



## LESSON XII.—MARCH 19.

## Healing of the Man Born Blind.

John ix., 1-11.

## Golden Text.

I am the light of the world. John ix., 5.

Commit verses 10, 11.

## Home Readings.

Monday, March 13.—John ix., 1-11.  
 Tuesday, March 14.—John ix., 12-25.  
 Wednesday, March 15.—John ix., 26-41.  
 Thursday, March 16.—Mark x., 46-52.  
 Friday, March 17.—Is. xxxv., 1-10.  
 Saturday, March 18.—I. John i., 1-10.  
 Sunday, March 19.—John xii., 34-41.

(By Davis W. Clark.)

To the thirty-three parables the thirty-three miracles of Jesus may well be added; for the latter were, in fact, parables, too—deeds packed with an inexhaustible symbolism. . . . The uplifted stones, the glaring faces of those who thirsted for his blood, have just forcibly reminded Jesus of the rapid approach of the night of death, in which he must cease from these symbolic deeds. He will crowd the few remaining hours full of them. . . . Among the lazzaroni crowding the approach to the temple stands the well-known beggar blind from birth. Pfenninger, with the instinct of a poet, imagines a discussion among the apostles as they halt in passing: 'Judas began, "His parents must have heavily sinned." Thomas replied, "Or God foresaw great sin in him." John adds, "I know not what to think thereon." Peter finally breaks out, "Master, tell us who." . . . The words of Jesus may have fallen upon the ears of the unfortunate man, all the more alert because the other sense was lost. Those words may have been the seeds of that faith which was so soon to shake like Lebanon. 'Neither this man nor his parents!' . . . What joy to be rid of the odious imputation cast at him from childhood, that his phenomenal suffering must be penalty of phenomenal sin! 'Now, that he is in this sad and, humanly speaking, remediless plight, he furnishes a rare subject for the display of my Divine power, I will make him a new, indubitable, and lustrous seal upon my claim to Messiahship.' . . . It pleased the Master to condescend to the use of the rude materia medica of the day in order to strengthen the growing faith of the unfortunate man, and to make the cure the more conspicuous. Across the city he goes, holding the poultices of clay to his sightless eyes, followed by an ever-increasing crowd of curiosity-mongers, some of whom, no doubt, gibe at his credulity. He went; he washed; he saw. As the clay lozenges dropped, Siloam's mirrored surface reflected for him the beetling crags of the temple-crowned mount, and over all the azure dome. . . . What wonder that his very neighbors doubted the identity of the man upon whose expressionless face the light of the soul was now pouring through his opened eyes! The man himself has passed into a new world, but has no doubt about his being the same man who once cried on the temple steps, 'Pity one born blind!' Nor has he a shadow of doubt as to who wrought his cure. Mayhap some hired and overalert emissary of the Sanhedrim hails him before that august body. It was, for them, the most unfortunate 'catch' they ever made. The man deposes like a self-possessed witness. He rests the irresistible power of his logic upon indisputable fact, and bears down upon it with the vigor of true manliness. Behold you, the ancient, vaunted, colossal superstructure of an effete ecclesiasticism topples to its fall! There is a wild scurrying to its rescue. . . . The attempt is made to terrorize the man's parents into the lie that his blindness was not con-

genital. Their very timidity enhances the value of their testimony. The man himself is now recalled, and, as if in his absence a foul plot had been discovered to foist Jesus upon the nation by means of a fictitious miracle, he is adjured by all the pains and penalties at discretion of the Sanhedrim to deny the validity of his cure. . . . Like a pillar of Hercules this humble man stands while the highest court of his nation frets itself into a foam of rage against him. He is overborne at length, and swept contemptuously out like so much filth and offscouring. But he is quickly found of Jesus and ensconced in that Church against which the gates of hell shall ne'er prevail.

## LIGHTS ON THE LESSON.

I picked up an autograph-album in the home of my friend, Professor Sultzberger, in Frankfurt-on-the-Main, and, opening it at random, my eye fell on the, to me, familiar handwriting of the first Methodist bishop to make the circuit of the globe. The sentiment was one never to be forgotten: 'The question is not so much how sin got into the world as how to get sin out of the world.—C. Kingsley.' . . . Jesus steers his disciples away from a subject that is purely speculative in character. He attempts no theodicy. He simply affirms that in this instance, though the parties were not sinless persons, the uncommon suffering was not due to an unusual degree of sin in them. But Providence would avail Himself of this instance of phenomenal affliction to show the Divine power that was in Christ. . . . An eccentric thought which Victor Hugo somewhere weaves into one of his fictions is this—the normal condition of our world is one of darkness, only relieved by the intrusion upon it of the illuminating orb. What may be a mere conceit as regards the material world, is a fact in the moral sphere. The utter and obstinate darkness of men's minds to the things of God is only relieved by him who said, 'I am the Light of the world.' . . . Professor Tyn-dall can trace the subtle metamorphoses of sunlight in its manifestations in organic and inorganic, vital and physical power. In every fire that burns, and every flame that glows, he sees a dispensing of light and heat which originally belonged to the sun. Yet, when it comes to believing that the moral darkness of the human soul can be irradiated, and its weakness stored with higher potencies, he hesitates, he denies. The miracles of sunlight to one so competent to define and trace them, ought to make belief in the miracles of moral illumination comparatively easy. . . . John's glowing narrative gives us a dissolving view, fascinating and impressive. The pitiful mendicant fades away, and in his stead appears a glorious confessor, witty, dauntless, meet to be enrolled in the noble army of the faithful, if we but knew his name. . . . Converts shouldn't be coddled. The healed man was left to his own resources, left to fight it out with the august assembly, to suffer extreme ecclesiastical penalty, all with no word of comfort. Thus he endured hardness. And it was good for him. . . . Excommunication put the mark of moral leprosy on the Jew. If he died, there was no mourning for him. If he lived no one could come nearer to him than four cubits. His social and religious privations were of direst sort. But all this was as dust of balance compared with denying the reality of his cure, or the worth of the Prophet who had effected it. Converts of to-day may well imitate such an example. . . . The glad acceptance of Jesus by the beggar, his stubborn rejection by the chiefs of the nation, has its modern analogue. Jesus is set for the fall or rising of many. He is still a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death.

## NOTES FROM THE COMMENTARIES.

A man blind. Blindness is common in Palestine to a degree which we in Western lands can scarcely realize. There is probably no country in the world, except Egypt, where this affliction is so prevalent. At Gaza, for instance, it is said that one-third of the population have lost one or both eyes; and, from my own observation in that city, I should unhesitatingly say that the statement is not exaggerated.—Tristram. Who did sin: The connection between sin and suffering was an elementary principle with the Jews. Its application to the lives of individuals without evidence of special sin is condemned by our Lord. In this instance the question was complicated by the fact that the man had been born blind, forming an ethical or theological puzzle such as the rabbis were fond of discussing. Two alternative solutions presented themselves—either

that the calamity was due to the sin of the man's parents on a principle of transmission or that it was due to sin committed by the man himself. In the latter case it might be either punishment by anticipation or for sin committed in a previous state of existence. But probably the disciples were speaking generally, and had no precise conception of the various possibilities involved in the first part of their question.—New Century Bible. Go wash in Siloam . . . which is sent. As the prescribed action was purely symbolical in its design, so in connection with it the evangelist notices the symbolical name of the pool, as in this case bearing testimony to him who was sent to do what it only symbolized.—J. F. B.

## C. E. Topic.

Sunday, March 19.—Topic—Glorifying God in our daily work. Matt. v., 13-16; Rom. xii., 11.

## Junior C. E. Topic.

## WILLING GIVERS.

Monday, March 13.—'That giveth it willingly.' Ex. xxv., 1, 2.

Tuesday, March 14.—'A willing heart.' Ex. xxxv., 5.

Wednesday, March 15.—They offered willingly. I. Chron. xxix., 6-9.

Thursday, March 16.—Giving God his own. I. Chron. xxix., 13, 14.

Friday, March 17.—Freely give. Matt. x., 8.

Saturday, March 18.—More blessed to give. Acts xx., 35.

Sunday, March 19.—Topic—A story of some willing givers. Ex. xxxv., 21-29. (Missionary Meeting.)

## Learning the Lesson.

A most interesting and profitable address was given by Mr. C. D. Meigs at a Sunday-school convention, on 'Normal Work, or How to Get Your Lesson Until it Gets You.' He emphasized the importance of having a set time for studying the Sunday-school lesson. Some people think any time will do, but it won't. Some don't begin to study the lesson until the last half hour before retiring on Saturday night. Instead, one ought to begin at the beginning of the week. Some begin on Sunday afternoon for the following Sunday. That's more like the thing. But when a person attends preaching service in the morning, some afternoon meeting, a young people's meeting at 6.30, and an evening service, he has his hands about full, and can afford to wait until Monday. And by Monday noon, at least, sooner if you can, know what the lesson text is. Read and re-read it until you have it well in your head. That's the first place to have it. The better you get it in your head, the deeper it will be likely to sink into your heart. And that's where you must by all means have it if you expect to teach successfully. Only when the lesson sinks deeply into your heart, by diligent and prayerful study, will it come forth from a full heart in saving power.—'Living Epistle.'

Have a map of Palestine drawn by each scholar, under your instructions. No matter how crude it is, urge each to draw his own outline map. On this help them to trace in black—black is the color Travis uses for the preparatory period, red for the first year's ministry, green for the second, and purple for the third—the four journeys of Jesus from Bethlehem to the Temple, to Egypt, back to Nazareth, and from Nazareth to Jerusalem and back.—John F. Cowan.

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