

THE LESSON GRADED

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the School.

For Teachers of Bible Classes

This Lesson is the exposition of the Golden Text, and shows how the lines were drawn by Jesus as He approached the close of His public ministry.

1. *Those on Christ's side*, v. 49, 50. Bring out three points: (a) The new wonder worker using Jesus' name. Consider the widespread influence of Jesus when His name was regarded as capable of casting out demons. Make clear that this man was engaged in helping others, although he did not become one of the band of followers. (b) The position of the disciples that because he did not follow them he could not be a true disciple, so they forbade him. (c) Jesus' teaching, which distinguishes the essential oneness of aim and spirit from the diversity of methods. The lesson to emphasize is the sin of narrow, sectarian prejudices.

2. *Those against Christ*, vs. 51-56. Bring out the fact that these rejected Him probably through ignorance on account of the traditional opposition of the Samaritans to Jewish customs. Take up the vindictive attitude of the disciples who wished to have them destroyed, and Jesus' rebuke of this spirit. In view of this incident dwell upon Jesus' mission as one of life giving. He would not destroy men's lives, but spared them for a future opportunity.

3. *The danger of doubtful attitudes*, vs. 57-62. Take up the three types: (a) The impulsive type. Follow out Jesus' answer as throwing light upon the shallowness of the man's faith. The lesson to teach is the necessity of carefully facing the problems involved in discipleship. (b) The hesitating type. The excuse is probably an allusion to a proverb implying some attachment supposed to be very tender and sensitive. Note Jesus' answer that the interests of the living must have precedence over sacred and tender memories. (c) The divided mind. Bring out that this man was a volunteer, feeling a great desire to be a disciple, but his interest shows a disposition to cling to old associations. Note that Jesus' reply

demands immediate action. To yield to the power of old associations is to unfit for the service demanded by the kingdom.

Sum up by showing that a doubtful attitude is a very dangerous attitude, and that it must either become supreme passion for the Master or will soon lapse into denial of the Saviour. This is a strong appeal for decision for Christ.

For Teachers of the Senior Scholars

The title of the Lesson will afford a good subject for an introductory talk with the class. We must be either for or against Christ. There is no middle ground. Where do we stand? We have five different classes of people in the Lesson whose attitude towards Jesus is indicated.

1. *A Miracle Worker*, vs. 49, 50. What was he doing? Why did the disciples forbid him? What kind of spirit did they manifest in this? If we feel that nothing is done quite right unless it is done by those who belong to our sect we show the narrow, bigoted spirit of the disciples. Dwell upon the broad, beautiful spirit of the Master when compared with that of the disciples.

2. *The Samaritans*, vs. 51-56. Ask some one to tell about the Samaritans. Who were they, and why did they not receive Jesus? What happy dealings did Jesus once have with the Samaritans? (See John 4:38-42.) They were at this time prejudiced against Him because He was a Jew. What national prejudices are we liable to manifest in Canada? Make it very clear that prejudice of any kind is a mean thing and a belittling thing. How did the disciples propose to deal with these people? Bring out the meaning of Christ's rebuke. Do not fail to lead the scholars to see that Christ lived in a larger, better world than His disciples.

3. *A Volunteer*, vs. 57, 58. This seems at first sight to be an out-and-outer. What answer will Jesus give to a man like this? It looks like a discouraging one. It is a testing one at least. Some volunteers need to think more about what they are doing, about the cost of discipleship. One never does a better thing than when he volunteers for Christ, but he must do this thoughtfully, earnestly, prayerfully.