

S. S. Lesson Department.

International Bible Lessons, 1878.

STUDIES IN LUKE'S GOSPEL.

FOURTH QUARTER.

Oct. 6	Warning against Formalism	Luke	12: 22-30
" 13	The Gospel Feast	"	12: 30-34
" 20	The Prodigal Son	"	15: 11-24
" 27	Two Rich Men and Lazarus	"	16: 19-31
Nov. 3	The Ten Lepers	"	17: 11-19
" 10	When the Lord Receives	"	18: 9-17
" 17	Zacchaeus, the Publican	"	19: 1-10
" 24	Jerusalem Overthrown	"	21: 5-33
Dec. 1	The Lord's Supper	"	22: 10-20
" 8	The Cross	"	23: 33-46
" 15	The Walk to Emmaus	"	24: 13-35
" 22	The Saviour's Last Words	"	24: 44-53
" 29	Review	"	

Prepared for THE CHRISTIAN HELPER.

Oct. 6—Warning against Formalism—

Luke 13: 22-30; A.D. 30.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."—V. 24.

IN THE STUDY.

"The interval of two months between the Feast of Tabernacles, Oct. 11, A.D. 29, and that of the dedication early in December, seems to have been spent partly in Jerusalem, and partly in its neighbourhood; especially in that happy home of Bethany, in the house of Lazarus and his sisters, Martha and Mary. Then, driven from Jerusalem by plots against a city called Ephraim, the Dedication, (John 10: 22-23) He retires to Bethanah beyond Jordan, in Perea, where John at first labored. From His retirement He was summoned again to Bethany by the sickness and death of Lazarus, John 12. After raising him from the dead, He retired to a city called Ephraim, John 12: 54 (Orphan of the Old Testament) 6 miles N. E. of Bethel, on the borders of the desert that stretches away to Jordan and the Dead Sea. Thence He seems to have withdrawn Himself again to Perea beyond Jordan, "perhaps to place Himself within Herod's jurisdiction." From this place He makes His final movement towards Jerusalem, which begins with the lesson of to-day; and He proceeds leisurely through these populous regions, through Jericho to Jerusalem, preaching in the villages on the way. To this progress through Perea should probably be referred those most impressive parables and lessons which occupy the 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, and 18th chapters of Luke's gospel, except chapter 17: 11-19."—*Pinkney*.

OUTLINE OF LESSON.

1st. The last journey. 2nd. The curious question. 3rd. The answer of Divine wisdom. 4th. The solemn warning.

IN THE CLASS.

THE LAST JOURNEY.

And He went through the cities and villages. For the last time He had lifted up His voice in solemn entreaty and warning to the inhabitants of Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida, and all the region round about the sea of Galilee; never more would they hear His voice. They, like Nazareth, had rejected Him, and henceforth it would be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for that land: for greater light had come, and they had rejected it, Luke 20: 17-18. And now for the last time, the land where John said *deeper* his ministry should hear from Divine lips the word of the kingdom. There comes a period when for the last time the message

of mercy is sounded in our ears, but for all time, *ye, eternally* we shall rejoice or mourn for the way in which we received it. Opportunities pass away, but consequences never.

Journeying toward Jerusalem. All that was to befall Him there He knew, and yet He journeyed thither with unflinching step, leading the way. Shame, suffering, death, so near, yet never more diligent and abundant in labours; a death He could avoid, yet with steadfast soul going to meet it. Behold the intense desire of our Lord for the salvation of souls; He spent His last days in pleading with men, in calling on them to repent and I believe, while He was unarmingly going to the place of sacrifice for their sins. For a similar spirit, born of love to Jesus, see Acts 21: 10-14. *Any journey may be our last; let every one be as if it were our last, about that which, at the time is most for our good and God's glory.*

THE CURIOUS QUESTION.

Then said one unto Him. "The inquirer can hardly have been a disciple of Jesus, v. 28, but most likely a Jew from the multitude, who had heard His discourses, and, either from Jewish pride, or perhaps out of real desire to learn from Him, put this question."—*Alford*. Lord, are there few that be saved? "Here the implication of final salvation is obvious."—*Alford*. Saved from hell, saved to heaven, saved from the condemnation of sin, its pollution, its love and its power. Had it been a question, the answer to which was important for him to know, doubtless our Lord would have given him a direct answer; but from the character of His reply it is evident that it was one of those curious questions about which he at that time had no need to be concerned. There was another matter of infinitely more importance to him—his own personal salvation. How many there are who waste their time, and allow precious opportunities of blessing to themselves and good to others to pass, while engaged in inquiries and discussions that yield no profit to any. The present time, the greatest good, the best opportunity of our thoughts and efforts. How many persons perplex themselves over the doctrine of election, while for them it would be settled by simply believing in the Lord Jesus. John 21, 21-22; 1 Tim. 6, 3-4; 2 Tim. 2, 23.

The question can be answered, but best by our seeking to add, first ourselves, and then all we can, by bringing them to Christ, to the number of the saved.

THE ANSWER OF DIVINE WISDOM.

Strive to enter in. "Strain every nerve." The term is taken from the Grecian games, where they wrestled and ran the race, in order to win the crown of laurel which belonged to the victor. It is the term, too, from which our word *agonize* is taken.—*Jacobs*. Strait gate, not straight, but narrow, a difficult gate. We have the same idea in the word *strait*. "It is not the gate out of life, but the gate into the Christian life, as Bunyan represents it in Pilgrim's Progress."—*Abbott*. There are a thousand wrong ones, but only one right one. "It is as wide as the love of God can make it, not narrow to keep men out, but because it must be narrow." Salvation can come only through a full atonement, a perfect righteousness, reconciliation to God, and a renewed life, and these come only through Christ. Many will seek to enter in, not by the way, but in some other way, or to take some forbidden thing through the narrow one way—as some darling sin. "It is wide enough for any soul, but not for any sin however small."

THE SOLEMN WARNING.

When come. "From the time that." The reference is to marriage feasts. In the evening the bridegroom would go with a company of his

friends to the home of the bride to conduct her to her future home, while a number of maidens would remain behind to welcome the party on their return. It was often late ere the bridegroom returned with his bride, through the *freighted* unwillingness of her friends to give her up; but as soon as he entered the house with his bride the door was closed and no one on any account was permitted to enter, however earnestly he might knock. Within, the house was brilliantly lighted, without the unrelieved darkness of an Eastern city. How great the contrast between the joy within, and the darkness and disappointment without! "And yet it was no fault of the *gate*, but of those who did not enter." Lord, Lord. "In the title, *Lord*, they claim to stand in a near and intimate relation to him, and in the *Lord, Lord*, twice repeated is an evidence of the earnestness with which they *new* claim admission."—*Trench*. I know you not. It is not that He disclaims an outward knowledge, but He does not know them in that sense in which He speaks in John 10: 14; so that Augustine's remark though it seems at first a slight, is indeed a very profound one when explaining. I know you not, he observes it is not else than, "Ye know not me."—*Trench*. Whence ye are. "Ye are none of my family, have no relationship with me."—*Alford*. Then shall ye begin. First they *knock*, then they *plead*. If they had had half the earnestness before they would have had an abundant entrance.

Eaten and drunk in thy presence. It is merely in *His presence*, very different from drinking *with*, Matt. 26: 29. It is one thing to be in the company of worshippers, it is another thing to be *of* that company; one thing to eat and drink in the presence of Christ at His table, and another thing to eat and drink *with* Him—by faith discerning the Lord's body—having real fellowship with the Master of the feast. Taught in our streets. Having heard the gospel will not secure an entrance to the heavenly feast; but having *received* it will.

Depart from me.—"He who dances with the devil all day, cannot feast with Christ at night." "Only wickedness keeps men away from Christ, some sin outside preferred to the Lord inside."

There shall be.—For the most part the Bible representations of future punishment are of a fixity in a state of sin, Rev. 22, 11, and of banishment from the presence of God, 2 Thes. 1, 9. Weeping and.—In the midst of misery yet witnesses of the joy of those within.

They shall come.—east . west . north . south. Bengel suggests that these points of the compass are intentionally so arranged here, to show the order in which the Gentiles would be called in all over the world. It certainly is a fact, that the gospel first took root in Syria and Asia Minor, then spread to the west of Europe, and along the shores of the Mediterranean, then turned northward to the Scandinavian nations and Britain, and since that time has spread toward the south, in Africa, Asia, South America, and the south Pacific Ocean."—*Edg.*

There are last.—"Many who are first in opportunities are last in usefulness. Many who are first in earthly riches are last in the treasures of heaven. Many who seem first and most prominent on earth shall be last and least in heaven. A comfort to those who seem last and least; a warning to those who seem first and greatest."

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS.

"It is not for us to ask curious questions about others future, but (1) to take heed that we are in the kingdom; (2) to do all we can to bring others in."

"It is sad to see others enjoying without us, what we might have enjoyed with them, and remember that the only reason is, *we would not*."