



LESSON VIII.—AUGUST 19, 1906.

## The Judge, The Pharisee and the Publican.

Luke xviii., 1-14.

### Golden Text.

God be merciful to me a sinner.—Luke xviii., 13.

### Home Readings.

Monday, August 13.—Luke xviii., 1-14.  
Tuesday, August 14.—Luke xi., 1-13.  
Wednesday, August 15.—Mark vii., 24-30.  
Thursday, August 16.—Is. i., 10-20.  
Friday, August 17.—Ps. li., 1-13.  
Saturday, August 18.—Neh. i.  
Sunday, August 19.—Matt. xviii., 1-16.

(By Davis W. Clark).

Two went to pray; or, rather, say,  
One went to brag, the other to pray;  
One stands up close, and treads on high,  
Where the other dares not send his eye.  
One Hearer to the altar trod,  
The other to the altar's God.

—Anon.

Most pictorial of parables! On background of temple these antipodal worshippers live and move and have a being. Jesus deals in no abstractions or generalities, no vague ratiocination. He just personifies, incarnates, concretes truth. In the Pharisee one sees the false and fruitless; in the publican the true and successful worshipper.

How true the Pharisee is to his name, which signifies 'separatist!' He stands apart to avoid ceremonial pollution, and to be more conspicuous. He strikes an attitude. He is statuesque. He is in full regalia of talith and phylactery. He

'Stands up close, and treads on high.'

He gets as close to the holiest place as a layman dares to tread. With outstretched palms and upturned eyes, he begins his self-laudation before the Deity.

'I thank Thee'—that is a promising prelude. But the next syllable dashes us with disappointment. He does not recognize God as the Author of his good character or happy environment. He does not say, 'But for the grace of God I might be an extortioner, unjust, an adulterer, or a publican.' Depreciation would have followed a sincere confession of grace. He would have cried, 'I am not worthy of the least of these Thy benefits,' but haughtiness and presumption are his characteristics. He will fain confess the publican's sins for him, as he has none of his own to speak of.

He passes now from the denial of gross sins to the affirmation of his active pieties. Though the Levitical law only required one annual fast, he abstained from food every Monday and Thursday. Though Moses only exacted a tenth of certain items in one's income, he tithes all his annual gains. So, through supererogation, God is his debtor. Superlative audacity! He poses there in absolute complacency before the holiness of highest heaven.

This publican, this inferior tax-collector, has found his way to the temple with a purpose. It was an uncommon thing to see one of this class on holy ground. Whatever their faults, and however numerous, hypocrisy was not one of them. They did not pose as saints. Here was an awakened sinner. He had come up the holy hill to

get clean hands and a pure heart. He had faith in the promises and provisions of the first covenant of grace.

He stands on the opposite side of the court from the Pharisee, just inside the inclosure. He dares not 'send his eyes' toward the sanctuary. He keeps smiting his breast with self-accusing gesture, and keeps crying in an unprescribed but noble collect, 'God be propitiated toward me, the sinner.' He attempts no palliation. He confesses, 'I have sinned and done evil.' He is in the oblivion and self-abandon of penitence, only conscious of the Eye that is on him from above. He tries not the ever unwise expedient of comparing himself with others. He looks at himself in the perfect law of God, that mirror that has no aberration. He is emptied of self and hungering and thirsting after righteousness. The moral universe would have tottered to ruin had he not been filled. How long think you it took for his Miserere to chord into the hallelujah of salvation?

'I tell you.' That is ex-cathedra,—Jesus' own decision from which there is no appeal. No one knows what became of the Pharisee. Of the party who thought so much of himself it is not deemed a matter of sufficient importance even to mention his exit. But in the court of highest heaven the indictment against the publican was ordered erased from the record. Henceforth, because of his penitence and faith, and through the mercy of God, he was to be accounted just and righteous. The way home and home itself was transfigured by the luminous power of an inward experience.

Now follows what a little girl aptly called 'the children's gospel.' Some parents, knowing that Jesus was about to leave the neighborhood, and that another opportunity might not be afforded, pressed forward with their little folks that they might receive the Teacher's blessing. They hoped that His look and word might be caught upon the sensitive plate of the child's memory. The disciples consider it an intrusion, the waste of time that might be employed in the instruction of adults.

But Jesus encouraged their coming in the immortal words which fix unequivocally the spiritual status of child-life. They, and they alone, who resemble them in spirit belong to the kingdom. The characteristic traits of the child—trustfulness, docility, teachableness, obedience, are the indispensable requisites for citizenship in the kingdom of God.

### ANALYSIS AND KEY.

1. A Pictorial Parable.  
Two sorts of worshippers made to live before the reader.  
One false, fruitless; other, true, successful.
2. Pharisee. 'separatist.'  
Self-laudation before Deity.  
Presumption and haughtiness.  
Gross sins denied.  
Active pieties affirmed.
3. Publican.  
Comes with a purpose.  
Penitent. Believing.  
Depreciation; no palliation attempted.  
No comparisons.  
Hunger for righteousness.  
Miserere transposed to hallelujah.
4. Jesus' ex-cathedra conclusion.  
'I tell you.' Exit of Pharisee unnoted.  
Publican goes 'justified.'
5. The Children's Gospel.  
Spiritual status of child-life defined.

### THE TEACHER'S LANTERN.

The great influx of pilgrim caravans to Jerusalem was probably the immediate suggestion of the parable. Multitudes were going up to pray—Jesus pictures for all and for all time the false and the true spirit of prayer.

Language of man can not produce a stronger antithesis. Here are two portraits in one frame. Spiritual haughtiness. Penitent humility. The one ugly in the extreme. The other wonderfully engaging.

How about our Church-goers of to-day?

Are their likenesses to be found in this parable?

The age-old contrast still maintains—the conflict goes on. It is still 'Works' and 'Faith.' The effort to merit heaven: to make God's one debtor; to pile up a surplus of good deeds; all this tends to pride, complacency, self-righteousness. This 'deadly doing' must be laid down, all down at Jesus' feet.

A parallel Bible-reading:

1. The Character of the Pharisee:

'And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things; and they derided Him. And He said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.' (Luke xvi., 14, 15.)

2. Why the Pharisee was unheard:

'But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear.' (Isa. lix., 2.)

'And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide Mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood.' (Isa. i., 15.)

3. The Humbling of the Proud:

'And the mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled.' (Isa. v., 15.)

4. God near to the Humble:

'For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.' (Isa. lvii., 15.)

5. God near the Penitent:

'The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.' (Psa. xxiv., 18.)

6. The Exaltation of the Humble:

'When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up; and He shall save the humble person.' (Job xxii., 29.)

### C. E. Topic.

Sunday, Aug. 19.—Topic—What is the sin of phariseeism? Luke xi., 42-44.

### Junior C. E. Topic.

#### A DISCOURAGED PROPHET.

Monday, August 13.—Baal's prophets killed. I. Kings xviii., 40.

Tuesday, August 14.—The little cloud. I. Kings xviii., 41-44.

Wednesday, August 15.—The return to Jezreel. I. Kings xviii., 45, 46.

Thursday, August 16.—Jezebel's threat. I. Kings xix., 1-3.

Friday, August 17.—Elijah's discouragement. I. Kings xix., 8-14.

Saturday, August 18.—What God said. I. Kings xix., 18.

Sunday, August 19.—Topic—A discouraged prophet under a juniper tree. I. Kings xix., 4-8.

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