

day to the city, not having partaken of Martha's hospitality, (having fasted, as is supposed, preparatory to giving his last teaching to those awaiting him,) and having on foot climbed the Mount of Olives and descended to the plain, he felt hungry, as a man, and seeing a fig-tree on the way he went to it and found no fruit thereon, nothing but leaves, (tho' on good fig-trees the fruit appears first,) and to teach his disciples a lesson, he said unto it, (not in anger,) "No man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever."

This occurred about five days before the Passover of unleavened bread, and about six days before the crucifixion.

The lessons to be taught were three, as may be supposed. 1st, The tree without fruit was intended to point out the state of the Jewish people—making a profession without the possession of true religion; also in supposing that they only were the peculiar people of God, and thus despising others; and in being hypocrites, merely Pharisaic professors—embled by leaves and no fruit. 2nd, On the following morning as they repassed they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots, (20.) Surely this sight was emblematical of the end of the ungodly. They who had advantages from the teachings of our Lord did not improve by them and were thus made more hostile to Him. Their hearts were hardened and their necks were stiffened. Mark 6:52; 8:17. Consequently, as on this tree, the stroke of God fell upon them in time by the Roman axe, and in eternity by everlasting destruction. 3rd, Let each remember that a fruitless soul must perish. Mat. 3:10; John 15:2. After purifying the Temple and arousing the anger of the Scribes and Chief Priests, who sought to destroy him, he returned to Bethany for the night; and on the next morning Peter called our Lord's attention to the fig tree that had withered away; he simply answered, "Have faith in God," and encouraged his followers so to do.

(30.) PRAYER AND FORGIVENESS: Mark 11:24—33.

Christ and his twelve disciples are now crossing the crest of the Mount of Olives on their way to the city of Jerusalem, where the last eventful days of his teaching await him. With the withered fig-tree in full view, they eagerly listen,

while Jesus states anew the principles of true, earnest and believing prayer. Every desire uttered in prayer with faith, is accepted and is sure of an answer; but with faith there must be forgiveness towards men. "Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us." Luke 11:4. See Matthew 18: 21, 22, 35. We must have the spirit of forgiveness; no unkind or jealous feelings; and we should be at peace with those who have injured or wronged us. If we do not forgive, God will not forgive those who cherish the sin of hatred, or envy, or spite, or malice, or revenge. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." Romans 12:19; see Matthew 7: 7, 8. "Ask, seek, knock;" these imply want, loss, earnestness. Ask with confidence and humility; seek with care and application; knock with importunity and perseverance. For he that asketh, receiveth; seeketh and findeth; knocketh and it shall be opened; Rev. 3:20.

They have now entered the Temple, and as Christ was teaching therein the Chief Priests, the Scribes, and the elders, asked Him who authorised Him to do these things. Our Lord puzzled them with a question that they were afraid to answer, for fear of the consequences to themselves.

They said, with regard to John's baptism, "We cannot tell," or rather, "We will not tell;" for they feared the people; and they would not recognize Christ as the Messiah. Were they to acknowledge John as the forerunner, they must of necessity receive Jesus as the Christ. The question so wisely put, placed them on the horns of a dilemma. Therefore they uttered a falsehood. Simplicity and truth give confidence and peace. Double-dealing and lying cause inquietude and trouble. A mind made up against the Saviour, cannot, and will not, receive any evidence of His Divinity. It is doomed to believe a lie; 2 Thess. 2:10, 11.

Our Lord thus gaining the advantage over those hypocrites, simply replied, "Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things;" namely, His receiving the acclamation of the people as the Messiah; His purifying the Temple and teaching therein.

Let each and all cultivate a forgiving