

The Sunday School

BIBLE LESSON

Abridged from Peloubet's Notes.

First Quarter.

CHRIST HEALING THE BLIND MAN.

Lesson XI. March 12.—John 9:12, 7-11.

Study the Chapter. Commit Verses 5-7.

GOLDEN TEXT.

One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. John 9:25.

EXPLANATORY.

I. A MAN BORN BLIND.—V. 1. AND AS JESUS PASSED BY. This does not refer to the passing from the temple, mentioned in the last verse of chap. 8, which is another word in the Greek, as in the R. V., but as he was passing along on his way about the city. SAW A MAN WHICH WAS BLIND FROM HIS BIRTH. Of the six miracles connected with blindness which are recorded in the gospels, this is the only case described as blindness from birth. In this lies its special characteristic (v. 32). It is still true, according to the latest authorities, that congenital blindness can rarely be cured, the only form which is susceptible of cure being that of congenital cataract.

Canon Tristram says, "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. But among these cases it is difficult to find any born blind. Congenital blindness is as rare in East as in the West," and hence was certain to attract attention.

II. A DISCUSSION OF THE MYSTERY OF PROVIDENCE.—Vs. 2-5. 2. WHO DID SIN THAT HE WAS BORN BLIND? This is the question that troubled the friends of Job, and made them so unjust in their judgments; and it has troubled people in all ages. For it is true in many cases that the suffering is the natural result of sin.

It was plain the man's blindness might have come from his parents' sin, but how could it come from his own sin, since he had been blind from his birth? Could he have sinned before he was born, in some pre-existent state?

3. JESUS ANSWERED, NEITHER HATH THIS MAN SINNED, NOR HIS PARENTS. Not that they were perfect, and had never done wrong, but the affliction had not come as the result or punishment of any particular sin, beyond that of others who did not suffer such an affliction; as in the case of those upon whom the tower of Siloam fell (Luke 13:1-5). But the blindness came THAT THE WORKS OF GOD SHOULD BE MADE MANIFEST IN HIM. Manifest to himself, and through him to the world all down the ages. Who would not be willing to be blind for a few years if thereby he could reveal and proclaim Jesus as the light of the world, and reflect the goodness, the power, the comfort of God to millions of his fellowmen?

4. I (better as in R. V., "we") MUST WORK THE WORKS OF HIM THAT SENT ME, WHILE IT IS DAY; i. e., while the fitting opportunity lasts, as the daylight is the fitting time for our daily work. This was suggested by the blind man's case before him. "I am the light of the world," and I must make this blessing known more clearly by curing this man who is now before us.

THE NIGHT COMETH WHEN NO MAN CAN WORK. The day of opportunity passes, never to return. Even Christ must do his work of redemption, and of teaching, at the time appointed, or it never could be done. He might do other works afterwards, but not those.

5. AS LONG AS I AM IN THE WORLD, I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. The article is wanting in the Greek, "I am light to the world."

There are two ways of being light to men: one is by letting the light shine; the other is the opening the eyes so that they can see the light that is shining. In both ways Jesus is the light of the world. He is the sun and the opener of blind eyes.

III. THE BLIND MAN RESTORED TO SIGHT.—AN EXAMPLE AND ILLUSTRATION.—Vs. 6, 7.

Jesus now illustrates this great truth by an enacted PARABLE OF REDEMPTION, a miracle on the blind man, which is a sign, and proof, and parable of his work of enlightening the world, and also of the method he often uses in curing spiritual blindness.

6. HE SPAT ON THE GROUND, AND MADE CLAY OF THE SPITTLE, AND . . . ANOINTED THE EYES. A thousand experiments would show that this act had no power to make blind eyes see. The means were simple, so that he would not trust in the means, but in him who was the light of the world; not in the dead wire, but in the mighty power that flowed through it.

The belief in the healing power of saliva, says the "Oriental Note" in the Sunday School Times, was universal in the ancient Oriental world, as it still is where primitive customs survive.

"Jesus applies harmless saliva, that the man might be helped to believe by having something external done to him. Your straitlaced dogmatists will never see the kindly spirit of such action in this. They would see the man blind all his days before they would 'pander' to such notions. Jesus is more kindly reasonable. He does not attempt to argue the notion out of the man's mind. He simply lets it alone, and helps the man through his grandmotherly beliefs finally to a strong faith in the divine power."

7. AND SAID UNTO HIM, GO WASH IN THE POOL OF SILOAM; i. e., wash off the clay that has been put upon your eyes. This was a test of his faith and obedience, and also a means of increasing them. One of the best things for an inquirer is to give him something to do. "The pool of Siloam" was a large pool on the southeast of Jerusalem, near the Fountain Gate. WHICH IS BY INTERPRETATION, SENT. Or "senting," i. e., outlet of waters.

IV. DISCUSSION ARISING FROM THIS CURE.—Vs. 8-11.

FIRST, AMONG HIS NEIGHBORS. 8. IS NOT THIS HE THAT SAT AND BEGGED? The circumstance that he had abandoned his occupation as a beggar called attention to the marvelous change in him. A change in conduct is what the world usually notices first in those to whom spiritual eyesight is given. And such a change occasions debate, as in this case. I knew a manufacturer who was converted, and almost the first notice I had of the fact was from one of his workmen, who had told me that he had immediately enlarged the drum on which his goods were measured so as to make the fact correspond with the labels.

9. HE IS LIKE HIM. But yet another man who had never been blind. This seemed easier to believe. "The opening of the eyes would naturally change the whole countenance." If we are truly changed by grace, our friends and neighbors will remark the difference in us. I AM HE. This settled the question of fact, but still they could not conceive how the change could take place, and therefore asked (v. 10). HOW WERE THINE EYES OPENED? Then in v. 11 he repeats the story of his cure. The facts were unanswerable.

Character Building.

There is a common impression that character is shaped and destiny determined by what is done in the great crises of life. It is important to bear in mind that these crises are not independent of our common hours, but that the work of giving form and bent to character is a matter of daily doing. The work goes on, not only in these moments which we call critical, when great issues hinge manifestly upon our actions, and the eyes of men are upon us; but also in the obscure hours of life, and along the great paths of life's common levels. Much of the work is done in secret, when no eye sees, but God's. It will find full revelation in the clear light of eternity.—Baptist Union.

A serious conflict has taken place between the Russians and Chinese at Taliens-Wan, three hundred of the latter being killed. It is said to have originated in a question of taxes.

Mr. H. Whitney, president, and S. J. McLennan, treasurer, of the Dominion Coal Company, have been in conference with B. F. Pearson, secretary, and W. B. Ross, solicitor, of the company, to complete arrangements for the purchase of iron deposits at Conception Bay, Newfoundland. The next step is the foundation of a company to develop the deposits, and Mr. Whitney will apply to the Nova Scotia Legislature for a charter. The new company will be capitalized at \$30,000,000. The Whitney syndicate has contracted for the delivery of 200,000 tons of iron ore in Great Britain this year.

Mr. and Mrs. S. E. Frost celebrated their golden wedding on Wednesday evening, the 15th, at their home, Lower Norton. There were present over 70 friends and relatives and a very enjoyable evening was spent. The bride and groom received many very appropriate presents, among the rest a purse of gold. The gathering broke up at an early hour with the best wishes of all present for many more years of happy life together. Among those present were four daughters and two sons—Mrs. H. V. Dixon, Nauwigawauk; Mrs. A. D. Smith, St. John; Mrs. A. H. Upham, Upham Station; and Miss Lottie Frost, and Messrs. W. H.

Frost, Hampton, and John F. Frost, Lower Norton. Another son is S. L. T. Frost, of the customs department, Ottawa. The gathering was a very pleasant one, made particularly so by the fact that there has not been a death in the family, either among the children or grandchildren.

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Mr. Locke lives at Jordan Bay, and the

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Day by day his condition grew worse, and his sufferings increased. He used various remedies, each of which was said by its manufacturers, to be a sure cure. Yet these failed as the doctors had failed.

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Soon after he had taken his first dose of this medicine he felt a slight change for the better. Every day this change grew more noticeable to both himself and his family, and at length, Mr. Locke was well again—in sound health, and robust strength, able to work, to eat, to sleep, to enjoy life, as well and as heartily as he ever did.

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