



LESSON V.—JULY 29, 1906.

Jesus Dines With a Pharisee.

Luke xiv., 1-14.

Golden Text.

He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.—Luke xiv., 11.

Home Readings.

Monday, July 23.—Luke xiv., 1-14.
 Tuesday, July 24.—Luke xi., 37-54.
 Wednesday, July 25.—John ii., 1-11.
 Thursday, July 26.—Luke v., 27-39.
 Friday, July 27.—Luke xix., 1-10.
 Saturday, July 28.—Matt. xi., 16-34.
 Sunday, July 29.—Acts xi., 1-18.

(By Davis W. Clark.)

Asceticism finds no encouragement in the example of Jesus. Sociability was a conspicuous trait in His character. It gave a handle to His enemies, who described Him as a wine-bibber and gluttonous. He is not known to have ever declined a social invitation. If bidden to banquet or wedding, He went. Nor was He a spectral figure. He marred no festivity with melancholy air or disapproving frown. He filled well the function of guest, adorning and beautifying with His presence and miracles the amenities of life.

A foremost Pharisee, about to give a lordly banquet, covets, as an ornament of the occasion, the grace of Jesus' presence. He will fain garnish his feast with the young Rabbi's novel and superb table-talk.

The vestibule of the Pharisee's chateau is the scene of a miracle of deed, as the banquet-hall afterward echoes to a miracle of word. An unfortunate creature lies there, his skin distended to the point of rupture by the watery collection beneath it. Jesus screens not His eyes to a disgusting sight, which would spoil the appetite of the average voluptuary. He tosses no small coin to the sufferer, as other guests are doing. But before He can bestow that gift which will be of more value than silver and gold, He must forestall the deadly criticism of the Pharisees, which He knew to be lying in wait for him. It is not necessary to suppose, as some do, that the sick man had been placed in Jesus' way with a malicious purpose. He was there, and the critics of the Master saw their opportunity. They seem to have Him 'coming and going'; for it was a desperately bad case, and He might ignominiously fail of a cure; and if He succeeded, He would, in his very success, have flagrantly violated the Sabbath.

Jesus manfully takes the Sabbath-desecration horn of the dilemma; for He intends to heal the sick man. He springs His snare in His categorical questions, 'Is it allowable to work a cure on the Sabbath-day, or not?' Actions speak louder than words. Jesus answers His own question by an instantaneous and complete cure of the sick man. After this benevolent parenthesis He clinches the nail which He had driven in His first question by asking another: 'Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on a Sabbath-day?' Amid ominous silence the prescribed ablutions are attended to, the festive cloak from the host's wardrobe is thrown about each guest, and at length the banquet-hall is reached.

Now is witnessed the disgraceful scramble for place at table, as for the chief seats on the synagogue. Although a concrete act is specified, reference is in fact to the subjective state of which the act is a true ex-

pression. The doing of the deed (for example the taking of the lowest place at table) without the appropriate subjective state would either be destitute of significance or it would be an instance of hypocrisy. The outward manner is the expression of an inward condition.

Jesus' words may also be understood as picturing in an ironical way Pride's defeat of itself. Then, too, he may be placing a premium upon a prudential course of conduct when even though the motive is not the highest, a species of self-control is developed which may finally contribute to the evolution of a truly noble character.

ANALYSIS AND KEY.

1. Sociability a trait of Jesus.
 Asceticism no support in Him.
 Declined no invitation.
 No spectral figure either.
 Filled well the function of guest.
2. Specific Instance.
 Guest of a Pharisee who covets His table talk.
3. Miracle in the vestibule.
 Jesus does not avoid the sufferer.
 Does not toss a small coin.
 Determines to heal.
4. Criticism forestalled.
 'Is it allowable to work a cure on the Sabbath?'
 Answers His question by curing.
 If ox or ass—how much more a man?
5. The competition for place deprecated.
 A word to guests—
 And hosts.

THE TEACHER'S LANTERN.

Eyes of Jesus were alert for physical sufferers. None escaped His sympathetic glance, few His healing power. Entering with the happy party to the high social function, He saw and paused and helped the unfortunate. How sweet to believe with our dear Quaker bard, Whittier:

'Warm, sweet, tender, yet
 A present help is He;
 And Love has still its Olivet,
 And Faith its Galilee.
 The healing of the seamless dress
 Is by our bed of pain.
 We touch Him in life's throng and press,
 And we are whole again.'

The irrational literalism of the Pharisee never had a more complete expose than in that chief of Pharisees' vestibule. Because the ass and the ox are expressly mentioned in the law, and man is not, therefore the former can be extricated from trouble on the Sabbath, while the latter can not be. Jesus, of set purpose, publicly and repeatedly crushed the hollow shell of the Pharisaic Sabbath, but He never broke the golden thread of that Sabbath which God made for man.

An unseemly scramble for precedence may yet be seen in social life. Who shall be first? Who shall sit at the captain's table on shipboard? Who is 'the first lady in the land?' What trifles for those who are seeking the evolution of the largest life possible in this world, and are consciously steering for worlds eternal!

Jesus took the occasion to put forth a parable 'teaching humility,' the moral of which is that he who exalts himself is abased, and vice versa,—a truth perpetually exemplified and confirmed in current history.

Religion needs extension to the whole man—body, as well as soul and spirit. The Infinite Father wills His children to be whole, hale, hearty. There is no virtue in pallidity. A popular health magazine bears the motto, 'Weakness a Crime; don't be a criminal.' A pure soul in tune with God can pour healing and vivifying streams upon the body, part of which it is, and receive in turn and kind from the body. It is time to discard the poetical platitude that the body is a shack of a tenement to be quit with joy. Such a notion of God's handiwork is irreverent.

Jesus gave the sick man health. Better

than silver and gold. He put him in the way of independently making his own living,—always the best form of charity. A boy toiling with his press, and failing to get a fair impression, called a printer-friend to his aid, who said: 'Your types need to be 'justified.' They need to be put on their feet.' Peter and John set the lame man on his feet, and that was better than a lapful of gold.

To the host of the hour Jesus propounded the duty of disinterested munificence toward the poor and afflicted. No other form of hospitality is so thoroughly divested of the element of self-interest.

C. E. Topic.

Sunday, July 29.—Topic—Gardner, and missions to Latin America. II. Cor. xi., 23-30.

Junior C. E. Topic.**GOD'S RAVENS.**

Monday, July 23.—God made the birds. Gen. i., 20-22.

Tuesday, July 24.—God feeds the birds. Matt. vi., 26.

Wednesday, July 25.—They are God's birds. Ps. i., 10, 11.

Thursday, July 26.—Lessons from birds. Job. xii., 7-10.

Friday, July 27.—Songs among the branches. Ps. civ., 12.

Saturday, July 28.—The raven messengers. I. Kings xvii., 1-4.

Sunday, July 29.—Topic—God's ravens, I. Kings xvii., 5, 6; Luke xii., 24. (Band of Mercy meeting).

One Danger.

This is not an imaginary one. It is the danger of becoming stereotyped. Here and there a school is enlarging and applying better methods, but too many are satisfied and go on in the same way in which they began a quarter or half century ago. There is too much dry rot. Modern in everything but the work of the Lord. What a field for real, practical work the Sunday school affords. Look at some of them: Sunday school missionary work, Sunday school giving and Sunday school education embraced as they are in our modern organizations under such titles as Home Department, Cradle-Roll, House-to-House Visitation, Decision Day, Teachers' meetings, Normal Classes and Institutes. We have not yet begun to get hold of and use our real sources of power and effectiveness.—'S. S. Teacher.'

Teach Jesus Christ.

In all your teaching honor the Holy Spirit, and make much of Christ, for this is what you are teaching for. Teach the Lord Jesus Christ, who abounds in every page of the Bible, and for whom your class is hungering and thirsting. There is not a scholar in your class who is not longing for more of Christ, and more of the Holy Spirit, and they will all hail you with joy, if you can show them Christ, their elder Brother, and the Holy Spirit, their daily Companion. That is just what God has given you your class for; not to teach geography nor history, but to bring Christ out of every verse in the Scripture for them, so that each one at the close of the lesson will say: 'I am so glad that I came here to-day; Christ is my Saviour, and I have life through His blood.'

Never be satisfied with your teaching. Be filled with the determination to succeed. Teach them so that every member will have something new every Sunday. God says, 'I have set thee a watchman,' and a watchman never sleeps. Through every day of the week let class be always on your mind, and give every minute of leisure to it. Talent is work, nothing but work, easier to some than to others, but still nothing but work.—'Presbyterian.'