feet thick, built of masonry or of loose blocks of basalt. There is a low doorway in the centre of one of the walls, and each house has windows 12 inches high and  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide. In one or two cases the houses were divided into four chambers." Dr. ROBINSON (Res., iii., p. 69) gives this description of a modern Syrian house, which is the more interesting, as the author was at the time in the region of the house in which Jesus was hidden when sought by the Syro-phœnician woman :

"The high wind and cold prevented us from pitching our tent; the thermometer stood at  $51^{\circ}$  Fahr. We were therefore taken to the house of the priest Elias, an old man of some seventy years, who had been the priest of this Maronite village (Kefr Bér'im) for forty-five years. His house was a large one, and he had twenty-five persons in his family, including women and children. The ground floor was occupied by the family-rooms and stables, and there were other stables around the yard. Dismounting in the court, we entered by a small and low door, and crept up a low and very narrow flight of steps in the wall to the large upper room which served as parlor and guest-chamber. It occupied the whole upper floor, and was spanned by three arches, on which rested the beams of the roof. It had three windows, but without glass, and the shutters of two were kept closed on account of the wind, thus rendering parts of the room quite dark. There were fires in every room; in ours the hearth was in the middle of the floor, and was made of clay in the form of a pan or basin. On one side were carpets and cushions, where we, as guests, were seated or stretched. On the other side and around the fire sat our host, the sheikh of the village and other neighbors. There was of course no thought of our being left alone; they all remained while we took our dinner, which our host helped out by bringing bread and goat's-milk butter."

# INDEX.

**ABBREVIATIONS.**\*—A., answer; Ant., antiquities; A. V., authorized (King James) version; Bib., Bible; bk., book; ch., church; chn., Christian; *fig.* shows that the word is used as a figure or metaphor; Gr., Greek, showing a different, or different shading of meaning from the English Bible; *illn.* indicates an illustration of the word; Id., the same; Jn., John; L., Lesson; Lk., Luke; Matt. or Mt., Matthew; Mk., Mark; N. T., New Testament; N. B., Note; O. T., Old Testament; p., page; pp., pages; par., parable; Q., question; qs., questions; sq. or sqq., and the following; vs., verse; vs., verses; wk., week.

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