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BIBLE LESSONS.

STUDIES IN MARK.

Second Quarter.

Lesson XIII. June 30. Mark 16: 14-20.

REVIEW AND MISSIONS.

GOLDEN TEXT.

These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name.—John 20: 31.

As we have been studying the story of Christ's life for six months past, it will be well for our Review to take, as it were, a bird's eye view of His life, and impress upon the scholars the main incidents, leaving a picture which never can be effaced. Below is given a series of questions, showing one way in which this general view of Christ's life may be set forth.

SUBJECT—THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

I. HIS BIRTH AND EARLY LIFE. When and where was Jesus born? His mother's name. Give three incidents of His early life. In what place did he live? for how many years? What was His occupation? When and where was He baptized?

II. THE TIME AND PLACE OF HIS MINISTRY. How old was Jesus when he began His public ministry? How long did it last? In what two countries was most of it spent? What other countries did He visit? Name the chief cities in which He taught. Name two mountains, a lake and a river connected with His life.

III. HIS TEACHINGS. What sermon of Jesus is recorded. In what way did he do much of his teaching? Name some of the principal parables He spoke. Give some of His illustrations. What were some of the leading truths He taught?

IV. HIS MIRACLES. Name some of the principal miracles. What was the purpose of the miracles? Over what evils and enemies of men did they show our Saviour's power? Were they all miracles of help and blessing?

V. INCIDENTS REVEALING HIS CHARACTER. How did He gain victory over temptation? What did His example teach about the Sabbath? What was revealed concerning Him on the Mount of Transfiguration? What by His night of prayer? by His washing the disciple's feet? by His agony in the garden? by His words upon the cross?

VI. THE ATONEMENT ON THE CROSS. By whom was Jesus betrayed? where? By whom was He condemned? On what occasions was He mocked? Where was He crucified? How many times did He speak on the cross? How long did the crucifixion last? What happened at its close? Where was Jesus buried?

VII. HIS RESURRECTION. How long was Jesus in the tomb? When did He rise? Who saw Him first? How many times did He appear? In what places? For how long? What was His last act on earth? From what place did He ascend to God?

VIII. THE GREAT COMMISSION. What was Jesus' last message to His people (Mark 16: 15, 16.) Who is to go? Where are they to go? Are any nations to be omitted? What are we to preach and teach? (Matt. 28: 19, 20.) What aids did God give them? (Mark 16: 17, 18.) Have missions been successful? Have any churches succeeded without the missionary spirit? Is such a Saviour worthy of being preached everywhere?

The Way of Escape.

No one doubts the terrific strength of temptation, or the universality of the experience. Temptation itself we cannot escape.

"What is life, father?"
"A battle, my child,
Where the strongest lance may fail,
Where the wariest eyes may be beguiled,
And the stoutest heart may quail;
Where the foes are gathered on every hand,
And rest not day or night,
And the feeble little ones must stand
In the thickest of the fight."

Yet no truth is more clearly taught in the Scriptures than that none need fall into temptation. There is one golden passage which ought to be written on every struggler's banner, which says: "There hath no temptation taken you, but such as a man can bear; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it." The words represent the faithful God as keeping His eye on each one of His children in all temptation, ready at an instant, when He sees the trial becoming too sore, to open a door of escape. It may be profitable to consider what are some of the ways in which God provides for our escape from the fierce assaults of temptation.

Our way of escape is by our resolute choice of the right. Every time there comes to us a temptation to take a wrong course, there is also another course open. Two ways lie before us, a right way and a wrong way, and we must take our choice. God's "way of escape" at that point is the way of duty and right. If we take it we are absolutely safe at once.

"Stop a minute," said a gentleman to the friend who was walking with him. "Just here I once fought for my soul's life, and by the grace of God won it."

"How was that?" asked his friend.

"It happened in the time of my clerkship," was the answer. "I left my room one Friday evening for a stroll. While standing right here for a moment I was hailed by a young clerk whom I knew. He was two years older than myself—smart, clever, with manner that to me was very attractive. Pointing toward a neighborhood, then notorious for its haunts of evil pleasures, he invited me to go with him there.

"Young and social myself, it seemed impossible to resist. Having taken a few steps with the young man, all at once the sight of the chapel, in the rear of the church yonder, reminded me of a promise I had made an old friend to meet him there some Friday evening at the prayer-meeting. But I was moving the other way. It seemed now as if I heard this voice: 'If you go yonder tonight you will never again feel like going to the chapel. Which party will you join? Answer.'

"It was the crisis of my life. Here I stood where two ways met. The debate was torture. I prayed inwardly and power came. I stopped short, mentioned the promise I had given my older friend, bowed my good night, and hastened to the chapel."

It is easy to see what in that case was God's way of escape. The light in the chapel window was the signal that marked it out. That young man *took* the open way and began a noble life. There is such a way of escape from every temptation, and he who takes it is safe. He runs into the path of right and duty and God folds his wings of love over him.

Another way of escape is avoidance of the path in which danger lies. We pray each morning, "Lead us not into temptation." Then we must not go where temptation is, unless God plainly and clearly leads us there. Strongest warning should be uttered against the reckless rushing into spiritual danger which is so common. True, there is a bit of Scripture which says, "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways;" but that promise is not ours to plead unless we are walking in duty's path with God. When God leads us where temptation's fires are hottest we must go and he will shelter us; but if we go unsent and unled, we go unsheltered. In many temptations God's way of escape is to keep entirely away from them. We have no business to do any thing else. Temptation is too terrible a thing to be rushed into with blind, reckless disregard of danger. We ought never to be cowards in duty. Where God bids us go we should go though the way swarm with devils. But we *ought* to be cowards about going into temptation.

Countless thousands have ventured into temptation, going unbidden into the way of danger, clambering down the perilous edges of death to gather flowers of pleasure, and then have fallen into hopeless shame and eternal death. God's way of escape from these perils is to keep as far as possible from them. How can the young man expect God to keep him from the drunkard's woe if he deliberately enters the drinking saloon and puts the cup to his lips. How can the young girl expect God to keep her pure if she stands on the streets at night and mingles with the immodest and the indecent? Avoidance of the temptation is God's way of escape from all such danger.

Then if temptations come where we are in the path of duty, as they surely will come, flight to God as refuge is the ordained way of escape. Not long since a gentleman was walking along a city street when he was greatly surprised at the strange actions of a little bird that came fluttering down, evidently in great alarm and excitement, and lighted on his bosom and quickly crept under his coat. The poor thing had been chased by a hawk, and thus sought refuge from its pursurer. It is thus that the chased and hunted soul should run to Christ and creep into his bosom in every time of danger.

The door is not shut day or night and the weary and imperrilled ones who fly there for sanctuary are never disappointed, never turned away, but are always made welcome.

"How precious is thy loving kindness,
O God!
And the children of men take refuge
Under the shadow of thy wings".

These are some of the principal ways of escape from temptation which the faithful God makes for his children. If we but trust him unquestioningly, and obey him implicitly, we shall never be defeated in life's sore battles, but shall be more than conquerors through Him that loved us.—*The Presbyterian.*

A Boy's Temptations.

You have heard of the old castle that was taken by a single gun. The attacking force had only one gun and it seemed hopeless to try to take the castle; but one soldier said, "I will show you how we can take the castle" and he pointed the cannon to one spot and fired, and went on all day, never moving the cannon. About nightfall there were a few grains of sand knocked off the wall. He did the same thing the next day and the next. By-and-by the stones began to come away, and by steadily working his gun for one week he made a hole in that castle big enough for the army to walk through. Now with a single gun firing away at every boy's life the devil is trying to get in at one opening. Temptation is the practice of the soul, and if you never have any temptation you will never have any practice. A boy that attends fifty drills in a year is a much better soldier than the one that only drills twice. Do not quarrel with your temptations; set yourself resolutely to face them.—*Prof. Drummond.*

The Power of Simple Confidence.

A young man, distressed about his soul, had confided his difficulties to a friend, who discerned very quickly that he was striving to obtain everlasting life by great efforts. He spoke of "sincere prayers" and "heartfelt desires" for salvation, but continually lamented that he did not "feel any different in spite of all."

His friend did not answer him at first, but presently interrupted him with the inquiry.

"W., did you ever learn to float?"

"Yes, I did," was the surprised reply.

"And did you find it easy to learn?"

"Not at first," he answered.

"What was the difficulty?" his friend pursued.

"Well, the fact was, I could not lie still; I could not believe or realize that the water would hold me up without any effort of my own, so I always began to struggle, and, of course, down I went at once."

"And then?"

"Then I found that I must give up all the struggle and just rest on the strength of the water to bear me up. It was easy enough after that. I was able to lie back in the fullest confidence that I should never sink."

"And is not God's word more worthy of your trust than the changeable sea? He does not bid you wait for feelings; he commands you just to rest in him, to believe his word and accept his gift. His message of life reaches down to you in your place of ruin and death, and his word to you now is, "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6: 23).—*Occident.*

The Great Penal Colony of the World.

The number of convicts and exiles sent to Siberia from Russia itself between the years 1754 and 1884 was little short of a million, the exiles alone numbering 750,000. From 1823 to 1832 the number of persons exiled was 98,725; from 1853 to 1862, 101,238; and from 1863 to 1873, 146,380.

The condition of the exiles is very bad, and, as their sole aim is to get back to Russia, the number of those who get away is very large, amounting during the last twenty years to 24 per cent of the total number of exiles. In 1877 it was officially stated that, in the Government of Tomsk, out 28,828 of exiles 20,726, or more than a third, had fled. So in the Government of Tobolsk, out of the 31,122 exiles who had been sent there, only 34,293 were actually resident there in 1875. Most of the exiles are in the prime of life, and this renders it all the more difficult for them to accommodate themselves to a free mode of life.

Women form but a fifth of the whole number of exiles, and as most of them are over 40, there is very little chance of their marrying; while, for the matter of that, marriage is forbidden during the first five years of exile. Moreover there is little encouragement given the exiles to settle down into good colonists, as the natives take every possible advantage of them, and the relations between the two divisions of the population are very unfriendly. According to the official statistics, two-thirds of the crimes in Siberia are committed by exiles, and this fact seems to have struck the government at St. Petersburg and to have been one of the motives which has led to the formation of a special committee to inquire into the whole subject.—*London Times.*

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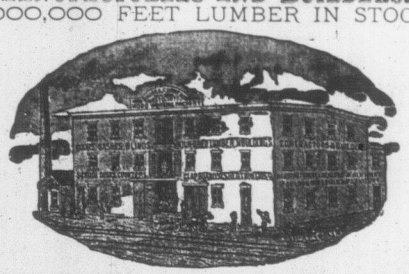
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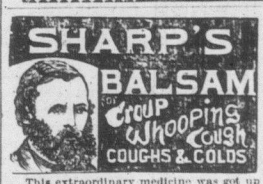

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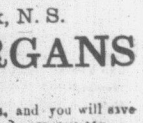
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