

The Quiet Hour.

Jesus and the Sabbath.

S.S. LESSON—Matt. 12: 1-13. February 21, 1904.

GOLDEN TEXT—Is it lawful to do well on the Sabbath days.—Matt. 12: 12.

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Were an hungered, v. 1. All activity springs from some felt want. The mere presence of a desire in one's life is not in itself a sin. It is the task of conscience and reason to mortify evil desires and to gratify legitimate ones. Jesus teaches us that hunger is perfectly natural, and therefore, that it is quite right to take the needful steps to appease it on the Sabbath. God's demands of men are reasonable and merciful.

When the Pharisees saw it, v. 2. On one occasion when the famous Duncan Matheson visited a parish in Scotland, he asked a lad, "Are there any Christians here?" "I never heard of 'em," replied the boy. "Are there any hypocrites then?" "Oo ay, there's an in yonder cottage." Matheson knocked and asked the woman that responded, "Will you receive a disciple in the name of a disciple?" Her face beamed with a glad smile. He knew she was no hypocrite and that the world's judgment is not to be relied upon. Obedience to God's laws is not Pharisaism. True Christians have often been cruelly slandered by the term. Where there is a mean-spirited, selfish, carping man, who

"Compounds for sins he is inclined to,
By damning those he has no mind to,"
there is your Pharisee.

What David did, v. 3. The power of precedent is enormous for good or ill. All new activities should be carefully scrutinized before permitted; as, once allowed, they will be quoted to justify future action. And all good men should set a close guard upon their actions. Even a single divergence from the path of right may lead many astray.

The priests in the temple, . . . are blameless, v. 5. The Fourth Commandment permits of works of necessity and mercy. Christ suffers His disciples to satisfy the wants of the body; for this is such a work. The claims of the soul are not less urgent; therefore, on the Sabbath the priest ministered at the altar, the minister officiated in the pulpit, the teacher, if need be, travels far to the Sabbath School. But these exceptions are no excuse for the running of trains, the operation of machinery, or for holiday excursions, which are neither merciful nor necessary, and which sacrifice the needed rest of thousands to the pleasures and avarice of the favored few.

I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, v. 7. This is the key-note to all God's laws. The regulations that would not permit a woman to wear a ribbon, nor a man to use a false tooth on the Sabbath, because these were burdens, were a travesty of the divine government. The law that would force the disciples to go hungry rather than rub a few grains in their hands, was absurdly cruel. So also is the operation of great industries that have robbed the laboring man of his rest and peace of heart. God will have mercy, and not the sacrifice of the highest interests of the working classes.

The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day, v. 8. The spirit that is to decide what we shall do or not do, is the Sabbath spirit of our Lord, ever ready to heal, to

help, to teach, to bless, but never to impose a burden upon another. By possessing such a spirit we make the Son of man Lord of the Sabbath. The Pharisees forged fetters to bind men; Christ came to set them free.

One sheep, v. 11. Garibaldi was known in his farming days to hunt all night for a single lost lamb, not because of its monetary value, but because he could not help thinking about the poor little bleating creature lost in the darkness and the storm. He was a true shepherd. What a thought, that God's heart so yearns for every wandering and wayward one! Such divine love brooks no regulations that limit it, but lays down the rule for the Christian life.

It fell into a pit on the Sabbath day, v. 11. Suppose that, on our way to public worship some Sabbath morning, we should see a man trying to get his ox out of a pit into which it had fallen. It might be our duty to help in the rescue of the poor beast, even though so doing should prevent our going to church. But suppose that Sabbath after Sabbath, we should be asked to aid in getting the ox out of the same pit. We would then be justified in saying to the owner that he would get no more help from us, that he must tie up the ox or fill up the pit. No one has the right to expect that, on the plea of humanity, we shall do unnecessary work.

A Cure for Spiritual Poverty.

The poverty of modern Christian life will never be cured until a far greater earnestness is put into the hard and happy work of praying.

It is instructive to read in the life of Frederick Maurice how he would often be engaged in prayer all the night through; and if everything were known, it would be found that all Christians who have made a deep mark have sought and found the Lord in like manner.

To live in the atmosphere of prayer is to live in the atmosphere of miracle, in the atmosphere of the New Testament; and it is in this way, and in this way only, that faith in the divine manifestation is kept alive and burning.

When the strength, the joy, the peace, and the power of the Christian Church are unimpaired, it is because her ministers and her people are proving that through Christ we have access in one Spirit to the Father, and confessing that Jesus is Lord in the Holy Ghost. Then there is no complaint of failures to attend Christian worship.

There is a longing even on the part of those outside to touch the hands of those who have walked with the Most High. The brethren are able to speak to one another of what the Lord has delivered unto them, of their comprehension of the supernatural revelation. They shine with the divine splendor which fills each star, one star differing from another in glory. The Holy Ghost comes upon them, and the power of the Highest overshadows them.

So, confessing with their mouths the Lord Jesus, and believing in their hearts that God has raised Him from the dead, they are saved.—British Weekly.

Begin To-Day.

Is there nothing which Christ as your Friend, your Lord, your Saviour, wants you to do which you are leaving undone to-day?

Do you doubt one instant, with His high and deep love for your soul, that He wants you to pray? And do you pray? Do you doubt one instant that it is His will that you should honor and help and bless all men about you who are His brethren? Are you doing anything like that? Do you doubt one instant that His will is that you should make life serious and lofty? Do you one instant doubt that He wants you to be pure in deed and word and thought? And are you pure? Do you doubt one instant that His command is for you openly to own Him and declare that you are His servant before all the world? And have you done it? These are the questions which make the whole matter clear. No, not in quiet lanes, nor in the bright temple courts, as once He spake, and not from blazing heavens, as men sometimes seem to expect—not so does Christ speak to us. And yet He speaks! I know what He—there is all His glory—He, here in my heart—wants me to do to-day, and I know that I am not mistaken in my knowledge. It is no guess of mine; it is His voice that tells me.—Phillips Brooks.

Consider the Chances.

BY REV. A. A. CAMERON.

"What are the chances for the average man being saved?"

This might be considered a strange question, but it was a most practical one. It was not uncommon to discuss man's chances of living to a certain age. Why, then, could they not discuss his chances for eternal life?

So far as human life was concerned God regarded the multitudes in danger. He had provided a Saviour. God regarded human soul as being sick unto death. Men were born with a nature that developed into love for sin and caused them to do things in their business, home and the world that proved sin had diseased their spirit. Sin was really a brain fever, a pneumonia, a heart disease, a spiritual indigestion.

God regarded man as spiritually asleep on the river of life. The currents of appetites, passions, evil companions and associations were constantly leading his frail boat on. While he was occupied with dreams the boat would drift faster and faster to the rocks.

Should they not answer the words, "How few there are that be saved," by the verse, "Awake thou that sleepest and call upon thy God!"

He wondered how many of those who died throughout Christendom entered in through the straight gate. How many of such had called in the Great Physician? But while many were thus perishing, provision had been made for the salvation of all. Sin was a fatal disease unless that physician was called in. But God had provided one. He could today heal all manner of sicknesses and diseases. If they were still in the grip of sin fever, whose fault was it but their own?

He wondered were the people of Ottawa seeking salvation, how many were striving to do right?

There were overtaxed business men in this city who loved their business more than their God. When Sunday came it brought little leisure to them and was a day for the reviewing of gains, or losses, the speculations of the week. God's house, God's Son did not concern such men. And such an one was a type of thousands in Ottawa. Such a man could be seen on Sunday in his slippers reading the papers, not worshipping in God's house, receiving his friends and talking over politics, business, the chances of a famous