

## FOR THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

## International S. S. Lesson.

## LESSON IX.—CHRIST'S TESTIMONY TO JOHN.—DEC. 2.

Luke vii : 24-35.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Behold I send my messenger before thy face."  
—Luke vii : 27.CENTRAL TRUTH.—Christ's Condemnation.  
Mission, 24-27.ANALYSIS.—THE Greatness of John, 28, 29.  
Rejection, 30-35.

HARMONY.—Matt. xi : 2-10.

TIME AND PLACE.—Summer of A.D. 28, According to several authorities before last lesson. Somewhere in Galilee. John was a prisoner in the Castle Macherus.

THE MISSION OF JOHN, vs. 24-27.—John the Baptist was lying in prison in the Castle Macherus. His work had ended in apparent failure; little wonder it is that he felt discouraged. Doubts arose in his mind as to the reality of his mission; "Was this man whom he had heralded as the Lamb of God, indeed the Messiah?" Thus he questioned, and questioned at the right source. He sent messengers to Christ Himself to ask "Was he the one that should come, or looked they for another?" And the Master replies, "Tell John how the sick, and blind and maimed are healed; and how good news is preached to the poor. And tell him also that he who is not offended in me is blessed." Sweet message to the noble hearted captive.

When the messengers were gone on their way back to John, Christ turns to the multitudes who had probably heard the question, and declares to them who the Baptist was and what relation he bore to Himself. After showing them that when they flocked to John's ministry it was not because of the beauty of his language, or the richness of his apparel, he brings home to their minds with new force the popular belief that John was a prophet, and the herald of the Messiah who had been foretold by Malachi.

THE GREATNESS OF JOHN, vs. 28, 29.—To have the commendation of Christ is to have the praise most to be desired. The great men of the land hated John, but the Master said, "Among them that are born of women, there is none greater than John." John was the last and greatest of the prophets. Greatest because of his mission. To him was given the mighty work of making ready for the coming of the king. Greatest because of his personality. John was a completely consecrated man; in his own words the keynote of his life was, "He must increase, but I must decrease," Jno. iii : 30. Notwithstanding all this Christ says, "he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." Not in character, or personality; but in privilege, and mission. John lived under law; we live under grace. John could preach only repentance; we can preach an uttermost salvation.

THE REJECTION OF JOHN, vs. 30-35.—The Pharisees and lawyers rejected Messiah's herald, and so doing rejected the Messiah. The messenger had come to them in the garb and manner of life of an ascetic, preaching a rugged, uncompromising call to repentance; and the rulers of the people hardened their hearts, turned their backs on him, and sneered, "He hath a devil." The Messiah came as one of the people; He lived their life, He wore their dress, and eat their food, with all opposing sin in every form and practically demonstrating the possibility of being in the world, yet not of it; but the rulers would have none of Him, and now the sneer half lie half truth, was, "Behold, a gluttonous man, and a wine bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." So it will ever be. He who is in love with sin will hate righteousness and truth, no matter how it is presented.

NOTES ON THE TEXT.—V. 24. *A reed*.—An Arab told a friend of mine that the "reed shaken by the wind" was the musical reed pipe made to vibrate with the wind blown into it. Did you go out to hear a musician discoursing sweet sounds?—*Pelouët*. V. 27. *It is written*.—Mal. iii. 1. V. 29. *Justified God*.—Bore witness that God was just. V. 31. *Like unto children*.—The only amusement of children described in the Bible.

## Application and Illustration.

## WHAT CAN I DO?

TAKE MY DOUBTS TO CHRIST.—John in his time of doubt sent messengers to the Master. When doubt seizes our minds a messenger of prayer can reach the ear of Christ and receive His gracious answer, "Blessed is he that is not offended in Me." Luther says, "At one time I was sorely vexed and tried by my own sinfulness, by the wickedness of the world, and by the dangers that beset the church. One morning I saw my wife dressed in mourning. Surprised, I asked her who had died. 'Do you not know?' she replied. 'God in heaven is dead.' 'How can you talk such nonsense, Katie?' I said. 'How can God die? Why, he is immortal, and will live through all eternity.' 'Is that really true?' she asked. 'Of course,' I said, still not perceiving what she was aiming at, 'how can you doubt it? As surely as there is a God in heaven, so sure is it that he can never die.' 'And yet,' she said, 'though you do not doubt that, yet you are so hopeless and discouraged.' Then I observed what a wise woman my wife was, and realized my sadness."

REALIZE MY GREATNESS, V. 28.—If I am one of the members of Christ's Kingdom, I am, on the Master's own word, "greater than John." Greater because my privileges are greater. I have a union with Christ and a power through Him, that John never experienced. I have a knowledge of a salvation of which he knew nothing; a

message to deliver to mankind far greater than was his. What a responsibility rests upon me then. If greater than John I must do a greater work than he or I have failed to live up to my privilege and calling.

GATHERED GOLD.—The proof of Christianity is in its beneficent effects on the world.

If the Lord our God is a jealous God, He is jealous also for the honor of His own children, v. 24.

Soft raiment is alright if the softness does not get into the man. Divine wisdom will "justify" as wise those who, by humble faith "justify" it.

SUGGESTED HYMNS.—"All my doubts I give to Jesus." "Oh to be nothing!" "Look away to Jesus." "To the work, to the work." "A blessing for you."

## CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR.

## Daily Readings.

First Day—The choice of wisdom—1 Kings iii. 5-15.

Second Day—"The principal thing"—Prov. iv. 1-4.

Third Day—"Her paths are peace"—Prov. iii. 12-25.

Fourth Day—Her summons—Prov. i. 20-33.

Fifth Day—"The Lord giveth wisdom"—Prov. ii. 1-9.

Sixth Day—As little children—Luke x. 17-22; xviii. 15-17.

Seventh Day—TRUE WISDOM; GETTING IT, USING IT.—Jas. iii. 13-18.

PRAYER MEETING TOPIC, Dec. 2.—"True wisdom; getting it; using it," Jas. iii. 13-18. Wisdom is knowledge in action, so the quality of the wisdom depends upon the quality of the knowledge of which it is the active phase. In the passage before us we have two kinds of wisdom described; that which is from below and that which is from above. The former is known by producing envyings and strife, bitter and useless argument, sophistry against the truth; it is characterized as "earthly, sensual, devilish." The latter is evidenced by its purity and freedom from false sophistry; by its peaceableness, being willing, so long as truth is not imperilled, to concede a point rather than quarrel over it; by its gentleness, not pounding in the truth as with a hammer, but pressing it home with the hand of love; by its approachableness being patient in the hearing of others; by its good fruits the best test of all; by its fairness and sincerity. How desirous is such a wisdom! Yet it is the privilege of every Christian to possess it. If you have Christ, in Him you have wisdom, for is He not "made unto us wisdom" (1 Cor. i. 30.)

REFERENCE PASSAGES:—Ps. li. 6; cxix. 97-104, Prov. i. 20-23, ii. 6-9; Eccl. ii. 26; Dan. ii. 19-23; Luke xii. 12-15; 1 Cor. i. 22-24; Eph. i. 15-18; Col. ii. 2, 3; Jas. i. 17.

## The Missionary Extension Movement.

At a meeting of the Board of Control of this movement held in Chicago on November 1st, it was decided to recommend that each state and province have a general missionary committee for the local management of the extension course of meetings, and that in the future the United Society have control of the movement, the headquarters being moved from Chicago to Boston. At this meeting also the resignation of Mr. L. S. Mershon was regretfully accepted. While Mr. Mershon finds it impossible to give up his whole time to the work he will still be ready to do all circumstances will permit. On December 6th he will address the Christian Endeavorers of Toronto at their annual meeting; no one should miss this opportunity of hearing him. This meeting will probably be the most enthusiastic gathering of Endeavorers ever held in Toronto. Special arrangements are being made to secure hearty singing.

What do you say to a week of self-denial at Christmas? On a persons birthday we present that person with gifts, except in one case, and then, strangely enough, we present everybody else with gifts. Why not make a change this year? Instead of giving costly presents to our friends and dear ones, let us deny ourselves some of this pleasure and see what we can save from our usual Christmas week expenditure for the Master's cause. If every Presbyterian C. E. in Ontario could by self-denial save fifty cents by the end of the year, the total sum given to missions would amount from that alone to \$10,000, more than the amount contributed by all Ontario by \$2,000! *It can be done, will it?*

Comrades, hear the voice of Jesus  
Pleading for your lives to-day,  
Will you make a full surrender?  
Own your rightful sovereign's away?

Pledged to glad unceasing service,  
Loving Christ we plead Thy grace  
For the day of work is flying,  
And the night draws on apace,  
Soon our King returning, from us  
Our commissions will demand;  
Let us labor lest we meet Him  
Shamed, and with an empty hand.  
Comrades, then, be up and doing  
In Endeavor strong and free,  
Brother, sister, Christ is pleading,  
Oh, what will the answer be?

The heterodoxy to be most dreaded is the orthodoxy, which men put in the place of piety.