

The Sunday School

BIBLE LESSON

Abridged from Peloubet's Notes.

Second Quarter.

JESUS AT THE PHARISEE'S HOUSE.

Lesson VII. May 13. Luke 7:36-50.

Read Matthew 18:23-35.

Commit Verses 44-47.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Thy faith hath saved thee.—Luke 7:50.

EXPLANATORY.

Distinctions.—This incident must be distinguished from the anointing of Jesus' feet, by Mary, at the house of Simon, of Bethany (Matt. 26:6-13), which was a year and a half later. Simon was a common name applied to fifteen different persons in the New Testament. Nor should this woman be confounded with Mary Magdalene, out of whom Jesus cast seven devils; although in art and common thought they have often been so identified.

I. THE TWO TYPES OF SINNERS.—Vs. 36, 37. First Type: Simon the Pharisee, 36. AND ONE OF THE PHARISEES, Simon, by name (v. 40). There is every reason to suppose that he was one of the better class of Pharisees, partially open to conviction, and questioning whether indeed this might not be the expected prophet (see John 12:42). But his treatment of Jesus shows that he was unwilling to be acknowledged as his disciple, by publicly honoring him with the rites accorded to illustrious guests (vs. 44-46).

DISMISSED HIM. Was asking. "The tense implies that the request was repeated." AND HE WENT. Jesus was no hermit, keeping away from men, but went to any place where he could do good and reach the souls of men. He was like the rays of the sun, which shine on the most vile and unworthy things, and yet receive no defilement, but carry life and health wherever they go. It is safe for us to go wherever our work calls us, where we take our religion with us, and make it helpful to our fellow-men. AND SAT DOWN TO MEAT. "Reclined at table." At meals, the custom was to recline on a couch, the head toward the table, the feet outward, and the body supported by the left arm. Here it is necessary to remember this, to understand the movements of the grateful woman.

Second Type: A Woman that was a Sinner. 37. A WOMAN IN THE CITY, WHICH WAS A SINNER. "One who had been and was still regarded as a sinner; that is, of bad character, unchaste." She was so notorious as to be recognized by Simon as a person of such character. WHEN SHE KNEW THAT JESUS SAT AT MEAT. "Her presence there is explained by the Oriental custom of strangers passing in and out of a house during a meal to see and converse with the guests. Tremblay cites a description of a dinner at a consul's house in Damietta. Many came in and took their places on the side seats, uninvited and yet unchallenged. They spoke to those at table on business or the news of the day, and our host spoke freely to them."

II. TWO WAYS OF TREATING JESUS.—Vs. 37, 38, 44-46. First: The Woman's Way. 37. BROUGHT AN ALABASTER BOX. Plask. "Literally, 'an alabaster,' just as we call a drinking vessel made of glass 'a glass.' Pliny compares these vessels to a closed rosebud." "Alabasters" was derived probably from "Alabastron," a town in Egypt. OF OINTMENT. The ointment with which Mary of Bethany anointed Jesus' feet was worth 300 pence, Roman silver denarii, worth 15 to 17 cents each, or \$50. Equivalent to \$300 in our day.

38. AND STOOD (was standing) AT HIS FEET, which she could easily reach on account of his reclining posture. WEEPING, in penitence. BEGAN TO WASH (rather, "to wet") HIS FEET WITH TEARS that fell unconsciously upon them, "before she could perform the act of love she had in mind." AND DID WIPE THEM WITH THE HAIRS OF HER HEAD. Having no cloth to wipe them, she promptly loosed her hair, and with that supplied its place, in order to remove the stains of her tears. She took "woman's chief ornament" and devoted it to wiping the travel-stained feet of her Saviour. She devoted the best she had to even the least honorable service for him. It was the utmost possible expression of her love and devotion.

AND KISSED HIS FEET. "The verb is a compound one, expressing tenderness of regard. 'She rained kisses upon them.' The tense of this and the following verb shows that the actions were continued and repeated, as though she could not desist." "The woman's kissing his feet was no impropriety. A woman would do it today to a judge, or to any high official from whom she expects or has received a great favor. It was a mark of most submissive respect." AND ANOINTED THEM WITH THE OINTMENT. "The use of unguents, for pleasure or honor, has always existed in the East to

an extent which we cannot appreciate—except as a barbarian. To anoint with costly ointment in place of oil, however, was an extravagant honor.

Second: The Pharisee's Way. Note the contrast in the way the Pharisee treated Jesus.

44. I ENTERED INTO THINE HOUSE Where every opportunity for expressions of honor and love to his guest was given him. THOU GAVEST ME NO WATER FOR MY FEET. To refresh the feet soiled with the dust and heat of summer travel. The feet were shod only with sandals, and these the guest leaves at the door when he enters the house. This did not show any special disrespect or want of common courtesy. He simply treated Jesus in the most ordinary way, with no mark of reverence or special respect, such as he would have given had he recognized Jesus' real nature and mission.

45. THOU GAVEST ME NO KISS. The kiss is a common—very common—salutation in the East. Not, however, between the sexes. That the Pharisee gave Jesus no kiss was not because he lacked politeness, but because he did not consider Jesus either near enough as a friend, or high enough in honor, to call for that manner of welcome.

46. MY HEAD WITH OIL THOU DIDST NOT ANOINT. An ordinary token of respect. "Oil,"—common oil is here contrasted with the "ointment," which was the finer and costlier of the two. Christ means to say to Simon, 'Thou didst not anoint my head,' the nobler part, with 'ordinary' oil. She hath anointed my 'feet' with 'costly' ointment."

III. A MIRROR FOR TWO SOULS.—Vs. 39-46. 39. HE SPARK WITHIN HIMSELF. Not venturing to utter his thoughts. THIS MAN, IF HE WERE A PROPHET, WOULD HAVE KNOWN. And like a true Pharisee, judging from the ceremonial point of view, he was sure that Jesus would not have let the woman touch him, had he known the kind of person she was. He misjudged entirely, for Jesus did know her heart, to which the Pharisee was blind.

40. JESUS ANSWERING the thought of his heart. "Simon did not see through his guest, but Christ saw through him." I HAVE SOMEWHAT TO SAY UNTO THEE. A courteous way of asking permission to speak. To every one of us individually, if we will listen, Jesus has something to say. MASTER. Greek, "teacher"; so we say schoolmaster.

41. THERE WAS A CERTAIN CREDITOR. Typifying God, to whom we owe obedience. WHICH HAD TWO DEBTORS. Typifying sinners, who had failed to pay to God the obedience due. THE ONE OWED FIVE HUNDRED PENCE. Silver denarii, worth 15 to 17 cents; about \$80. THE OTHER FIFTY. About \$5. The former sum represents the enormous amount of sin to which this sinful woman pleaded guilty, and which Jesus had pardoned; the latter, the few infractions of the law for which the Pharisee reproached himself.

42. AND WHEN THEY HAD NOTHING TO PAY. When they realized this, and confessed it. All sinners are equally unable to pay their debt of sin. Only God can forgive and save. HE FRANKLY. Freely, without payment of the debt. FORGAVE THEM BOTH. Alike the large and small debt. So God forgives freely, gladly, all who truly repent and believe. God's love is like the ocean, that can cover a mountain as easily as a mole hill. WHICH OF THEM WILL LOVE HIM MOST? Which has the most reason for loving?

43. HE TO WHOM HE FORGAVE MOST. The two debts owed were in one sense "sin," unfulfilled obligations; but as the application of the parable shows, the "sense of sinfulness" is meant. And this does not depend upon the actual guilt, which only God can measure.

IV. TWIN GRACES: FORGIVENESS AND LOVE.—Vs. 47-49. 47. WHEREFORE. The reason for saying that. HER SINS, WHICH ARE MANY, ARE FORGIVEN. Have been and are. FOR SHE LOVED MUCH. Not "because" she loved much, as though her love were the cause of the forgiveness; but you may know that she is forgiven by the fact that she loved much, as proved by the acts spoken of in vs. 44-46. TO WHOM LITTLE IS FORGIVEN, THE SAME LOVETH LITTLE; i.e., he who "feels" little need of forgiveness loveth little.

V. 48. Then he spoke directly to the woman, so that she might have assurance doubly sure. THY SINS ARE FORGIVEN.

49. WHO IS THIS THAT (even) FORGIVETH SINS. Showing how astonished the people were at the claims of Jesus and calling attention to the great facts of his life and death, that he came to redeem men from sin and be the means of their forgiveness.

V. TWO GREAT BLESSINGS: FAITH AND PEACE.—V 50 AND HE SAID TO THE WOMAN THY FAITH HATH SAVED THEE. She showed her faith in him (1) by going to him in the house in this public way; (2) by her penitence for her sins; (3) by her acts of love and devotion. "Hath saved thee." Not only from sin,

and the punishment of sin, but to a pure and holy life. GO IN PEACE. The Greek is strictly, "Go into peace." "Peace" is conceived of as a state which one entering is to go forward in, so as to realize, ever more and more, that rest and serenity of soul which follow pardon and deepen finally into eternal rest."

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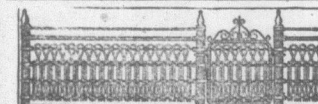
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