

The Song of the Plough.

Round the rough hill, lad,
Over ridge and rut,
Keen, lad, and clean, lad,
Let the bright share cut,
With a strong team, and steady,
To work soon and late,
And firm hands, and ready,
To keep the furrow straight.

Up with weed and thorn, lad;
Kill them from the root;
Foes, lad, are those, lad,
That choke the struggling shoot.
That were rare matter
For folk's jeers and scorn
Should the sower scatter
His seed among the thorns.

Break the hard crust, lad
Sun and rain and dew
Must glow, lad, and flow, lad,
Must shine and filter through.
Not a new shoot, lad,
That feels the hard earth
Will e'er strike a root, lad,
But die in its birth

Hearts want the plough, lad;
Every fault's a weed
To turn up and burn up
Ere we sow the seed;
Down to deep places
Score with God's might,
Sow in prayer the graces,
And they shall thrive right.

Selected.

LESSON NOTES.

FOURTH QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW.

A.D. 28.] LESSON VI. [Nov. 6.
CONFESSING CHRIST.

Mat. 10. 32-33. Commit to mem. vs. 5; 59.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Whoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. Mat. 10. 32.

OUTLINE.

- 1. Our Confessing of Christ.
- 2. Christ's Confession of Us.

TIME.—28 A.D.
PLACE.—In Galilee.

EXPLANATIONS.— Shall confess me— Shall acknowledge me as Messiah and Saviour. Shall deny me— Shall refuse to acknowledge my claim. To send peace— He is the Prince of peace, and through him peace shall come, but only after fierce conflict with sin. Sword—Christ's Gospel is aggressive, and must overthrow existing forms of unbelief and wickedness. For I am come to set a man at variance—Not as an actual purpose for the mere sake of making trouble; but that will be the natural result of my coming. That taketh not his cross—A figure borrowed from the familiar Roman punishment by which he was himself to die. He that findeth his life—He who preserves his earthly life, shall lose it—Shall lose his spiritual life, if the former was saved by unfaithfulness. A prophet—Any religious teacher. One of these little ones—Referring to his disciples. Cup of cold water—The very smallest act of Christian love.

TEACHINGS OF THE LESSON.

Where, in this lesson, are we taught—

- 1. That we determine our own destiny?
- 2. That religion demands self sacrifice?
- 3. That good deeds are never forgotten?

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

1. What did Jesus say in the GOLDEN TEXT about confessing him? "Whoever," etc. 2. What does Jesus require of those who would be his disciples? That they shall love him. 3. Who does Jesus say is not worthy of him? He that taketh not his cross. 4. What does Jesus say of the one who gives a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple? "He shall not lose his reward."

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The judgment.

CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

6. Does the death of Christ then prove both the justice and mercy of God? Yes; in a most wonderful way the cross shows us God's hatred of sin and love towards the sinner. Isaiah liii. 10; Psalm lxxxv. 10.

A.D. 28.] LESSON VII. [Nov. 13.
CHRIST'S WITNESS TO JOHN.

Mat. 11. 2-3. Commit to mem. vs. 2-6.

GOLDEN TEXT.

He was a burning and a shining light. John 5. 35.

OUTLINE.

- 1. John's Question.
- 2. Christ's Answer.

TIME.—28 A.D.

PLACE.—Capernaum. John the Baptist in prison at Castle Machærus.

EXPLANATIONS.—In the prison—In the castle, or fortress, of Machærus, near the Dead Sea. It was a very strong fortification. Two of his disciples—Evidently Herod had given John such liberty in the castle as allowed his disciples still to wait upon him. He that should come—That is, the Messiah so long expected. Do we look—Shall we look. Evidently John himself had begun to doubt whether the One whom he had proclaimed was really the Messiah. Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me—A caution to John not to mistake the true nature of Christ's ministry and kingdom. A reed shaken—John is asserted not to be vain, and fickle, and easily swayed, despite his question of doubt. Clothed in soft raiment—A strong reminder of John's austere manner, and coarse garb, in contrast to the effeminacy of his enemies in Herod's court. More than a prophet—One who had actually seen the Messiah. The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence—A figurative allusion to the rapid entrance of men into the kingdom of heaven which characterized the age. This is Elias—Or, the Elijah, who was to come before the Messiah. See Mal. 4. 5.

TEACHINGS OF THE LESSON.

Where, in this lesson, are we taught—

- 1. That the miracles of Jesus prove him divine?
- 2. That to be a messenger for Jesus is a great honour?
- 3. That to be a true Christian is the highest earthly dignity?

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

1. What question did John the Baptist send to Jesus? "Art thou he that should come?" 2. How did Jesus show John that he was the Saviour? By his wonderful works. 3. What did Jesus say of John? That he was the greatest of the prophets. 4. What did he say of John in the GOLDEN TEXT? "He was," etc. 5. Who is greater than John the Baptist? He that is least in the kingdom of heaven.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The Messiah.

CATECHISM QUESTION.

7. And what further lesson should we learn? Our infinite debt to the Redeemer himself, who in his love laid down his life for us.

John x. 11. The Good Shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep.

WHO STOLE THE EGGS?

RATS and mice are not favourites with most people. Their thieving, mischievous habits have always made them unwelcome, and they have come to be classed with black beetles and other "nasty things," and set down as vermin. Their appearance in a house is usually the signal for the baiting and setting of traps, and pussy is ordered to watch for them night and day.

They are cunning little creatures, rats especially, and the following story seems to show that when they meet with a difficulty they can think and rack their brains as well as any little boy over compound multiplication.

The head-master of a boys' school in Jersey kept some fine Dorking fowls,

whose eggs he used often to have for breakfast. Being very fond of them, he was very much annoyed when the supply began to run short, and finally ceased altogether. What could be the reason? Perhaps the gardener took them for himself? Or could it be the boys that had robbed the nests? No one knew, no one could tell. So a strict watch was set on the stables where the fowls were kept.

One day a small boy, whose turn it was to keep a look-out, noticed three old rats come out of the ground, peep about, and then, running to the nests, deliberately set to work to remove one of the eggs. Rat No. 1 rolled it to the edge of the nest and there gave it into the arms of rats No. 2 and No. 3, who very carefully lifted it down to the floor of the stable.

Once on the floor, the next thing was how to carry it over to the mouth of their hole. To push it along before them would probably have led to its getting cracked against the pebbles. So what do you think they did? Rat No. 1 turned over and lay on his back, while the other two rolled the egg up between his paws. No. 2 then took hold of him by the tail, and with the assistance of No. 3 dragged him and the egg over the stones safely to the hole. As soon as the three clever thieves had disappeared, the astonished little boy ran off to tell the master what he had seen. The latter would not believe it at first, but the rat-catcher was sent for, and soon the breakfast table was again furnished with new-laid eggs.

A LESSON IN A TUNNEL.

WHEN we returned from Italy, some years ago, the Mont Cenis Tunnel was newly opened, and we reckoned that it must be a dreary passage, and very dark, and therefore we had better be provided with a candle. It would be damp and close, and therefore every window should be closed for fear of our breathing the impure air. So we speculated. But when we traversed that wonderful passage, the carriages were well lighted, and much of the tunnel also, and we sat with opened windows, finding it as easy to breathe as on the mountain's side. It was a joy rather than a peril to pass through the dreaded tunnel. So shall the voyager along the good old way find that death is not what he dreams. Jesus will light the darksome way, and the soul will need no candle of earth, fresh breezes from glory will drive away the death-damp, and the music of angels will make the heart forgetful of pains. How can the good old way lead into danger? What can it conduct us to but eternal rest?—Spurgeon.

ACKNOWLEDGING that we have been wrong is only showing that we are wiser to-day than we were yesterday.

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