

HELPS IN STUDYING.

INTRODUCTORY. Jesus was now at Jerusalem attending the Feast of the Dedication, October, A. D. 29, about six months before the crucifixion. Read the accounts of cures of other blind men. Mark 8: 22-26; Matt 20: 29-34; Mark 10: 46-52; Luke 18: 35-43.

LESSON PLAN. I. Misfortune Explained. vs. 1-3. II. A Sufferer Relieved. vs. 4-7. III. Sceptical Friends. vs. 8-11.

I. MISFORTUNE EXPLAINED. 1. **As he passed by** (R. V.)—as he went along the street. **Blind from his birth**—This kind is incurable even now. See verse 32. Diseases of the eyes are exceedingly common in the East. In Egypt one person in every hundred is blind. 2. **Who did sir?**—The disciples believed that special suffering was due to special guilt. They also knew that the sins of parents brought calamities upon their children, and some Pharisees taught that the soul of man had an existence before he was born. They were curious to know how to explain the case of one who was blind when he came into the world and could not have committed sin himself. Had he sinned in his previous state of existence? or, had his parents' sin brought him into this unfortunate condition? 3. **Neither**—Jesus does not mean to say that they were sinless, but that the blindness was not sent as the punishment of any particular sin. Read Luke 13: 1-5, and compare the story of Job. **The works of God**—Not only in his becoming a subject of Christ's healing power, but in shewing God's loving care of a helpless one from day to day, chastening him and his parents by affliction, and drawing out the charity and sympathy of others. Read also ch. 11: 4.

and spiritual darkness, of which physical blindness was a type (Isa. 29: 18; 35: 5; 42: 7; Luke 4: 18-21; John 1: 5, 9; 3: 19; 8: 12; 12: 35, 46). 6. **Anointed the eyes**—The saliva and the clay were common remedies for diseases of the eye. In employing them our Saviour graciously aided the faith of the blind man, and teaches us that we are to expect the divine Healer to work through our using the best remedies that our medical science knows. 7. **The pool of Siloam**—This was a test of his faith and obedience, the inward conditions of his receiving the blessing of sight. (See *Siloam* in Bible Dictionary.) **Sent**—The name *Siloam* is derived from the Hebrew verb "to send." Perhaps because, springing from the temple hill, it was regarded as the special gift of God. John sees in the name a typical reference to Christ himself (Isa. 8: 6). Compare Naaman, 2 Kings 5: 14. **Came seeing**—What a joy to look for the first time on the earth and sky. No other temporal blessing could be compared with it.

II. A SUFFERER RELIEVED. 4. **We must work** (R. V.)—Jesus often urges to ceaseless activity in doing good (ch. 4: 34; 5: 19, 36; 11: 9; 12: 35; 17: 4). **The night**—The day of opportunity passes, never to return. We go but once through the world, and we cannot return to correct errors or finish what we have left undone. 5. **The light of the world**—Jesus came to dispel moral

III. SCEPTICAL FRIENDS. 8. **He that was a beggar** (R. V.)—There was nothing that a blind man could do but beg. His opened eyes and lighted up countenance would change his looks very much. 11. **The man that is called Jesus** (R. V.)—the well-known wonder worker, Jesus. He does not yet know him as the Christ, the Saviour of men. This miracle was wrought on the Sabbath (verse 14). Read the conclusion of this very interesting story, and note the manly bearing of the man, and his prompt and hearty acceptance of his Healer as the Son of God.

LESSONS.

1. Suffering is not always punishment. Sometimes it is sent as discipline to the individual, and sometimes in order that God may use the sufferer for his glory and the good of others.
2. We should not waste our time, but do diligently the work that God has given us to do.
3. While we pray for health, we should expect our prayers to be answered through the use of the means that God puts in our hands.
4. Jesus alone can cure our spiritual blindness.

LESSON IX — March 3rd.

The Raising of Lazarus. JOHN 11: 30-45.

(Commit to memory verses 33-36.)

GOLDEN TEXT.

"I am the resurrection and the life."
John 11: 25.

PROVE THAT

Jesus can soothe the sorrowing. Heb.
4: 15.

LESSON HYMNS.

CHILDREN'S HYMNAL, Nos. 188, 63,
232, 265

SHORTER CATECHISM.

Quest. 11. *What are God's works of providence?* A. God's works of providence are, his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures and all their actions.