

Lesson I.

JESUS AND THE CHILDREN

July 1, 1906

Matthew 18: 1-14. Commit to memory vs. 2, 3.* Read Mark 9: 14-50; 10: 13-16.

GOLDEN TEXT—It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.—Matthew 18: 14.

1¹ At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who ² is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

2 And ³ Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them.

3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye ⁴ be converted, and become as little children, ye shall ⁵ not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is ⁶ greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

5 And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.

6 But whoso shall ⁷ offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it ⁸ were better for him that a ⁹ millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he ¹⁰ were drowned in the depth of the sea.

7 Woe unto the world because of ¹¹ offences! for it must needs be that ¹² offences come; but woe to that man ¹³ by whom the ¹⁴ offence cometh!

8 ¹⁵ Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot ¹⁶ offend thee, cut ¹⁷ them off, and cast ¹⁸ them from thee: it is ¹⁹ better for thee to enter into life ²⁰ halt or maimed,

Revised Version—¹ In that hour; ² then is greatest; ³ he called to him a little child, and, etc.; ⁴ turn; ⁵ in no wise enter; ⁶ the; ⁷ cause; believe on me to stumble; ⁸ is profitable; ⁹ great millstone should be; ¹⁰ should be sunk; ¹¹ occasions of stumbling; ¹² the occasions; ¹³ through; ¹⁴ occasion; ¹⁵ And if; ¹⁶ causeth thee to stumble; ¹⁷ it; ¹⁸ good; ¹⁹ maimed or halt; ²⁰ the eternal fire; ²¹ the hell of fire; ²² See that; ²³ Omil v. 11; ²⁴ any man; ²⁵ goeth; ²⁶ rejoiceth over it more than over the ninety and nine which have not gone astray.

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THE LESSON EXPLAINED

Time and Place—Autumn, A.D. 29, shortly after the Transfiguration (see Luke 9: 28-36, Lesson XII., Second Quarter); a house in Capernaum, perhaps Peter's.

Connection—As they journeyed with Jesus through Galilee to Capernaum (compare Mark 9: 33; Luke 9: 46), the disciples had a dispute as to who should be greatest.

I. THE CHILDREN WELCOMED.—1, 2. At the same time, Peter had returned from paying the temple tax with the money found in the mouth of a fish, ch. 17: 24-27. Came the disciples; with the question that vexed them. Mark tells us that Jesus had asked them about their dispute by the way (see Connection). They were ashamed, and kept silent. A little later they came and asked Jesus' opinion. Who is the greatest? Perhaps the prominence given to the three at the Transfiguration had started the question. Called... a little child; who may have been playing near, and was drawn to the wonderful, loving Jesus. Set him in the midst. Mark (ch. 9: 36) adds that He took the child in His arms. How warm and tender is Jesus' love for children!

3-5. Be converted (Rev. Ver., "turn"); from the selfish, ambitious spirit they had just been showing. As little children; with no thought about their own greatness. Whosoever... shall humble himself... is greatest; because he has most of the heavenly spirit—faith, love, self-denial, willingness to serve. Receive one such... in my name; loving and admiring the children, and the childlike, because they possess the spirit of Jesus, reflecting the beauty of His character.

rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into ²⁰ everlasting fire.

9 And if thine eye ¹⁰ offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is ¹¹ better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into ¹² hell fire.

10 ²¹ Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

11 ²² For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.

12 How think ye? if ²⁴ a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which ²⁵ is gone astray?

13 And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he ²⁶ rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.

14 Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

II. THE CHILDREN HINDERED.—6, 7. Offend ("cause to stumble")... it were better, etc. Better to lose one's own life than cause another to sin. The "millstone" meant here was a very large one, turned by an ass; smaller ones were turned by hand (see Illustration). Drowned. Drowning was



Hand Mill of Palestine

The lower stone is fastened into the ground or floor, while the upper is movable and may be lifted off or whirled round.

common in Greece and Rome as a swift and terrible penalty for crime. Woe unto the world, etc. The difficulties ("occasions of stumbling") in the way of becoming good, and especially in the way of children, move Jesus to compassion. It must needs be; in this sinful world. Woe to that man; because he is a soul murderer by causing others to sin.

*The Scripture Memory Passages of the Supplemental Lessons are recommended as a substitute for those here given Sabbath by Sabbath. They will be found in the Supplemental Lessons Leaflet.