



LESSON IV.—JANUARY 27.

Christ Silences the Pharisees

Matthew xxii., 34-46. Memory verses, 37-40.
Read Matt. xxi., 19 to xxii., 46.

Golden Text.

'What think ye of Christ?'—Matt. xxii., 42.

The Bible Lesson.

34. But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.

35. Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,

36. Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

37. Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38. This is the first and great commandment.

39. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

40. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

41. While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,

42. Saying, What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David.

43. He saith unto them, How, then, doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying,

44. The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?

45. If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?

46. And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.

Suggestions:

The Pharisees and the Sadducees had been asking questions of Jesus, by which they had intended to entangle him, and to make him appear to be teaching doctrines contrary to the orthodox beliefs of the people. But our Lord answered with divine wisdom teaching them in each instance the deep underlying truth which could not be disturbed by their superficial cavillings.

When the Pharisees heard that the Sadducees (the rival religious party) had failed in their attempts to make Jesus appear unpractical, they gathered to try to catch him in his talk. One of the lawyers, a scribe who had to do with copying and interpreting the law (God's law as given in the old Testament), stood out and asked Jesus which of all the commandments was the greatest. Without the slightest hesitation Jesus answered him, giving the summing up of the whole law toward God as the first commandment, and the summing up of man's duty to man as the second commandment. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. This concise epitome of the law was much used and, printed on phylacteries, was worn tied on the forehead and on the arms of the zealous. (Deut. vi., 4-9; Lev. xix., 18.)

After all these questions from the Jews, our Lord asked a question of them: What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? This is a most important question for men to answer honestly and correctly. Jesus Christ is not only the Son of David, perfect in humanity, he is also the Son of God, perfect in divinity. David spoke of him not as his son (descendant), but as his Lord, co-equal and one with Jehovah. (Ps. cx., 1.)

But the Pharisees had studied the Scrip-

tures without the aid of the Holy Spirit, and had failed to realize the true character of the Messiah. To the questions of Jesus they were not able to reply, because they were not seeking the truth with their whole hearts.

Questions.

How did the leaders of the Jews try to entangle Jesus in his talk? Did they have any success? What did our Lord say was the first and great commandment? What the second? Would we be happy if we obeyed these? Will you try to obey them for this year? Is there anything too hard for Jesus to do?

C. E. Topic.

Sun., Jan. 27.—Topic—Missions: resolutions.—Rom. i., 14-16.

Junior C. E. Topic.**A MISSIONARY CONTRAST.**

Mon., Jan. 21.—Homes without God.—Eph. ii., 12.

Tues., Jan. 22.—God in the home.—Acts x., 1, 2.

Wed., Jan. 23.—The world's need.—John viii., 12.

Thu., Jan. 24.—Send forth the Gospel.—Rom. x., 13-15.

Fri., Jan. 25.—Making home happy.—Acts xvi., 30-34.

Sat., Jan. 26.—Thank God for your blessings.—Ps. ciii., 1-5.

Sun., Jan. 27.—Topic—Missions: heathen homes and Christian homes. I. Tim., i., 3-5; iii., 14, 15.

The Free Church Catechism.

12. Q.—What benefit have we from the Son of God becoming Man?

A.—We have a Mediator between God and men; one who as God reveals to us what God is, and, as perfect Man, represents our race before God.

13. Q.—What further benefits have we from our Lord's life on earth?

A.—We have in him a brother man who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, as well as perfect example of what we ought to be.

14. Q.—What did he accomplish for us by his death on the Cross?

A.—By offering himself a sacrifice without blemish unto God, he fulfilled the requirements of Divine Holiness, atoned for all our sins, and broke the power of Sin.

The Unseen Hand.

'I'm very glad you've come to-day, miss, for I've something wonderful to tell you,' said the mother of one of my Sunday scholars on opening the door one afternoon in answer to my knock.

'Well,' she began, when I had taken a seat, 'Willie started last evening to go to the choir practice; it was so dark that one couldn't see one's fingers, but I didn't like to say he shouldn't go.'

'It was a very rough night, but during a lull soon after he had started my ears caught the cry, "Oh, dear! Oh!" and I knew that the voice was Willie's. "I'm coming!" I shouted back, as I sprang forward into the darkness. As I went the wind rose higher, and suddenly with its roaring were mingled loud strains from the village band practicing in the squire's coach-house.

"If only they'd leave off beating the drum," I sighed as I halted; then I called loudly, "Willie, where are you?" but no answer came. I went a little further, and then the noise and the blackness confused me; I felt I was going crookedly, and presently had wandered off the road to the grass beside it.

'Then a terrible fear entered my heart and caused me to stand still—the fear lest my child or I should find a watery grave. "Lord, keep us from harm, be our Guide, and we shall be safe," I whispered.

'Then I called again to Willie, and receiving no reply, moved on, but had gone only a few steps when I felt compelled to halt once more. Spreading out my right hand I bent lower and lower, to find out whether I was near any shrub, and when the tips of my fingers touched water, I realized that I stood on the edge of the pond, and that my Lord had sent his angel to save me from

taking that one step which was between me and death.

"Father, I thank Thee," I faltered, as I rose; and at that moment a vivid flash of lightning showed me which way to take. My feet were scarcely on the hard road again when the band ceased playing, the wind was hushed, and there was a calm. Eagerly I raised my voice to utter my boy's name, and immediately a cheery "Here, mother!" came to me, and at the same time a lantern appeared at the top of the lane; and presently when the bearer shouted: "Hullo, what's amiss?" I knew that he was Mr. Jarvis, the bootmaker.

'We soon met and got Willie out of the ditch into which he had tumbled in consequence of walking too near its edge, and where—on account of having an arm in a sling—he was obliged to stay till some one arrived to assist him up the steep side; but the ditch was a dry one, so he is none the worse for his adventure, I am glad to say.'

Mrs. Grant's eyes filled with tears of gratitude as she added, 'Oh, it was wonderful! Truly the angel of his presence saved me, and I can never thank him half enough for that marvellous proof that he is very nigh unto all that call upon him.'—Daphne Hammonde, in 'Friendly Greetings.'

Temperance Sunday.

Mr. Amos R. Wells gives the following hints for a 'Quotation Lesson' on temperance Sunday:

The teacher holds in his hand a bunch of papers, on each of which is written an interesting quotation bearing on temperance. The collection will include longer anecdotes as well as brisk sentences. Many will bear famous names. Each scholar will choose a quotation at random and read it aloud. The teacher will draw out its meaning by questions, will add illustrations and practical comments, will tell something about the author of the quotation, or will show the connection of the thought or anecdote with the day's lesson. In some classes the scholars themselves may be trusted to bring their own quotations or anecdotes.

Let me mention briefly a few more devices out of many that may add interest to these lessons. Get a trained worker along temperance lines to come in and address the class. Carry out a series of simple experiments, showing the physiological effects of alcohol. Try a fifteen-minutes' debate on some temperance topic. Get the scholars now and then to write five-minute essays, or give five-minute talks on appropriate themes. Let one edit a temperance paper, in manuscript, of course—collecting contributions from each scholar and reading the result before the class as a sample number of the 'Cold Water Herald.' Some Sunday call on every member of the class to sign the pledge.

It is an admirable plan to set each of your scholars to doing some steady work in preparation for these lessons. One, for instance, may watch the newspapers and collect temperance facts and illustrations of the evils of strong drink. Indeed, the theme branches out into channels so many and so wide, that, when once the teacher is started upon them, his greatest lack will be of time for exploration, and so far from desiring the temperance lessons fewer than four, he will wish it were possible for them to come every month.—'Christian Endeavor World.'

The Parents' Words.

Parents should see to it that their children study the lessons used in the Sunday school. In this way they can co-operate directly and powerfully with the efforts of the Sunday school. Parents should not only make themselves acquainted with the lesson, but they should require the children to study them. If this were done more generally the results of the work of the Sunday school would be much more satisfactory than they now frequently are. One of the weaknesses of our Sunday school work is that there is so little attention paid to the preparation of the lesson by the scholars. The only way to bring about an improvement is for parents to become interested in the matter, and insist upon the studying of the lesson during the week at home.—'Evangelical.'

Every man in his humor. 'World Wide' is a collection of the best writing on the most interesting subjects.