

Fourth Quarter : Studies in the Lives of Peter and John

LESSON FOREWORD—Although Jesus had foreshadowed that the Messiah must suffer and die, yet the ideas of the disciples, based on a material view of the kingdom, died hard. Hence we find them discussing the question of preeminence. We also find John seeking to prevent the doing of good, because without authority, while James and John would consume enemies by fire.

Lesson VIII. JESUS CORRECTS JOHN'S NARROWNESS November 23, 1919

THE LESSON PASSAGE—Luke 9 : 46-56.

46 Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest.

47 And Je'sus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him,

48 And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me : and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me : for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.

49 And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name ; and we forbid him, because he followeth not with us.

50 And Je'sus said unto him, Forbid him not : for he that is not against us is for us.

51 And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face

GOLDEN TEXT—Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in uncorruptness.—Eph. 6 : 24 (Rev. Ver.).

SENIOR AND HOME DEPARTMENT TOPIC—True and False Liberty. ADDITIONAL MATERIAL.—Matt. 8 : 5-13 ; John 10 : 16 ; 1 Cor. 3 : 1-23 ; Eph. 2 : 11-22 ; 6 : 24 ; 2 John 10, 11.

THE LESSON EXPLAINED

I. A LESSON IN HUMILITY.—46-50. *There arose a reasoning* ; a heated discussion, carried on as they journeyed. Jesus said nothing at the time. *Which . . . should be greatest.* Perhaps the taking of Peter and James and John alone up the Mount of Transfiguration had suggested this question. *Perceiving the thought of their heart.* Jesus saw the root error in the raising of this question. It was putting self before service. *Took a child.* Jesus has never to look far for his illustrations. *Whosoever shall receive this child* ; not seeking the seats of the mighty, but meeting the needs of the humble and weak, is their supreme duty. *Receiveth me . . . him that sent me.* It is service that brings us near to God. *He that is least . . . shall be great.* Greatness in the kingdom of God means leastness in the kingdom of life. Greatness is not a matter of order, precedence, privilege, but of spirit. We sacrifice ourselves into greatness. *One casting out devils* ; unquestionably a Christlike work. *In thy name* ; unquestionably a right motive. *Forbad . . . because he followeth not with us.* The disciples had taken a purely official view of the matter. They regarded themselves

to go to Jeru'salem,

52 And sent messengers before his face : and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him.

53 And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jeru'salem.

54 And when his disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Eli'as did ?

55 But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

56 For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save *them.* And they went to another village.

the sole agents of Jesus. But John now wonders if they did right, since Jesus has said that the



THE CHILD IN THE MIDST

helping of the helpless is the great thing. *He that is not against us . . . for us.* Discipleship is a matter of right motive and right action, not a matter of belonging to the disciple band.