

teachings of the fourfold presentation of Jesus Christ.

Matthew keeps prominent the Messiahship of Jesus the King of the Jews, and confirms our faith in the Old Testament Scriptures.

Mark makes conspicuous, by impressive groupings of words of might, and deeds of miracle, the power of the King and His kingdom, and he addresses the Romans.

Luke points out the universality of the kingdom, and Jesus as "the Son of man," the King of men, appealing to the Greek.

John dwells on the spiritual glory of the King and His kingdom, together with the spiritual character of its subjects. Hence the central subject of the first three Gospels is

"THE KINGDOM OF GOD."

The eternal and imperishable blessing of this kingdom is LIFE (John x. 28). This is the ruling theme in John's Gospel. The disciples were absorbed with the first part of Christ's teaching, "The Kingdom;" while Christ, by His life and words and deeds, kept emphasizing the second part of the statement, "the kingdom of God."

These are some of the facts that will enable you to obtain a large and growing estimate of the person and teaching of Jesus Christ; and while you may not keep these points before an average class, they will, if filling your own mind and emotions, give unconscious power to your preparation and teaching for the quarter.

Note carefully that while the lessons of last quarter were largely consecutive and chronological, extending over ten months, this quarter on which we are entering passes over many important events found in Luke, chaps. x. to xviii. 18. Mark's aim is only incidental, his object being to show that their bearing on this kingdom of God in the earth, and in the human heart, can only be won by triumph in suffering and death.

To travel in this appointed pathway, Jesus leaves Capernaum, departs from Galilee, comes into the borders of Jordan (Pe ex), carefully instructs the Twelve, and skillfully confounds his enemies; so that from Mark viii. 27. to ix. 13 you have the great crisis in Christ's ministry.

THE FIRST LESSON

of the quarter firmly presents the social character of the kingdom of God—called in the Epistles "the family of God." This view is elicited by an answer to the ensnaring question of the Pharisees. The divine character and purity of the home and family life are vindicated by an appeal to the original law. Also the character of the kingdom is shown in the well-merited rebuke to the disciples in their discouragement of the children. Find the points of contrast and resemblance between the closing lesson of last quarter and the opening one of this, little children being in both. The lessons fall together in groups.

THE SECOND AND THIRD

are mutually illustrative of each other. The young man seeking "the eternal life" of the kingdom; the disciples selfishly seeking position in the kingdom. Eternal life is found not in rightful inheritance, but gracious gift—by self-surrender, submission, obedience. In the other case, the path of safety and promotion lies in obedient suffering and grateful service.

LESSONS FOURTH AND TENTH

have relations to each other. The experience of Bartimeus becomes typical of the experience of every son of the kingdom of God, and the miracle of giving sight becomes a parable of instruction in God's methods of working in His kingdom. Lesson tenth, in connection with the light of God's kingdom, gives us His summary of obligation, and His memorial example of the value of gifts to the cause of the kingdom, estimated not in current money, but in devotion of heart and sacrifice—Mark xii. 28-34.

LESSON FIFTH

is the central lesson of the course—there is the light of prophecy and recent history shining on it.

Christ's personal action and direction as to His entry into Jerusalem, claiming the kingdom in the name of God and of David, are deeply significant of His present position and illustrative of the lessons that follow. Read carefully the narrative given by each of the evangelists. Before the captivity, Isaiah points to such a claim—Isa. lxii. 11. On the return of the captives from Babylon, Zechariah notes it clearly—Zech. ix. 9. The light of the transfiguration, and the un-

conscious testimony of Bartimeus, "Thou Son of David, have mercy upon me"—all these considerations make the lesson very impressive.

LESSONS SIXTH, SEVENTH, EIGHTH AND TENTH cluster together, and should be used in illustration of each other. In lesson seventh, Christ's claim to the kingdom is questioned—Mark xi. 27-33. Hence the cursed nation symbolized in the fruitless tree, "Dried up from the roots." The answer to the disputed claim is given in Lesson eighth, in the form of a prophetic parable forecasting violence to the heir of the kingdom, and swift retribution to the murderers of the heir.

LESSONS NINTH AND TENTH

set forth the most diverse parties, and of most conflicting interests, uniting in their murderous intent on the death of Christ—the superstitiously religious Pharisees, the learned and influential Scribes, the cold and sceptical Sadducees, the political and unscrupulous Herodians.

The subjects of entanglement and controversy were—The Sabbath and its mode of observance, Obedience ceremonial and its importance; Marriage and Divorce, and its relation to future life; Taxes, and to whom paid. The relative importance of the several commandments of the law.

It is hardly necessary to say that this exercise, to be helpful to teachers, requires to be taught, as the mere lecture form will fail in securing the co-operation necessary to lodge the facts in the mind.

JOHN MCEWEN, Teacher.

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SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON XXIX.

July 15, 1882. SUFFERING AND SERVICE {Mark to 37-45.}

GOLDEN TEXT.—"The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."—Ver. 45.

TIME.—Not long after the last lesson; about ten days before the crucifixion.

PLACE.—On the last journey to Jerusalem, before Jesus reached Jericho.

PARALLEL.—Matt. 20: 17-28, with vers. 32-34; Luke 18: 31-34.

Notes and Comments.—Ver. 32. The first sentences of this verse would indicate that the disciples hung back from this last journey to Jerusalem; they knew the danger and dreaded the result; they were "amazed—afraid:" at and for Jesus; "took again:" (see Lessons for May 21 and June 11); "began to tell:" more fully than on the previous occasions, of His coming sufferings.

Vers. 33-34. "We go up:" to His death—then follows the details of the successive steps of the passion; "delivered unto the chief priests:" condemned to death—delivered to the Gentiles—mocked—scourged—spit upon—killed, Matthew says crucified; and yet plain as this was, and keenly as they felt the danger, they did not understand. Luke 18: 34—"it was hid from them:" by their own determined opinions respecting the Messiah; "the third day He shall rise again:" light after darkness, the completion of Christ's personal work for the salvation of the world.

Vers. 35, 36, 37. "James and John—came unto Him:" Matthew says—"the mother" came with them, and was apparently the speaker, as the reply is addressed to her. There is no contradiction, for the request was theirs, although their mother presented it. If their mother was, as is supposed, the sister of Mary, they were cousins of Jesus, and might think that they had a right to a place in His "glory;" or as Matt. "kingdom;" the ideas were one to them. Jesus had been speaking of "twelve thrones:" in the last Lesson, see Matt. 19: 28, and the minds of these two were fired with ambition. Lange lays stress on their confession of Christ involved in the request; it may have been so, but we think not. In the East, the highest place of honour was at the right hand of the king, and next to it that on his left.

Ver. 38. "Ye know not:" the position you covet is one of suffering—the cup is a bitter one, Matt. 26: 39, and the baptism is a baptism of fire, Luke 12: 50. How often we ask for things, ignorant of what the answer involves; so Newton, "I asked the Lord that I might grow." In asking to be with Him, they were asking to be made partakers of His sufferings.

Vers. 39, 40. "We can:" how ignorant they were of what they so rashly undertook, and yet the Lord accepted them—they should "drink of the cup:" "be baptized with the baptism:" should be partakers of His labours and sufferings. So James early had his baptism of blood, and John, al-

though he did not die a martyr's death, drank deeply of the cup of persecution and suffering. "But—not mine to give—for whom it is prepared:" there are many interpretations of this; to us it appears to mean this—the place of honour in My kingdom is not a gift to any individual specially, but for those who manifest most My spirit and love. Compare 1 Cor. 2: 9.

Ver. 41. "Ten:" "moved with indignation," so Matt. and R.V. here; they were jealous of this sought pre-eminence; the ten were as little praiseworthy as the two; and these petty strifes when the Master stood almost under the shadow of the cross!

Vers. 42, 43, 44. "Called:" this conversation and reproach of the two had been carried on apart. Jesus shows them their mistake by pointing out the difference between His kingdom and worldly (Gentile) ones; there, the essence of government was despotism; tyranny and arbitrary power marked the rule; but among them there was to be no such lordship, and that, as he had shown them before (see Lesson for June 18), the servant, the minister, he who was willing to be nothing, would be accounted the greatest; character, Christ-likeness, gives dignity in God's kingdom, "will be chiefest—servant of all."

Ver. 45. "For even (REV. "verily") the Son of man:" He came not to seek honour or authority, but to serve—his life was one of service—"and to give His life:" the crowning act of His service, "a ransom:" not merely a redemption price, but a vicarious sacrifice; so, as has been well said, "the cardinal virtue of humility is based upon the cardinal doctrine of the atonement."

HINTS TO TEACHERS.

PRELATORY.—The truths in this portion are so clear and evident that it is scarcely needed to utter a word of caution. The teacher who gives the least attention to this portion will find the lessons rich and full, such as he cannot well mistake. The central thought is, what constitutes true greatness in Christ's kingdom, the teachings of the Saviour on the point, and the practical illustration of His teachings in His own life.

WHAT AND HOW TO TEACH.

Topical Analysis.—(1.) The third and fullest announcement by Jesus of His sufferings and death (32-34.) (2.) The ambitious request of James and John (35-37.) (3.) The Saviour's teachings on true greatness (38-45.)

On the first topic, show that Jesus with His company was on the way to Jerusalem to keep the passover, that one which was to be for ever memorable as the occasion on which the true Paschal Lamb was sacrificed. The mind of His disciples is seen in the next topic, and is in strong contrast to that of Jesus Himself. They were looking for a manifestation of His power and a setting up of His kingdom; He, knowing what was in their hearts, tells them, more clearly than before, of His coming passion—betrayed, first by one of themselves, to the Jews, and again by the Jews to the Gentiles, to suffer a Gentile death. Teach here how the Saviour ever kept the end before Him, and how calmly He went onward to His death, and this because by His death He was to bring salvation to the world.

On the second topic, show that while the face of the Master was towards the place of suffering and death, with the shadow of the cross already upon Him, the disciples were looking, as before, to honour, power, worldly greatness; they could see only a temporal kingdom, with Christ as King and they in the highest positions, and in this spirit the two sons of Zebedee came to Him asking that they might occupy special seats of honour in His "glory." His exaltation and power! Much as we marvel at their ignorance, we may show that there was belief in, and loyalty to, Jesus. They mistook the character of the kingdom entirely, and what its honours were; but their wish to be near the Master was a right one, and which, in the Christian spirit, not with their ambition, we may imitate. Point out that if we bring self in any shape into our religion we make the same mistake which these disciples did. Selfishness is the unclean spirit that can have no dwelling in the heart of the true disciple.

The third topic shows us, once more, the true spirit of the Gospel. It is not of this world. It has a different centre—Christ, not self; it has a different motive—"the love of Christ constraineth;" a different manifestation—service, not power; its duty, its privilege, is self-sacrifice; it looks up and around, asking, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Point out how this very spirit was manifested by Christ Himself, who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many,"—the Divine self-sacrifice the world has ever seen. Show your scholars that here all are equal; although the path of service may be widely different, yet all true service will be accepted, and leads to that honour which the Master will bestow upon His faithful servants in the day of His coming. The royal road to honour is through service.

"This is the path the Master trod."

"He humbled Himself—wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him," Phil. 2: 8, 9.

Incidental Lessons.—On the first topic, That Jesus leads us in the way in which we should go.

That where He leads we all should follow.

That companionship with Him in suffering leads to companionship with Him in glory.

On the second topic, That selfishness is the root of ambition and many evils.

That the most subtle and dangerous selfishness may be in our religious desires.

That human ignorance knows not what it asks.

On the third topic, That presumption is confident, humility is diffident.

That honour from God is determined by service.

That the greatness of Christ's kingdom is in service.

That true ministry is true service.

That in some way all may serve.

Main Lesson.—Christ an example of true greatness.

Luke 22: 27; John 13: 13-16; Rom. 13: 3; 2 Cor. 8: 9; Phil. 2: 6.