

A FALL DOWN THE PRECIPICE.

Some years ago a Russian nobleman was going to cross from Switzerland into Italy by the path of St. Theodule. The path lies over a large glacier, which is reckoned one of the least dangerous in Switzerland, but still is intersected by enormous fissures or crevasses in the ice, extending to a great depth. These crevasses are often lightly frozen over and covered with a coating of snow, so that the danger is unseen. It is therefore the custom for travellers who go this way to be roped together, leaving a considerable distance between each, so that if one should fall, the others to whom he is attached are able to draw him up again without danger to themselves.

This Russian nobleman, however, secure in his knowledge of the mountains and their perils, disdained the assistance of the rope, and with one guide prepared to cross the pass.

All went well for some time, and the traveller began to boast of his powers, and of his being able to do without the precautions taken by others.

All of a sudden the guide, who was in front, heard a crash and a cry, and looking back in alarm, the Russian was nowhere to be seen; only a hole where the treacherous ice had broken, and through which he had fallen to a considerable depth. Much to his joy, the guide heard a voice coming from the bottom of the chasm and assuring him that the traveller was alive, and that no bones were broken.

Instantly the guide starts for Zermatt, to bring ropes and help to get him out. With all the speed he is capable of, he hurries on, and collects a body of willing helpers, with ropes and lights and every needful appliance. How long his absence must have seemed to that poor man! How he would have strained his ears for every sound, and again and again believed his deliverers were at hand!

He gets weary of hoping, and the intense cold of the ice in which he is wedged has begun to cause stupor; his senses and his strength are both leaving him. But he is roused by a shout, and with difficulty summoning his energies he sees the faces of his deliverers, and watches the letting down of the rope that is to free him.

Meanwhile the rescue party were doing all that could be done with all possible speed. Strong men were ready to pull up the rope the moment the signal should be given; one rope was added after another, but no strain was felt. At last all the ropes were used, everything that could be employed was given for the purpose, but still no sign.

At last, with blank and terrified faces, they were compelled to acknowledge the fearful truth, that their rope, though very nearly long enough, would not quite reach the sufferer; he saw it, but it was beyond his grasp; it might as well never have been there. One can picture the frantic efforts of the rescuers—how they tried everything just to make it a little longer, but in vain—nothing would do; so in the darkening gloom they had to return to Zermatt with sad and downcast hearts, knowing that night was coming on, and that their poor fellow-creature must die.

A yard or two of rope made all the difference between life and death.

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'Then Agrippa said to Paul, almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian; but we never read of the barrier of the 'almost' being passed. And in the great hereafter it is only too sadly certain that amongst the lost there will be very many who were 'almost saved.'

God seeth not as man seeth. He only recognizes two divisions of men—the saved and the not saved. The rope in the story was not long enough to reach the sufferer; but Christ's salvation is deep enough to reach to the lowest, broad enough to embrace the most distant. Not one can say it did not reach him as long as those words remain: 'Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'

But the personal acceptance of Christ is our own matter. Though His salvation is near, yet if it is only 'near,' and not in us, we are only 'almost saved,' and we have seen what that

means. We can know, and teach, and preach about Christ without ever having Christ; we may very nearly believe in Him, but not quite; we may intend to yield our hearts to Him, but keep putting it off; we may only just not accept Him, and, near as we may be to life, we shall be far enough to be without it.

'Almost'—but lost!—'Friendly Greetings.'

HIS WAY.

A pastor who had been very successful in establishing churches near his own, was asked in Presbytery how he did it; and answered: 'In my garden I go to a thrifty currant bush and bend down some of the outer branches and put a shovelful of dirt over them toward the ends; and when they have taken root, I cut the connection between the new and the old. So, I establish a prayer meeting, or send some of my members to conduct a Sabbath-school—in a community otherwise unprovided for. Then I preach there perhaps once a month; and after a while I take the session out, and have a communion service, and there receive members into the home church; and later on I set them off into a church of their own. Meanwhile, I have been doing the same in some other community; and, as these stations grow into churches, I get some minister to come and take one or more of them, with aid, financial and otherwise from the mother church, and from the Home Board if necessary, and at last cut them loose from the home church and give our time and energies and money to like work in other places.'

—Dr. Seward.

DO NOT NEGLECT IT.

A certain minister called upon a member who had been neglecting the week-night services, and went straight up to the fireplace in the sitting-room, and with the tongs removed a live coal from off the fire and placed it on the hearth, then watched it while it turned from the red glow of heat to a black mass. The member in question carefully observed the proceeding, and then said: 'You need not say a single word, sir; I'll be there on Wednesday night.'

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From Westminster Question Book.)

LESSON VII, NOVEMBER 18, 1894.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.—Luke 6: 20-31.

Commit to memory vs. 27-31.

GOLDEN TEXT.

'As ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also to them likewise.'—Luke 6: 31.

THE LESSON STORY.

After Jesus chose the twelve apostles he stood in an open place with them, and a great multitude of people came to him. Some were sick and some had evil spirits, and Jesus healed them all. Then he went away with the twelve disciples to a mountain and taught them there.

He told them who the happy ones on this earth are. He called them 'blessed.' Jesus called the poor blessed. He meant those who are humble in spirit and trust God to make them good. He called those blessed who hunger and thirst to know what will please God. He said that these would be 'filled' or 'satisfied,' for God will teach them how to please him.

Jesus taught the disciples how to behave to other people. He said that they must love their enemies. If wicked people harm Christ's disciples these must never harm back again, but pray for their enemies and try to do them good. And then he taught them the beautiful Golden Rule. Just the way we would like others to do us, just so we should do to them.

Jesus taught many other lessons to his disciples that day in this wonderful 'Sermon on the Mount.'—Berean Lesson Book.

HOME READINGS.

M. Luke 6: 20-31.—The Sermon on the Mount.

T. Matt. 5: 1-26.—True Disciples.

W. Matt. 5: 27-48.—The Tongue and the Temper.

Th. Matt. 6: 1-18.—Giving and Praying.

F. Matt. 6: 19-34.—Our Father's Care.

S. Matt. 7: 1-14.—Golden Precepts.

S. Matt. 7: 15-29 Solemn Warnings.

LESSON PLAN.

I. The Blesseds of the Kingdom, vs. 20-23.

II. The Woes of the Kingdom, vs. 24-26.

III. The Law of Love, vs. 27-31.

Time.—A. D. 28, summer; Tiberius Caesar emperor of Rome; Pontius Pilate governor of Judea; Herod Antipas governor of Galilee and Perea.

Place.—The Mount of Beatitudes, or the

Horns of Hattin, seven miles south-west of Capernaum.

OPENING WORDS.

Immediately after our Lord had chosen his twelve apostles, he delivered his discourse which is called 'The Sermon on the Mount,' of which our lesson to-day is a part. (See Matt. 5-7.)

HELPS IN STUDYING.

20. Blessed be the poor—poor in spirit, who have humble views of yourselves as sinners. Yours—intended and prepared for you. The kingdom of God—which is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. 21. That hunger now—intensely desire and earnestly seek. Shall be filled—shall receive your desire. That weep now—on account of sin. Shall laugh—shall rejoice in the assurance of pardon. 22. For the Son of Man's sake—because you are his disciples. 24, 25. Rich....full....laugh—who have all your good things and joyous feelings here and now, in perishable objects. Shall hunger....mourn and weep—your inward cravings strong as ever, but the materials of satisfaction for ever gone. 29. Smiteth thee—our Lord's example (John 18: 22, 23) is the best comment on these words. Cloak—the outer garment or mantle. Coat—the inner garment or tunic. 30. Give to every man—refuse no man in a spirit of retaliation. 31. As ye would—compare Matt. 7: 12. This is called 'The Golden Rule.'

QUESTIONS.

Introductory.—What was the subject of the last lesson? Name the twelve apostles. What power did Jesus give them? Title? Golden Text? Lesson Plan? Time? Place? Memory verses? Catechism? I. The Blesseds of the Kingdom, vs. 20-23.—What blessing did Jesus pronounce in verse 20? Who are meant by the poor? What is promised to them? Who are pronounced blessed in verse 21? What are they promised? Who are declared blessed in verse 22? Why are they told to rejoice?

II. The woes of the Kingdom, vs. 24-26.—What woe is pronounced in verse 24? In verse 25? In verse 26? Describe the classes here named? What reasons are given for the woes pronounced upon them?

III. The Law of Love vs. 27-31.—How are we to feel and act towards our enemies? What are we to do when wronged or injured? How did our Saviour show this spirit? What rule is here given for common life? What is this rule called? What is the sum of the ten commandments?

PRACTICAL LESSONS LEARNED.

1. We should have humble views of ourselves.
2. If we earnestly strive for holiness of heart and life, we should be satisfied.
3. We should be willing to bear reproach for the sake of Christ.
4. We should love our enemies and seek their good.
5. We must forgive others if we would have God forgive us.
6. We must do to others as we would have them do to us.

REVIEW QUESTIONS.

1. Whom did our Lord first pronounce blessed? Ans.—Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.
2. Who are further declared blessed? Ans.—Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.
3. Whom else did he pronounce blessed? Ans.—Those who are hated and reproached and persecuted for the Son of Man's sake.
4. How does our Lord counsel us to act toward our enemies? Ans.—Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you.
5. What are we to do when reviled and persecuted? Ans.—Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.
6. What is our Saviour's Golden Rule? Ans.—As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

LESSON VIII, NOVEMBER 25, 1894.

OPPOSITION TO CHRIST.—Mark 3: 22-35.

Commit to memory vs. 23-26.

GOLDEN TEXT.

'He came unto his own and his own received him not.'—John 1: 11.

THE LESSON STORY.

So many people followed Jesus now that the scribes and Pharisees were more angry than ever. They could not deny that he did wonderful works; so they said that he did these miracles by the power of Satan. Jesus knew their evil thoughts even before they spoke them, and he said to the people who listened, 'How can Satan cast out Satan?' Jesus had cast evil spirits out of many, and they had become kind, and gentle, and good, where before they were full of hate and evil works. How foolish and wicked to say that Satan's power would cast out his own evil power!

Then Jesus spoke the most solemn words that are in all the Bible. They are about that awful sin which can never be forgiven. However wicked people may become, if they are deeply sorry in their hearts, and ask God, he will, for Jesus's sake, forgive them.

But it is possible to so hate God and goodness as not even want to be forgiven.

The mother of Jesus, and his brothers, came looking for him, and some of the crowd told Jesus. Then he looked on his disciples and said, 'Behold my mother and my brethren!' Any one who will obey God is as dear to Jesus as his brother, or sister, or mother!—Berean Lesson Book.

LESSON PLAN

- I. The Scribes' Wicked Charge, vs. 22-27.
- II. The Unpardonable Sin, vs. 28-30.
- III. The true friends of Christ, vs. 31-35.

HOME READINGS.

M. Matt. 8: 5-13.—The Centurion's Servant healed.

T. Luke 7: 11-17.—The Widow's Son Raised.

W. Luke 7: 36-50.—Dining with a Pharisee.

Th. Matt. 12: 22-45.—A Blind and Dumb Demoniac Healed.

F. Mark 3: 22-35.—Opposition to Christ.

S. John 15: 18-27.—Hatred without Cause.

S. John 14: 15-27.—Obedience the Proof of Love.

Time.—A. D. 28, autumn; Tiberius Caesar emperor of Rome; Pontius Pilate governor of Judea; Herod Antipas governor of Galilee and Perea.

Place.—Capernaum.

OPENING WORDS.

After the Sermon on the Mount our Lord returned to Capernaum, where he healed the centurion's servant. Mat. 8: 5-13; Luke 7: 1-10. Great crowds continued to follow him. He then made a tour through Galilee, during which he restored to life the son of the widow of Nain. Matt. 11: 1-19; Luke 7: 11-17. On his return to Capernaum he healed one possessed with a devil. Mat. 12: 22. This miracle occasioned the charge of the scribes to which our Lord replies in this lesson. Parallel passages, Matt. 12: 24-32, 46-50; Luke 11: 15-22; 12: 10; 8: 19-21.

HELPS IN STUDYING.

From Jerusalem—they were spies sent to watch him. He hath Beelzebub—they could not deny his miracles, and so they charged him with working them by the aid of the prince of devils. 23. How can Satan—if he has helped me to heal these persons, he has helped me to undo his own work. 27. No man can enter—the casting out of demons, instead of showing that Jesus and Satan were in league together, proved that Satan had met his conqueror. 29. Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost—scribe to the devil what is clearly the work of the Holy Spirit, as the scribes had done. Hath never forgiveness—shall suffer eternal punishment. 1 John 5: 16. 30. Because they said—because they charged him with acting under the influence of an unclean spirit, Beelzebub, instead of the Holy Ghost. 31. His brethren—probably the younger children of Joseph and Mary. 34, 35. His true disciples, those who do, as well as hear, the will of God, are his nearest kindred. 'He is not ashamed to call them brethren.' Heb. 2: 11:

QUESTIONS.

Introductory.—What was the subject of the last lesson? Give in order the leading events between this lesson and the last. Title? Golden Text? Lesson Plan? Time? Place? Memory Verses? I. The Scribes' Wicked Charge, vs. 22-27.—What wicked charge did the scribes bring against Jesus? Who is meant by Beelzebub? How did Jesus answer the scribes? How did this show the absurdity of their charge? Explain and apply verse 27. II. The Unpardonable Sin, vs. 28-30.—What did Jesus next say? What is blasphemy? What sin is here said to be unpardonable? Meaning of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost? Why did Jesus make this declaration? III. The True Friends of Christ, vs. 31-35.—Who came to Jesus? Why did they not come in where Jesus was? (See Luke 8: 19.) What was Jesus told? What was his reply? Who did he say was his nearest kindred? What did Jesus give as a test of friendship for him? John 15: 14.

PRACTICAL LESSONS LEARNED.

1. It is a most fearful sin to ascribe to Satan what comes from the Holy Ghost.
2. We are either the friends or the foes of Jesus—with him or against him.
3. They who do as well as hear the will of God are his friends.
4. Every true Christian is taken into the very family of God, and is dear to Christ as his own mother.
5. We should love Jesus with all our hearts, and never be ashamed to own our love for him.

REVIEW QUESTIONS.

1. What charge did the scribes bring against Jesus? Ans.—He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.
2. How did Jesus answer the charge? Ans. How can Satan cast out Satan? If Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end.
3. What is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost? Ans. Ascribing the work of the Holy Ghost to the devil.
4. What did Jesus say of this sin? Ans. It hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.
5. Who did he say were his nearest kindred? Ans. Whosoever will do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.