

new wine. It would not be easy for men brought up as were John's disciples, in the use of Pharisaic ceremonies, to relish the new wine of the gospel.

LESSONS.

1. Levi (Matthew) left his situation at once at the Saviour's call. He obeyed promptly. V. 28. What an example to us! Leave our sins, leave any worldly calling that may be inconsistent with our following Christ.

2. Christ came to call sinners, even the worst. He welcomes them. Let us, as his ambassadors, proclaim His grace; and in doing so not be afraid of mingling with "publicans and sinners."

3. Christ attended feasts, and "dinners," but at these He never forgot His Father's business.

4. Sin is a fearful, fatal disease which only one physician can heal. V. 32.

5. Let our chief regard be paid to the essentials of religion. Fasts, feasts, holidays and ceremonies may serve to keep us from Christ rather than lead us to Him.—Too much attention to forms leads to bigotry, divisions and strife.

DOCTRINE.

Christ saves the lost—Luke xix. 10.—Matt. i. 21. 1 Tim. i. 15.

FIFTH SABBATH.

SUBJECT :—*The end of all things*, 2 Pet. iii. 1-18.

V. 1.—The apostles wrote the most of their letters shortly before their death. *Pure*—free from error—sincere.

V. 2.—*Holy prophets*—in the Old Testament. This shows that we should study the Old Testament. He places the apostles and prophets on a level.

V. 3.—*Last days*—the present age of the world—the christian dispensation. *Scoffers*—persons that sneer at things divine, and mock at religious truth.

V. 4.—Christ has promised to come again: these scoffers have no faith in promise. They assert that all things continue as they were—that there are no changes indicating the hand of God. Is not this, to a large extent, the voice of the Darwins, the Huxleys, the Lyells, the Buckles of the present day? God and Christ, creation and redemption are ignored.

Vv. 5-7.—The argument here is that as the flood came, though its coming was not believed in or dreaded by those whom it drowned, so the destruction of the world by fire shall take place, though men scoff at the announcement.

V. 8.—See Ps. xc. 4. What God promises to do a thousand years hence is as sure to come to pass if it were to happen

to-morrow. God has all the ages before Him wherein to fulfil his purposes.

V. 9.—*His promise*—of future judgment. The Lord's long-suffering is the reason that the last judgment does not burst upon the world this very moment!

V. 10.—*Day of the Lord*—day of judgment. *As a thief*—suddenly, unexpectedly. *Elements*—sun, moon and stars.

V. 11.—*Shall be dissolved*: in the original the present tense is used,—"are melting." What an affecting picture of this world and its treasures!

V. 12.—We are to look forward to this day and to *hasten* it with our prayers. *Day of God*. God granted men many thousands of days, but at last He takes a day unto Himself.

V. 13.—See His promise, Rev. xxi. 1, 27. Isa. lxxv. 17; and lxvi. 22.

V. 15.—The long-suffering of God is not because He forgets His promise, but because He desires to give time to us all to secure our salvation. Paul wrote of the second coming of Christ, 1 Thes. iv. 13-18; 2 Thes. i. 5-10; Heb. x. 35-39; and many other passages.

V. 16.—It seems that Peter wrote this epistle after Paul had written all or nearly all his letters.

LESSONS.

1. A day is coming when we must appear at the judgment seat of Christ, and when this world shall be burnt up. This awful fact is often announced in scripture.

2. Infidels and scoffers are actually proving the truth of the scriptures by their unbelief. V. 4.

3. Learn the importance of remembering and recalling truths with which we are perfectly familiar. Do not expect to hear *original* or *new* things in religion. Vv. 1, 17.

4. Peter loved Paul and spoke kindly of him, although Paul rebuked Peter. We should love those who honestly tell us our faults. Vv. 15, 16; Gal. ii.

5. We should try to be not *unlearned* in the scriptures, nor *unstable* in the faith. It is the unlearned and unstable that wrest the scriptures. V. 16.

6. When Time is passing away, and our earthly treasures disappear, let us look for that new Heaven and new Earth which God hath promised, and let us grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

DOCTRINE.

Our treasure should be in Heaven. Col. iii. 1; Matt. vi. 19-21; Luke xviii. 22.

