

✻ The Sunday School ✻

BIBLE LESSON.

Abridged from Peloubet's Notes.
Second Quarter, 1905.

APRIL TO JUNE.

Lesson V.—April 30.—Jesus Washing the
Disciples' Feet. John 13: 1-14.

GOLDEN TEXT.

By love serve one another.—Gal. 5: 13.

EXPLANATORY.

I. THE STRIFE AS TO WHO SHOULD BE ACCOUNTED GREATEST.—Luke 22: 24-27; and Matt. 20: 20-28. We cannot understand the full meaning of our lesson without turning to the story of the strife recorded by Matthew and Mark. The strife probably occurred while the disciples were gathered in the upper room. It arose from the desire of some to be esteemed greatest, and the unwillingness of others that they should be. There were three things that developed the feeling into outward expression.

1. They seem to have wanted the seats of honor at the table nearest the Master.
2. They wanted to have the highest and best places in the new kingdom to be soon inaugurated. James and John had asked for these places. Peter was prominent. These three had more than once been favored, as at the transfiguration.

II. THE SUPPER SCENE. We must not think of a modern table, with chairs, as this scene is represented in many of the famous pictures, but we look upon the low, Eastern table, surrounded on three sides by couches or cushioned divans, on which each guest reclines, lying on his left side, and leaning on the left hand, with his head nearest the table, and his feet stretching back towards the ground. Each guest occupies a separate divan, or pillow. Thus it was easy to wash their feet one after another. The room was furnished with table, couches, table equipment, basin and pitcher for washing hands and feet.

III. FOUR SIDE LIGHTS ON THE SCENE. Vs. 1-3. "Around this scene in the upper chamber St. John sets lights which permit us to see its various beauty and grace."

First Side Light. That Nothing Could Quench the Love of Jesus. 1. NOW BEFORE THE FEAST OF THE PASSOVER. A note of time and place. It was in the upper room before the supper began, while they were waiting for the supper to be served (v. 2). This is the annual meaning, and agrees with the other gospels (Matt. 26: 17). Some interpret the statement as meaning that this supper was not the passover supper, but on the evening before, and, therefore, in direct contradiction of the statements of the other evangelists. But this is forced and unnatural. WHEN JESUS KNEW, better as R. V., "Jesus knowing," being fully conscious. THAT HE SHOULD DEPART. The Greek expresses the act of going over from one place or sphere to another. His going away could not quench his love. Even the sufferings of the cross could not destroy his love, but manifested greater strength and glory. HAVING LOVED HIS OWN, and shown his love by coming into the world to make them his own. His own were the group of followers whom he had chosen, and also the worldwide circle of his disciples of which there were twelve the nucleus. WHICH WERE IN THE WORLD. The sphere of their labors and trials and service. He loved not only his own in heaven where they shine, in perfect glory, but also those in the world, still tainted with imperfections. HE LOVED THEM UNTO THE END. (1) To the uttermost limit of love, the greatest love known in the universe; [and] (2) with a love without end. God's love never changes, never ceases, any more than the sun ceases to shine, although men may hide in caves and dungeons from its light. This loving to the end is the test of love.

Second Side Light. Jesus' Wisdom in Timing his Reproof. 2. AND SUPPER BEING ENDED. Ended is not in the original. The meaning is "the supper being," being served having commenced, while supper was in progress. By waiting till supper was fully begun, Jesus gave the disciples ample opportunity to repent and take the love instead of the better places, and to wash one another's feet. The delay would also give time for their excited feelings to quiet down, and their reason and consciences to begin to act, and a sense of shame to come over them for such a contention at such a time.

Third Side Light. The Loving Kindness of Jesus to Judas. THE DEVIL HAVING NOW (already) PUT INTO THE HEART, etc. There was still hope for Judas, since he was not so utterly lost as to plan his treachery all by himself. Satan was the power of the seed, but Judas had for a long time been preparing the soil of his heart to receive the evil seed, or it could not have sprung up.

Fourth Side Light. Jesus' Consciousness of his Dignity. 3. JESUS KNOWING. Fully conscious that he was the Son of God, with all power and glory; to which he was soon to return. This verse sets before us the in-

finite condescension of Jesus, and reinforces the lesson of the act that follows. No disciple could ever claim that he was too great too glorious, of too high rank, or too supreme power, to do the humblest service for man. Greatness and power are given for this very purpose. AND WENT TO GOD. "The consciousness of impending separation leads us all to try to put all our love into a last look, a last word, a last embrace, which will be remembered forever. The earthquake of parting lays bare the seams of gold in the rock."

IV. JESUS' WASHES HIS DISCIPLES' FEET. Vs. 4-11. 4. RISETH FROM SUPPER. Showing that all were reclining at the table. LAID ASIDE HIS GARMENTS. His outer loose flowing robes. TOOK A TOWEL, instead of the usual girdle, and GIRDLED HIMSELF. Into this girdle the shirts of the underdress were tucked for menial service, for running, or for fighting. All these details enable us to put ourselves in the place of the disciples and to realize the scene as if we were spectators in that upper room.

5. HE POURETH WATER INTO A BASIN. Over the feet, for the feet were not put into the water as with us, but the water was poured from a ewer over a basin held under them, and the feet were washed in the falling stream. Hence it was difficult for any one to wash his own feet. BEGAN TO WASH. Implying that he had washed some of the feet before he came to Peter. Note. That this was a needed duty, not a ceremonial merely for reproving the disciples.

6. THEN COMETH HE TO SIMON PETER. "Shame and astonishment shut the mouths of the disciples, and not a sound broke the stillness of the room but the tinkle and splash of the water in the basin as Jesus went from couch to couch. Put the silence was broken when he came to Peter." LORD, DOST THOU WASH MY FEET? The emphasis lies first on "thou," and then, a little slighter, on "my." The other disciples seemed to have allowed Jesus to wash their feet in silent shame, but Peter burst out in an indignant explosion of protest.

7. THOU KNOWEST NOT NOW; BUT THOU SHALT KNOW (understand) HEREAFTER. (1) Jesus explained the meaning to Peter, after the work was completed.

8. THOU SHALT NEVER WASH MY FEET. The negative is the strongest form possible. Thou shalt by no means wash my feet as long as the world stands. IF I WASH THEE NOT, THOU HAST NO PART WITH ME. Cannot share my kingdom, my character, my work, must be prepared to leave the room, and the company of disciples.

9. NOT MY FEET ONLY, BUT ALSO MY HANDS AND MY HEAD. If the washing meant having a part in the work and character of Jesus, and being with Jesus, he could not have enough of a cleansing so precious. In spite of his errors his heart glowed with love to his teacher. He had begun to learn his lesson.

10. HE THAT IS WASHED, ETC. We gain a clearer idea of it when we read it in the revisions, which take account of the different Greek words used for "wash." LUO, to wash the whole body, bathe; and NIPIO, to wash a part of the body. HE THAT I WASHED (bathed) NEEDETH NOT SAVE TO WASH HIS FEET. "The daily use of the bath rendered it needless to wash more than the feet which were soiled with walking from the bath to the supper table." AND YE ARE CLEAN. "He knew that at bottom they were good men; he knew that with one exception they loved him and loved one another; he knew that as a whole they were clean, and that this vicious temper in which they at present had entered the room was but the soil contracted for the hour. But none the less it must be washed off."

11. FOR HE KNEW WHO (him that) SHOULD BETRAY HIM. This shows that Jesus was referring to moral cleansing. Jesus knows that his children who are cleansed by the new heart, who are his sincere followers, are yet often soiled by walking through the dusty ways of life, and that they need daily to pray "Forgive us our trespasses."

V. THE TEACHING OF THIS OBJECT LESSON. Vs. 12-14. 12. WAS SET DOWN. The word means reclined, as was customary at meals. KNOW YE. Have you understood the deeper, spiritual meaning?

13. YE CALL ME MASTER. Teacher, with the definite article, the teacher. AND LORD. One who has authority over you. You accept my instructions, and obey my commands.

14. IF I THEM. The I is emphatic. YE ALSO OUGHT TO WASH ONE ANOTHER'S FEET. Apparently this is what they had just been unwilling to do when they first came in.

At Glasgow last week the keel and first plates of the first new Canadian Pacific Atlantic boat, which will be ready for St. Lawrence navigation in 1906, were laid. A second ship will be begun in a fortnight.

The Old Testament creed setting forth the triple requirement which God makes, puts first what too many Christians require last. "What doth the Lord thy God require of thee but to deal justly?" Let that requirement be held in its right place, and our labor problems would be in a fair way of adjustment. We have just heard of a man, now in an honorable position and a working Christian, who says he was for years alienated from Christianity because his employer refused him an unquestionably just increase in wages and the same day doubled his subscription to a benevolent society. We have heard employers ridicule Christianity because Christian employees did their work in a slovenly way, broke their agreements and showed no interest in their tasks except to get the greatest pay for the least service. Each one who does his best to fulfill this threefold requirement, putting just dealing first, where it belongs, is doing much to solve labor problems—more, perhaps, than many who propose solutions on platforms and in the press.—Congregationalist

Conscience is one of the worst lodgers to have in your house; when he gets quarrelsome there is no abiding with him; ill at lying down and equally troublesome at rising up. A guilty conscience is one of the curses of the world; it puts out the sun and takes away the brightness from the moonbeam. A guilty conscience casts a noxious exhalation through the air, removes the beauty from the landscape, the glory from the flowing river, the majesty from the rolling floods. There is nothing beautiful to the man who has a guilty conscience.—Spurgeon

To love God: to rejoice in his world; to see and feel its beauty; to let the heart open in gratitude as naturally as the flowers blossom; to stand ready to serve in even the humblest way, seeking no reward except such as flows out of serving our fellows in the spirit of Christ; to rise above petty annoyances and be calm; to trust God amid the hardest trials and to find life sweet amid the deepest sorrows; to have faith in the power of love to conquer even enmity, sin, and death, is to be "risen with Christ."—Rodney F. Johnson

If you really want to work for God, you will never be out of employment.

Aim high, but aim at something definite.

Life is not made up of great sacrifices or duties, but of little things of which smiles and kindness and small obligations, given habitually, are what win and preserve the heart.—Sir Humphrey Davy.

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8—Express for Sussex	17.10
134—Express for Quebec and Montreal	18.00
10—Express for Halifax and Sydney	23.25

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9—Express from Halifax and Sydney	6.20
7—Express from Sussex	9.00
133—Express from Montreal and Quebec	13.50
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3—Express from Moncton and Point du Chene	16.50
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