

in offering up the sacrifices which were appointed for the Sabbath.

V. 6.—*Greater than the Temple*—Emmanuel; the God-Man; the true Temple of God. The argument is this: The priests in order to attend to the Temple broke the rest of the Sabbath and were blameless; the disciples break it in attending on One greater than the Temple, and therefore they are more emphatically blameless.

V. 7.—Compare Hos. 6: 6. Mercy is greater than sacrifice, and sacrifice is greater than the strict ritual of the Sabbath rest.

V. 8.—“I am the Lord whose work must be done on the Sabbath. To work the works of God belongs to every place and time, and such work is the true sanctification of the Sabbath.”

V. 10.—Having failed with the disciples, they now try to ensnare the Master.

V. 11.—To save a sheep was then allowed by the Jews; but since then they forbid even this!

V. 12.—It is lawful “to do well” on any day. A good deed must not be postponed. He healed the withered hand. Jesus did not toil as those who ministered in the Temple, or who saved the sheep! He healed with a word, yet blind hatred held that He had broken the Sabbath!

LESSONS.

1. We see that the disciples were very hungry while following Christ. In all ages His disciples may be reduced to distress; their riches are spiritual.

2. We must let no slight obstacles prevent our attending on the work of Christ. The disciples followed Him, though thus reduced to great straits for food.

3. Mercy is preferable to *sacrifice*: be not too ready to find fault with others, or to condemn rashly, quickly, cruelly.

4. The Sabbath is Christ's day, and should be devoted to Christ's work—preaching the gospel, relieving distress, visiting the sick, teaching in the Sabbath School, &c. It is right also to attend to the wants of lower animals.

5. We may learn from the example of the man who had the withered hand that we should attend on gospel ordinances—that we should, at Christ's command, “stretch forth” our hand to receive Him. See the power of Jesus to heal! He is the Great Physician!

DOCTRINE.

Works of necessity and mercy lawful on the Sabbath.—See Mark 2: 23, 27; Luke 6: 9; Luke 14: 3, 5; John 5: 8-10.

[“Christians can never prize the Sabbath too highly. It is a precious boon to the Church, and a blessed gift to a weary, sin-laden world. It points us back to the

bowers of Eden which we have forfeited, and bids us not despair,—for it is a pledge and a foretaste of a nobler inheritance in a better country where there is an everlasting Sabbath.”]

The Swimmer and the Child.

An ocean steamship was sinking off our Atlantic coast. One stalwart hero, a stranger to all on board, helped to lead in other passengers, until the boats were crowded to the utmost and had pushed off for the shore, then, trusting to his own strong arms, he was about to leap into the sea, when a little girl who had been left behind caught his hand, shrieking, “Oh sir, can't you save me!” The brave man hesitated. Land was nearly a mile away, and between it and them the angry sea rolled mountain high. But his kind heart could not say no; and in a moment more, with the little arms clasped tight about his neck, he was wrestling with the waves. The struggle had been gained, the swimmer's strength was well-nigh spent. But he would not cast off his burden; and as he rose from each succeeding billow he shook his head that he might still feel the pressure of the little arms about his neck. And now, a higher wave than any yet strikes him in the face. Exhausted, fainting, senseless, he yields and sinks. But a boat from the shore has spied the swimmer; and as he rises again, it picks him up.

An hour has passed, and in a cottage on the beach the brave man lies stretched upon the floor. Animation is restored; and with returning consciousness he opens his heavy eyes;—when, blessed sight! bending over him he first sees the little form which himself had saved from death.

So, fellow-teachers of the Sabbath-school, though we, disheartened, may think our weary years of toil and prayer are all in vain, and oftentimes in feeble faith may fear lest both ourselves and our precious charge will sink alike to rise no more; yet by the grace of God, on the other side the dark river, our ravished eyes may first open upon the radiant forms of dear ones gone before, whose little feet our despairing but Christ-blessed efforts once pointed to Heaven.

Prayer.

Fill up the void spaces of your time with meditation and prayer.

They are the safest who are most in their closets, who pray, not to be seen of men, but to be heard of God.