

FOR THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

International S. S. Lesson.

LESSON V.—JESUS LORD OF THE SABBATH.—NOV. 4.

Mark ii : 23-28, iii : 1-5.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath.—Mark ii : 28.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—“The Lord's Day.”

ANALYSIS.—The Sabbath a Burden, ii. 23-28. Blessing, iii. 1-5.

TIME AND PLACE.—Early Summer A.D. 28. Capernaum and neighboring fields.

HARMONY.—Matt. xii. 1-13. Luke vi. 1-10.

THE SABBATH A BURDEN, ii. 23-28.—On their way to the Sabbath morning service in the synagogue Jesus and His disciples had to pass through a field of grain. It was contrary to the rabbinical law to eat on the Sabbath before the morning service, and the group of fault seeking Pharisees that followed the little band watched eagerly for an occasion to criticise. Presently some of the disciples plucked of the ears of corn, an act permitted by the Mosaic law on week days, and rubbing them in their hands separated the kernel from the chuff and eat it. This was enough for the pharisaic censors. Stepping up to the Master they asked, “Why do they on the Sabbath day that which is unlawful?” Now they would see whether He would defend this transgression of ceremony. And eagerly, almost triumphantly they awaited His reply. It came, and the look of triumph turned to one of defeat and chagrin. He met them on their own ground, and silenced them. Christ went back to old Testament history and cited an incident in the life of David. He reasoned from equals to equals, or on the principle of equivalents. The temple and the Sabbath were equivalent, or equal in sanctity. Therefore if David, to satisfy his intense hunger, in a manner contrary to the ceremonial law, ate the shewbread, it must be right for us to do so much work on the Sabbath as is necessary to satisfy our hunger. Thus having met their criticism, He went on to state an axiom true for all time concerning the Lord's day. “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath; so that the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath,” a grand, and to the Pharisees somewhat startling conclusion. Rabbinical Sabbath rules were rods of steel that never yielded to man's necessity. Man must suffer, even die, rather than that one of these rules should be violated. This was making the Sabbath a burden, not a blessing. But this was not the design of the Lord of the Sabbath in instituting it. It was made to be a blessing to man; hence its observance might be modified by a due regard to human necessities.

Because the Sabbath was made for man, therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath. The Sabbath had come from His hands, originally, as the Creator of all things, and surely He best know its intention and how it should be observed. He had a right also to strip it of its man made wrappings. But observe, He does not as its Lord abolish it; He ennobles it and retains it. He liberates His Church from the burden of a rabbinical Sabbath and makes it a day of joy and gladness, a type and foretaste of heaven.

THE SABBATH A BLESSING, iii. 1-5.—On another Sabbath (Luke vi. 6). The Master entered their synagogue and taught. In the audience was a man having a withered hand, and his maimed condition soon caught the Saviour's sympathetic eye. It was an opportunity both to do good, and to teach these Pharisees a second lesson on the true purpose of the Sabbath, so fixing His gaze upon the man He said to him, “Stand forth,” that all might see his condition, and witness the miracle He was about to perform. Then turning to His critics He asked them, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath day to do good, or to do harm? to save a life or to kill?” and Matthew tells us that He used an illustration, (Matt. xii. 11-12) which brought the truth home to their own experience. Yet they would not acknowledge they were wrong; but, biting their lips in vexed obstinacy, they held their peace. And the Master looked at them sorrowfully, indignant that they should harden their hearts against the truth. Then turning to the infirm one, He said, “Stretch forth thine hand.” And lo, with the command came the power, and the impotent, withered hand was stretched forth, whole and strong. So we get the lesson that it is right to do good on the Sabbath. It is right for physicians to attend to their patients on that day. It is right to visit the sick, when we can carry blessing or cheer to them; to visit the afflicted, when we can carry comfort to them; to visit the poor, when we can minister to their needs or relieve their distress; to go out among the unaved, when we can do anything to bring them to Christ and save their soul, to gather neglected children from the streets and from Christless homes and bring them to the Sabbath school and the church. Jesus here gives us warrant for many works of mercy on His own holy day.

NOTES ON THE TEXT.—V. 23. *Corn*. Indian corn was unknown. It was probably wheat or barley. *To pluck the ears*.—This was not theft, (Deut. xxiii. 25). V. 24. *Not lawful*.—It was lawful on other days than the Sabbath. V. 25. *What David did*.—See I Sam. xxi. 6. V. 26. *Shewbread—not lawful*. See Lev. xxiv. 5-9. V. 2. *They*.—The Scribes and Pharisees kept the Sabbath by acting as spies on Christ's actions.

Application and Illustration.

WHAT CAN I DO?

HAVE GOOD AUTHORITY FOR MY CONDUCT, v. 23.—The Lord Jesus was able to refer the censorious Pharisees to the Word as His

authority for permitting the disciples to satisfy their hunger with the corn. So should we live that our every action if called in question may be properly defended by reference to the standard set in God's revelation.

LEARN THAT CHRIST BEARS THE BLAME OF MY WRONG DOING, v. 24.—When the disciples did what, in the eyes of the Pharisees, was unlawful, the latter went to Christ, as if He should be held responsible for the deed. So with us who profess to be Christians, the world marks our conduct and when we fall our Master bears the blame; His name is dishonored, His cause weakened, His glory tarnished.

REMEMBER I AM AN EXAMPLE, v. 26.—Not only did David eat of the shewbread, but also they that were with him. No man lives for himself alone. Whatever Sabbath rule I adopt, I must permit my friends to adopt also. No man keeps the Sabbath to himself alone. We are our brothers' keepers even in this matter of keeping the Lord's Day. “O, but circumstances alter cases,” you say; “and because I find it necessary for my health to take a ten-mile bicycle ride on Sunday is no reason why that strapping Tom Black should take a ride with his rambling club. That may be so, but you might argue a year and not persuade Tom Black that this was good logic.—*Golden Rule*.”

LEARN THAT THE SABBATH WAS MADE FOR ME, v. 27.—Not for my bondage; not for my pleasure; but for my blessing. It was made that I might be a better man; that my spiritual nature might have opportunity to develop, and that I might be able at least once in seven days to get out of the world into Heaven, from touch with man and his sin to communion with God and His holiness. Whatever tends to these ends it is right for me to do on the Lord's Day. Because it was made for me, is all the greater reason why I should keep it the more carefully in accord with God's will; for the Maker of it knows best how I may use it for my benefit.

LEARN CHRIST NEVER COMMANDS BUT HE GIVES THE POWER, iii. 6.—It seemed an impossibility. “Stretch forth thy hand; that hand that for years has been impotent, and even now hangs helpless at thy side,” such was the command. But suppose the man had smiled with incredulity, and made no effort to obey, would the healing have come? No. But He did not. He had faith, and with the faith the power came, the hand was raised and completely restored.

An old colored preacher was explaining what faith was to his congregation. “Faith, my breddern and sistern,” he said, is like this. Sposin, de Lord was to tell me to jump froo dat brick wall yonder. It would be my business to jump at de brick wall and expect de Lord to take me froo!”

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR.

Echoes of Kingston.

The Sixth Annual Convention of the Ontario C. E. Union has come and gone, and the Lime Stone City feels that its labor to entertain the many young people it brought from far and near has been rewarded by blessings left behind when they departed. The Convention opened in the First Congregational Church on the afternoon of Wednesday Oct. 10th, Rev. Dr. Dickson presiding. The subject “Ways of Working,” was treated in open parliament, and many helpful plans suggested. In the evening a reception to the visiting delegates was given in Sydenham street Methodist Church. Mr. Mills on behalf of the Kingston Union welcomed the delegates, Rev. C. O. Johnston extended greetings from the pastors of the city, and Mayor Herald spoke for the corporation. Fitting replies were made by several speakers. On Thursday afternoon the Convention reassembled in the First Congregational church. The afternoon was devoted to Junior work, and this important branch of Christian Endeavor was very fully discussed. A Junior Rally was held in Sydenham street church later in the afternoon, and hundreds of boys and girls filled the church to the doors. The chairman was Master Reynold Blight, of Toronto. Many of the Juniors took part ably in an open parliament. A banner for the county showing the greatest increase in Junior societies was won by Wexford. In the evening Canon Richardson presided. It was reported that Brantford had been selected as the place for the gathering in '97. The officers for the ensuing year were then elected, Mr. G. T. Ferguson, of Toronto being chosen as president. An address on “Personal Effort,” was then delivered by Mr. F. M. Pratt, of the Toronto Y.M.C.A. Principal Grant then made an eloquent plea for Bible study, and the meeting closed. On Friday at 2.30 p.m. the ninth session began. President Ferguson in the chair. Rev. J. Gosforth spoke on the “The Holy Spirit in Missions,” the Rev. J. P. Baker followed on “The Holy Spirit in Bible Study,” and the Rev. Mr. McGregor closed the meeting with prayer. The closing session began at 8 p.m. with the President in the chair. The Toronto Union was presented with a banner for having the most delegates present for the distance travelled. The Rev. W. C. Dodd from Siam, was the speaker of the evening. Then the Rev. A. L. McGregor, of Woodstock, led the closing consecration service in which all the unions took part, and the Convention ended with singing the National Endeavor Hymn, and the Missal benediction.

Daily Readings.

First Day—The origin—Gen. ii : 1-7.

Second Day—The command—Exod. xx : 1-11.

Third Day—The observance—Exod. xvi : 22-31.

Fourth Day—The defence—Neh. xiii : 15-22.

Fifth Day—A day for good deeds—1 Cor. xvi : 1-14.

Sixth Day—Hallow it—Ezek. xx : 10-20.

Seventh Day—How to keep the Lord's Day—Mark ii : 23-28