

returns. But the elder son, unpardoning and selfish as he has been (like many of the Jews towards the erring Gentile brethren), is not shut out from his Father's love, because the younger son has returned. There is room in God's heart for both.

GLIMPSES OF THE FUTURE (chs. 12; 13: 1-9, 22-30; 14: 1-24; 17: 20-37)—The disciples soon learned that they must share in the hatred of their countrymen towards their Master, but Jesus teaches them not to fear persecution. Judgment will ere long descend upon the rulers of a nation whose cup of misdoings is full, and Jesus will return to receive an account of the work done by His followers.

FALSE SPIRIT AMONG THE DISCIPLES—Wrong ambition soon manifested itself among men who were yet unequal to the responsibility of being leaders in the kingdom of God, Mark 10: 35-45. They needed lessons in humility and to learn that the childlike spirit of trust and simplicity is essential for members in the kingdom, Mark 10: 13-16.

LESSON XVI.

JEWISH PARTIES

The two great Jewish parties of Palestine in the time of Christ were the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

THEIR ORIGIN—This may be traced back to the close of the Captivity, although the parties did not definitely appear until the second century B.C.

When Ezra returned in 458 B.C., the two tendencies existed. Some of the Jews kept scrupulously apart from the heathen; others were lax in practice, even to intermarrying with the heathen and profaning the Sabbath. These were the germs of the two parties. In 445 B.C. Nehemiah found almost the same condition of affairs and made a successful stand against it.

LATER HISTORY—When the Greeks were masters of Palestine, their policy was to make the Jews as much like Greeks as possible. Not a few Jews, the priests especially, favored the introduction of Greek culture.

There was always a party, however, opposed to this. They were called Hasidæans ("pious"), were ardently devoted to the law, insisted on the rites of purification and on separation from all that was unclean. When the rule of the Greeks was overthrown by the

Maccabeans, they joined the standard of the latter, but afterwards withdrew, dissatisfied with their worldly policy.

Then the Sadducees and Pharisees came clearly into view. The Sadducees, probably so called from the proper name Zadok, successors of the old Hellenizers, were first of all a political party, interested much in the prosperity of the state and little in religion. The Pharisees ("separated"), the successors of the Hasidæans, were essentially a religious party, and insisted upon a strict observance of the law, upon separation from all foreign ways, all foreign alliances.

IN THE TIME OF CHRIST—The Sadducees now constituted the Jewish aristocracy, were in the majority in the Sanhedrin, filled the chief offices, and held most of the wealth of the land. The Pharisees were on a lower social plane, but were the real leaders of the people.

In their teaching and practice the Pharisees were known for their strict interpretation and scrupulous observance of the law. In the law they included the traditions of the elders. The law was the rule for all life, national, social, and personal.

In particular, the Pharisees believed in the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the dead, and future rewards and punishments. The Sadducees denied these doctrines. The Pharisees looked for the Messiah, for a literal reign of God upon earth, in which they should have a leading part. The Sadducees were quite indifferent to such expectations.

In relation to national life, the Sadducees were open to foreign influences, and denying, as they did, the future life, sought to make the most of this life by suing the favor of the conqueror. The Pharisees were the patriots of Israel. Their idea of patriotism contained much that was false, yet they sacrificed to it their fortune and their life.

Why did Jesus assail the Pharisees so severely and spare the Sadducees? The religion of the Pharisees had more points of contact with Christianity than the cold, lifeless system of the Sadducees, yet it was wholly unspiritual, they were the most vehement in their opposition to Christ, their numbers were many, and they had most influence with the common people.