



LESSON IX.—MARCH 4, 1906.

Jesus Tells Who Are Blessed.

Matthew i., 16.

Golden Text.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.—Matt. v., 8.

Home Readings.

Monday, Feb. 26.—Matt. v., 1-16.
 Tuesday, Feb. 27.—Matt. v., 17-26.
 Wednesday, Feb. 28.—Ps. i.
 Thursday, Mar. 1.—Ps. cxii.
 Friday, Mar. 2.—Ps. lxxxiv.
 Saturday, Mar. 3.—Ps. cxxviii.
 Sunday, Mar. 4.—Luke vi., 20-26.

(By Davis W. Clark.)

All curious speculation as to the precise spot where this sermon was preached and as to whether there were two sermons or only one on the occasion, and as to whether it was strictly original or not, and other mere matters of verbiage, fall short and are unworthy. The Sermon on the Mount is the most potent composition in written speech. The original assembly to which it was addressed dissolved, but in each successive generation a new and ever-increasing throng comes to the feet of the Teacher of Men. As from the sounding-board of the open heavens the old sermon has struck the ear of each new congregation. Jesus stands yet the unchallenged, original teacher of the human race—speaking with authority to the universal human heart, illuminating, warming and empowering it. He is not the institutor of a system of doctrine, nor the formulator of a ritual. He comes to inspire a life in the soul; to set up a kingdom within, which consists not in the externalism and triviality of sacrifice and oblation, but in that indispensable righteousness whose concomitants are peace and joy. . . . The Sermon on the Mount is an inaugural. As such it takes on a dignity and importance all its own. The fundamental principles of the kingdom of God are here irradiated, the character and conduct of its subjects prescribed. Jesus' ideal was the exact reverse of that popularly entertained. The people wanted an objective kingdom. He showed them only a subjective one. They wanted one of brute force. He unveiled one of meekness—unarmed with carnal weapons. In His brave enunciation of a superlatively unpopular ideal, He was carrying to its final conclusion His victory over the temptor who had shown Him the short cut to power by accommodating Himself to the popular notion of a kingdom. . . . The exordium of such an address is of special importance. It is significant that its first word is 'blessed.' In the inveterate, awful din of ceaseless cursing and maledictions, 'blessed' sounds like the high grace note of an anthem of angels. Jesus does not proceed to describe various classes who are blessed, but rather to tell of a blessed subjective condition of the human soul which expresses itself on occasion in manifold ways. . . . In two little, homely monosyllabic words Jesus describes the effect upon the social world of the multiplication of the subjects of His kingdom—Salt and Light! The influence of Christians is saline and illuminative. And this is the chief means of revealing and relating the divine to the human race. The true children of the Heavenly Father most effectively introduce Him to their fellows.

THE TEACHER'S LANTERN.

Religion is something that occurs at eleven o'clock Sunday morning! Such a notion, and it is to be feared some people have it, is for-

ever dissipated by a little attention to the Sermon on the mount. It is then discovered that religion is not a stated service, but a life.

This life begins in a discovery of personal destitution—the conscious discrepancy between the mean real and the heavenly ideal of life. The person so affected becomes a child—self-oblivious, asking, seeking and willing to learn, and so gains admission to the kingdom. . . . There is a ministry of sorrow from which no one dares wish himself exempt. The Comforter transposes all our dead marches into hallelujah choruses. . . .

True meekness is no despicable quality—on the contrary something admirable. It implies heroic self-control under provocation. It conquers in the end. The meekness of the martyrs overturned Rome itself. . . . The sharp, important physical senses of hunger and thirst are next used to describe the resolute temper of mind which succeeds in religion as it does in other things. . . . The subject of the kingdom of heaven addresses himself in practical and merciful service for others. And mercy gets mercy by the inviolable operation of moral law. . . . The ceremonially pure could enter the temple. But the really pure in thought and purpose need no temple. They have the vision of God everywhere. . . . Strange as it may seem, a fierce battle was fought on the very ground where Jesus had said 'Blessed are the peace-makers,' and one of the contending armies bore His emblem and were called Christians. The last of the Crusaders perished there. This very perversion of the doctrine of Christ helps emphasize the truth of it. Jesus taught non-resistance, and all the wars which have been waged in His name are so many crimes committed in His name. . . . 'Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake' is the general of which 'Blessed are ye when men shall revile you' is the particular—and thus ends the 'Octave of the Beatitudes.'

C. E. Topic.

Sunday, March 4.—Topic—What is true happiness? The worldly idea; the Christian idea. Luke vi., 20-26; I. John ii., 12-17; II. Cor. vi., 10; Phil. iv., 4-7. (Consecration meeting.)

Junior C. E. Topic.**A WRONG REASON FOR WRONG-DOING.**

Monday, Feb. 26.—God's command. I. Sam. xv., 1-3.

Tuesday, Feb. 27.—Saul's disobedience. I. Sam. xv., 4-9.

Wednesday, Feb. 28.—What Samuel said. I. Sam. xv., 10-23.

Thursday, Mar. 1.—Why Adam did wrong. Gen. iii., 11, 12.

Friday, Mar. 2.—Why Aaron did wrong. Ex. xxxii., 21-24.

Saturday, Mar. 3.—Men who would not do wrong. Dan. iii., 18.

Sunday, Mar. 4.—Topic—Doing wrong to please others. I. Sam. xv., 24. (Consecration meeting.)

Half a Century of Sunday School Teaching.

A talk with Mr. A. J. Scrutton, President of the London Sunday School Union, by 'M,' in the 'Sunday School Chronicle.'

(Concluded.)

'You would really be like a minister to his congregation, only more intimate?'

'Just so. It was only in this way that I was able to suit my teaching to their needs.'

'Some of your lads have done well in life, I understand?'

'Yes, very well indeed. One young fellow, the son of a billiard-marker, had practically no home. He is master of a large school in England now, a deacon in the church, and has a family doing well. There are many other cases I could name, but I must not weary you.'

'Did you not find that at a certain period your young lads have intellectual difficulties in regard to religion?'

'So much so that they instituted a class

for the discussion of religious matters. It was really a kind of mutual improvement society. But I did not encourage trying to argue about atheism. I tried to guide them in their reading, however, and gave them books which I judged would be helpful to them.'

'Do you believe in always dealing with a class with an eye to bringing them to a personal decision for Christ, or would you content yourself to build up a foundation of spiritual knowledge, trusting that the change would take place without direct dealing?'

'I believe in the first attitude. This aim should be before the mind continually. It is the chief end of your work, and, for my own part, I never lost an opportunity of urging them to decision, and fellowship with a Christian Church.'

'Looking back upon all these years, Mr. Scrutton, and putting yourself in the position of a modern young man, do you feel that you would have any difficulty in choosing a life-work for your leisure again?'

'None at all. I would begin a class just now if I dared. The joy of it is so great, the benefit to myself so enormous.'

'Would you be in favor of making Sunday school teaching part of a minister's training, so that he would be able to teach his teachers?'

'Yes; I think that plan would be more feasible. There is no question of the need of training for the teacher's work. At the same time you must remember that when you have trained the ministers you have then to persuade the teachers to submit themselves to training.'

'I would give emphasis to the need of personal love for the class, without which there is nothing to be done. Unless you secure the child's love by loving it yourself, you can do very little; the power and influence over them come with the love.'

I have since this interview had an opportunity of looking over the note-books referred to by Mr. Scrutton, and they amply reveal the secret of his success as a teacher, and his enthusiasm for the work to which he has given the best hours of his life. Occupying a prominent and influential position on the Stock Exchange, Mr. Scrutton has found time, during the scant leisure of his busy life, to keep a set of books relating to his class as thoroughly as the majority of men keep their business accounts. He is a worthy example of a man not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.

More Sunday School Workers Wanted.

To be courageous like Joshua.
 To be self-reliant like Nehemiah.
 To be obedient like Abraham.
 To be persevering like Jacob.
 To be decisive like Moses.
 To be administrative like Solomon.
 To be above reproach like Daniel.
 To be long-suffering like Paul.
 To be self-disciplined like David.
 To be prayerful like Elijah.
 To be masters of passion like Joseph.
 To be bold like Peter.

Is the Bible 'Trailed in the Dust?'

At sundown at an army post, when the American flag is lowered for the night, it rests upon the arms of soldiers, who carefully prevent its touching the ground. It is a lesson in reverence. In the Sunday school the Bible is sometimes found upon the floor, or carelessly stowed away under piles of papers or miscellaneous books. Reverence for the Book may be taught in Sunday school or in the home by a rule, invariably adhered to, that no book nor other object shall ever rest upon a copy of the Bible, and, of course, that the Bible shall never be left upon the floor.—'Sunday School Times.'

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