

rock he seats himself. The people come closer. He begins to teach them. He opens his mouth and says, "Blessed" — are who? Does that proud Dives up at the front silently reflect, "He will say, 'Blessed are the rich?'" It is humble Lazarus, hiding in the rear, purse-poor and soul-poor, who is comforted by the words, "blessed are the poor in spirit." Here is a bowed mother, her fatherless children clinging to her robes. O how empty the great world seems! "Blessed are they that mourn," says Christ. That "meek" man over at the left, he finds comfort in the beatitude that gives the inheritance of the earth. Here is a group of weary pilgrims, hungry and athirst. They have come from afar to find the great Master. Jesus knows it, and he says, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness." That man whom you may have seen this very day halting on his way to the great gathering to show mercy to a neighbor who is his debtor, or to the sick, dumb beast appealing for sympathy, finds a reward in the saviour's promise to the merciful. Another man is tempted to leave the way of the pure in heart, and he is encouraged, if steadfast, in the assurance that he shall see the heavenly Father. This woman near us came from a home where she tried to say, and

dissension, words of forgiveness and reconciliation. She has her reward in the blessing on the peacemaker. Are there not those before the Saviour who, because following him, have been followed by the frown of the bigot and the sneer of the frivolous? To such Christ gives strength for the carrying of the heavy cross when he pronounces a blessing on the persecuted. He would stimulate his hearers. He pictures before them the worthless salt-heap, whose savor has gone. From his seat, perchance, he saw on a neighboring elevation a cluster of homes. He points it out. Are not they the city set on a hill? Does he think of the home lights flashing down through the darkness of the night? How they sparkle! How they guide and encourage the traveler! Especially, how they cheer all within the house! His words take the hearers within the home. As he speaks they see the golden flame of the evening lamp set upon its stand. Is it to be covered and hidden under a measure? Its rays are to stream all over the home. They are to go forth at every window. So believers are to shine and light a wandering world into the path of the heavenly Father's service and the heavenly Father's blessing.

A. D. 28.]

LESSON VIII. JESUS AND THE LAW.

[Aug. 21.]

Matt. 5. 17-26. [Commit to memory verses 17-19.]

FULFILLED.



17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.
18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.
19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

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

21 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old

General Statement.

The first question which every Jew would ask concerning Jesus of Nazareth was, "What is his attitude toward the law?" Hence after the opening of his sermon the Saviour showed the relation of the new covenant to the old. To the word "law" as used by the Jews there was a very wide meaning. Originally it meant the ordinances contained in the five books of Moses, which were the supreme authority in the nation on both sacred and secular matters. But the scribes of the later ages had made many additions and refinements to the sacred text, in the way of comments and explanations. These had never been reduced to writing, but were passed down by tradition, and had at length come to be regarded as possessing equal authority with the Scriptures. Thus "the law," as understood by the people to whom Jesus was speaking, was a complicated network of precepts and precedents, of minute rules touching every detail of life; overshadowing and in some instances contradicting the prin-

ciples of the Old Testament. There was the deepest interest among the people concerning the position which Jesus would take with regard to this law.

Radical and revolutionary spirits were clamoring for the abolition of all the Mosaic regulations, and conservative minds clung to every syllable as the only hope of Judaism. In the multitude upon the mount, every shade of opinion was represented. Jesus therefore proceeded to show the relations of his kingdom to the old theocracy. He declared that the spirit of the law was divine and unchangeable, and that the Gospel aimed only to perpetuate in higher and nobler forms its essence; but that the letter of many of its regulations was transient, and, having fulfilled its purpose, should give place to more permanent principles.

With one breath he swept away the whole superstructure of rabbinical traditions, and with an authoritative "I say unto you" established the foundation of the New Covenant in love to God and man.

26 Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verse 17. Think not. The report had already been circulated by the Pharisees that Jesus was an enemy of the law. It arose, as false reports frequently arise, from either a misunderstanding or a wilful perversion of his teachings. **The law, or the prophets.** The two great divisions of the Old Testament. "The

law" was the Pentateuch, the "prophets" were all the rest of the volume, of which most of the historical books were called "former prophets." Yet this expression, "the law, or the prophets," in the lips of Jesus was not used in the precise meaning of the same words when spoken by the scribes. They included in