

The Child-like Believer.

JUNE 18.

MARK IX, 33-50.

Golden Text, Isaiah 57: 15.

COMPARE Matthew 18: 1, 4; Luke 9: 46-50. After leaving Caesarea Philippi, Jesus crossed the Jordan into the northern part of Galilee, remained there a short time, and then returned to Capernaum, intending thence to go to Jerusalem. On his arrival at Capernaum he was called upon to pay the temple tax, when he sent Peter to find the money in the fish's mouth, Matt. 17: 24-27 vs. 33-37. *Being in the house*—Peter's house, probably, he took the opportunity privately to teach his disciples an important lesson. He knew what they had been disputing about by the way. Evidently their ideas of the nature of his Kingdom were altogether wrong. They still imagined it was to be a temporal one and already they were canvassing their claims for promotion to "office." Sitting down, he gave them an "object lesson" which doubtless they never forgot. Matthew renders it more fully, ch. 18: 3. It was not the comparative ignorance of childhood that was commended; they were to cultivate the purity, truthfulness, simplicity, sincerity, and docility of little children. 1 Cor. 14: 20. vs. 38-41. John's incidental remark suggested by the use of "my name" in v. 37, gives a new turn to the conversation and was quickly seized upon by Christ as the ground of another lesson needed by the disciples, one of universal application, but which professing Christians in all ages have been very slow to apprehend—namely, that bigotry and exclusiveness are contrary to the mind of Christ. *Forbid him not.* The man in question, for all John knew, was a disciple of Christ. The success that attended his ministrations in the form of casting out devils should have convinced John that he was no imposter, but rather one whom he should have encouraged as a co-laborer, see Matt. 23: 8-10. The spirit of true religion is shown in a readiness to recognize good done by others, whether belonging to our own denomination or not. Guard against the habit of fault-finding, vs. 42-50. What follows has no necessary connection with the reproof addressed to John, but is rather a continuation of the subject previous to his interruption. *Whoever shall offend*—shall cause to stumble: referring to the bad effect which such disputes as they had been engaged in would have upon others who naturally looked to the disciples for an example of humility. *Letter that a mill stone &c.*—thus he would at least escape the responsibility of causing others to sin, and the world would be better without him. *If thy hand offend thee*—objects dear as a right eye and useful as a right hand are to be parted with if they interfere with the complete surrender of ourselves to Christ. Sins of the hand, such as forgery, stealing, murder; sins of the eye—lust and coveting; sins of the foot—going into forbidden ways, must all be abandoned if we would enter into life eternal. *Every one must be salted with fire*—"Every follower of mine must expect to undergo an ordeal of suffering"—No cross, no crown! 1 Peter 4: 12, 13. *Have salt in yourselves*—cultivate those graces that will keep you from temptation and that will make you a blessing to all with whom you come in contact.

A Lesson on Home.

JULY 1.

MARK X: 1-16

Golden Text, Psalms 101: 2.

COMPARE Matt. 19: 3-14; Luke 18: 15-17. Four months probably intervened between this lesson and the last one, during which many of the most important events in our Lord's history transpired. Some of these are mentioned by John; e. g. the visit of our Lord to Jerusalem, ch. 7: 8-10: the cure of a blind man, 9: 1-41; the raising of Lazarus, 11: 11-46. V. 1. *From thence*—i. e. from Capernaum. This was his final departure from the city where he had wrought so many of his "mighty works." It is noticed in Matt. 19: 1, and there is a beautiful reference to it in Luke 9: 51. *The Coast of Judaea*—anciently called Perea, on the east side of Jordan, extending from the Dead Sea to the Sea of Galilee. *As He was wont*—a fine tribute to Him who ever went about doing good. V. 2. *Tempting Him*—seeking to entrap Him into some expression of opinion whereby they might accuse Him of heterodoxy. "Among the questions of that time none was debated more freely by the rival schools of the Rabbis than the subject of divorce. One party contended that a man could put away his wife for any cause,—if he had seen some one he liked better, or even because of her having cooked a dinner badly; the other, held that divorce could only be obtained for a breach of the seventh commandment. If it were possible to get Jesus to pronounce in favour of either, the hostility of the other would be roused." Jesus refers them to the Mosaic law. They reply that the law of Moses was not so strict after all, Deut. 24: 1. V. 5. Our Lord's answer does not justify the alleged laxity. In the peculiar state of society at that time, the particular clause cited was the best that could be enforced upon a confessedly immoral people: that is all. "But from the beginning it was not so," Matt. 19: 8. V. 6. God never intended that the family relationship should be a mere matter of convenience or caprice, to be dissolved at the pleasure of a heartless husband, it was designed to be permanent, and a blessing to the human race as long as the world should last. V. 10. To his disciples, at their own request, he expounds the matter more fully in private, re-iterating what he had said in his sermon on the Mount, and what has always been the law of God. Vs. 13, 14. The conversation takes a pleasant change. A beautiful custom led parents to bring their children at a very early age to the synagogue that they might receive the blessings of the elders. They were thus brought, also, to any Rabbi of reputed sanctity, in accordance with old patriarchal usage. Gen. 48, 14, and before this had likely been brought to Jesus for his benediction. The disciples, as they had often done, rebuked the intrusion, as they deemed it. *Jesus was displeased*—or as in N. V. "was moved with indignation." It was an affront put upon the children. The disciples thought they could get no good from him. He dispels that delusion, and accords even infants a status in his church, thus teaching a principle we are too apt to overlook—that the children of Christian parents are, as such, members of His Church, Acts 2: 39. V. 15. Nay, more, the Apostles themselves must shew a humble, trustful, child-like spirit.