



LESSON I.—July 1, 1906.

Jesus and the Children.

Matt. xviii., 1-14.

Golden Text.

It is not the will of your Father which is in Heaven that one of these little ones should perish.—Matt. xviii., 14.

Home Readings.

Monday, June 25.—Matt. xviii., 1-14.

Tuesday, June 26.—Luke ix., 46-50.

Wednesday, June 27.—Matt. xxiii., 1-12.

Thursday, June 28.—James iv., 1-17.

Friday, June 29.—Phil. ii., 1-11.

Saturday, June 30.—Col. iii., 12-21.

(Davis W. Clark).

The training of the Twelve made large drafts upon the endurance and tact of the Master. Their racial and hereditary misconception of His kingdom was the most difficult of eradication. He had just unveiled to them his 'Via Dolorosa'; but, explicit though he had been, it seemed all to no purpose. They saw only a flower-strewn path to a glittering throne. And they wanted it quickly decided how they should stand relatively to each other and to that throne.

Before we are harsh with the disciples for their tardy approach to the true ideal of the kingdom, let it be remembered, they drank in their wrong notions with their mothers' milk. Even Jesus could not easily train out of them ideas which had been trained into them for thirty years and more, and those the most impressive years of a human life. They were ideas, too, that were peculiarly consonant with their natural tastes and ambitions.

The Searcher of Hearts knew very well the subject of the unseemly controversy in which His disciples had engaged on the way to Capernaum. They had, perhaps, parted from him on purpose 'to have it out' among themselves—not yet having learned how naked and open all things were to Him with whom they had to do.

It was the master-stroke of the Master-teacher, the placing of the child in the midst of His self-seeking disciples. The instant obedience the child rendered when called; the docility with which he stood where Jesus placed him; and, in the end, the swiftness with which he ran to receive and return the Saviour's embrace, and all with a self-oblivion to which the question, 'What shall I have for this?' never so much as occurred,—there, as in a simple living tableau, the characteristics of the approved disciple stood forth, a snowy cameo on an inky agate.

And from the acted parable, as was His wont, the Saviour passed to earnest, practical discourse, in which the principles of His kingdom were still further developed and applied. The conspicuous position to be accorded to childhood in the Church is distinctly enunciated. If those like children are eligible to membership, then children themselves are already included. Jesus is childhood's Defender. He puts Himself in the child's place. What you do of good or ill to the child, you do to Him. The immediate surrender of the dearest earthly ambitions inimical to the spirit of the heavenly kingdom is insisted upon in language of unsurpassed vigor. Better one hand, one foot, one eye, and—heaven, than two hands, two feet, two eyes, and—hell! The vivacious discourse closes aptly with a picture of the Good Shepherd going out with infinite sacri-

fice, pains, and persistence to seek for one lost sheep.

The lovely tapestry of the homily to the Twelve is shot again and again with the golden thread of the Master's particular love, care, and provision for child-life. 'Not the will of the Father that one of these little ones should perish'; 'Do not despise one of these little ones'; 'Their guardian angels stand nearest the Father'; 'The worst death conceivable would be preferable to the penalty of corrupting a child'; 'Whoever takes a child under loving and helpful care takes the child and—Me.'

ANALYSIS AND KEY.

1. The Training of the Twelve. Jesus' tact and endurance taxed. Their misconceptions.
2. Harsh criticism of the Disciples deprecated. How wrong ideals were imbibed.
3. Controversy 'which should be first' not unknown to Jesus.
4. Master-stroke of Master-teacher. 'A child in the midst.' Living tableau. Obedience, docility, self-oblivion. Love exemplified in child.
5. Principles developed and applied. Child's position in Church enunciated. Already in. What is done to child is done to Jesus self, according to His affirmation. Jesus' love, care, and provision for child-life.

THE TEACHER'S LANTERN.

It would be out of place to criticize the schoolboy clutching his pen with inky fist or hesitating and blundering from his dog-eared reader. Time may be when from that same hand will come Spencerian calligraphy, or from those lips periods an Everett would not disdain. So chide not the apostles in the bungling, short-sighted notions of their novitiate. The end crowns the work.

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True, they began with ambitions for self-aggrandizement,—which should be the Secretary of State, and which of Treasury, and all of that; but they ended by giving the world the most sublime examples of self-abnegation of all the ages. Not in vain did the Master set a little child in their midst that day.

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'I'm sure the Saviour smiled.' Some one said one day that we do not read that our Saviour, when on earth, was ever seen to smile. A little girl heard the remark. 'What,' she said, 'didn't Jesus say to the little children, "Come unto Me?" and they would never have come unless He had smiled!'

I'm sure the Saviour smiled,
Or else no little, trembling child
Had dared to venture near;
No darkening frown, no angry word,
Was ever seen or ever heard
While Jesus sojourned here.

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The two-Messiah idea prevailed to a considerable extent among the Jews. The Psalms and prophecies obviously pictured a suffering as well as a triumphant Messiah. But it seemed impossible for the Hebrew mind to apprehend that the Sufferer and the Victor were one and the same person; in fact, that the Victor was such through His suffering. The Disciples, in their novitiate, were ready to attach themselves to the victor Messiah, but they wanted none of the sufferer.

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Unhappily, hierarchical ambition and 'ecclesiastical politics' are not yet extinct. The more is the shame and pity, since two thousand years have passed in which to learn the spirit of the kingdom.

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The spirit of the little child who was willing to be employed by the Master—that is the animating principle of His kingdom. Not to be ministered unto, but to minister; not triple crown and jewelled crosier, but basin and towel, are badges of highest distinction.

C. E. Topic.

Sunday, July 1.—Topic—Humility, the foundation virtue. Matt. xx., 20-28; I. Pet. v., 5. (Consecration meeting).

Junior C. E. Topic.**SOLOMON'S CHOICE.**

Monday, June 25.—Solomon the king. I. Kings i., 43-46.

Tuesday, June 26.—David's advice to Solomon. I. Chron. xxviii., 9.

Wednesday, June 27.—Solomon's burnt offering. I. Kings iii., 3, 4.

Thursday, June 28.—Solomon's prayer. I. Kings iii., 7-9.

Friday, June 29.—God's answer. I. Kings iii., 11-14.

Saturday, June 30.—Solomon's wisdom. Prov. i., 1-10.

Sunday, July 1.—Topic—A young man's choice. I. Kings iii., 5-9; iv., 29-34. (Consecration meeting).

Sixteen Hours' Preparation.

One of the best known Sunday school teachers in America had given with great profit to the listeners, a masterly exposition of the lesson describing Paul's visit to and address at Athens, and concluded his exposition with the remark that it had cost him sixteen hours' study. This master teacher had been laying the foundation for good teaching during many years, and very few teachers have so broad a foundation on which to work as had this teacher, yet, on the day following there were teachers who undertook to present that great lesson to their classes after only a hurried study late on Saturday evening. We need not plead lack of time in preparing our Sunday school lessons, for many of the best Sunday school teachers and workers are the busiest people that there are. While in the very nature of things not every teacher can devote sixteen hours to the special preparation of one lesson, a great many teachers might devote many hours each week to special preparation.—M. C. Advocate.

Good Company.

'Did you caution your son about keeping good company?' someone asked of a mother whose only son had gone to a distant city to make his home. 'No,' was the reply, but I talked to him a great deal about keeping in fellowship with God. If he does that he can't be in bad company.' The surest way of getting into good society, as far as men are concerned, is to keep close to Jesus Christ. The Christian is sure of meeting the 'best people' there.—Endeavor Banner.

Seed Time and Harvest.

If a teacher studies earnestly and prayerfully, shall he expect and demand an immediate and definite spiritual blessing? Is he to be dissatisfied with himself or with his way of studying if he is not able to taste each day the joy of a conscious elevation of spiritual life? Is he to regard his teaching as a failure if it does not work like results in his pupils? In the realm of the physical, seed-time does not immediately follow harvest, nor does a student of history expect to get a correct knowledge of the laws of human development when he first begins the study of Greece. While the farmer watches with interest the growth of his crop, and the historian knows that the more data he obtains the broader will be his outlook, for either to worry because there were not immediate tangible results, would be to dissipate his very ambitions. So in Bible study often spiritual insight and uplift come immediately upon the reading of a passage. There are times in men's lives when they are conscious of a most rapidly growing Christian experience, but such moments are generally retrospective. Men are convinced that they have grown rather than that they are growing. The kingdom of God is to be established and developed in accordance with natural laws.—M. C. Advocate.