



Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind.

John ix., 1-12. Memory verses 10, 11. Read John ix.

Golden Text.

I am the light of the world. John ix., 5.

Home Readings.

- Monday, March 9.—John viii., 12-30.
- Tuesday, March 10.—John viii., 31-45.
- Wednesday, March 11.—John viii., 46-59.
- Thursday, March 12.—John ix., 1-23.
- Friday, March 13.—John ix., 24-41.
- Saturday, March 14.—Luke ix., 35-43.
- Sunday, March 15.—Mark viii., 22-38.

FOR THE JUNIOR CLASSES.

Shut your eyes all of you, and try to think what it would be like if you could never open them again. But there is something even worse than that, something you can hardly imagine, and that is never having been able to see anything. You know how, when you go into a dark room to get anything, you put out your hands in front of you and walk carefully because you are afraid of falling. Can you think what it would be like to be always in the dark? In our lesson to-day we learn about a poor man who was like that because when he came a little baby into the world he was quite, quite blind. Shut your eyes again. Now put your hand over them. Did you notice how much darker it was with your hand over your eyes? That was because you could feel the light on your eyes even with your lids down until you shut it out with your hand. Your eyes are strong and good you see, but this poor man could not even feel the light on his eyes; it was always quite dark to him. He was so poor too, that he had to sit and beg by the roadside. One day when he was sitting like that Jesus passed along the road. Now let us stop and think what our golden text says. (Have them repeat it.) It was Jesus who said those words, and in our lesson we learn how he brought light to this poor man who had lived always in darkness.

In conclusion, show what is the real meaning of Christ's being the light of the world, how he gives the sunshine of love and happiness in the place of the shadow of sin and misery.

FOR THE SENIORS.

The two chapters intervening between this and last Sunday's lesson should be read over. There is little of incident. John merely stops to record some sayings of Christ induced by various criticisms. Several months, however, actually lie between the two lessons, a period indicated by the first verse of the seventh chapter, and it is now toward the close of the third year of Christ's public ministry. He is back in Jerusalem and did not again return to Galilee. The hostility of the ruling spirits and of the crowd when under their sway, has been manifested by the attempt to stone him recorded in John viii., 59. From now on there was open and determined hostility; the decree mentioned in verse 22 had been passed, and the Pharisees were on the watch for any action that could be construed as warranting arrest. Christ, however, would sacrifice no part of his mission for this cause, and although it was the Sabbath day (verse 14), artificially revered by the Pharasaical law, the call of humanity was unhesitatingly answered. The question of the relation of sin to suffering in this world is introduced by the

disciples. Christ's answer did not indicate that the parents were unusually sinless people, but that we are not to construe suffering as punishment direct from God. Nature is impartial and any sin against its laws is bound to entail the threatened consequences, but there is much of suffering in this world not traceable to the sufferer's fault or even to that of the parents, and this is God's opportunity to overrule nature in mercy. To suffering we owe some of the most beautiful traits of human character. Sympathy, pity, gentleness, and unselfishness would all be unnecessary if there were no suffering. These are surely 'works of God made manifest' through suffering. The man who stands out so prominently in the lesson and so fearlessly before the carping councilors is a splendid study in himself. The faith, so weak that it required some outward aid to strengthen it, culminated, with that patient help, in the declaration of verse 38.

(SELECTIONS FROM TARBELL'S 'GUIDE.')

Verse 4. Let us accustom ourselves in early life to the idea that we must go away, and let us play our part bravely, without having our good nature spoiled or our enthusiasm for work diminished. Then, if the moment comes to stop, it does not prove that what we have done in this world is in vain, not that we should lightly value these days that will end. What we have begun here will have its successor and its to-morrow. If a man resigns himself to death, he is not permitted to resign himself to nothingness. Death is a stage of progress, it is not the end. God's will for us is infinite. Nothing that comes from God can vanish into nothingness.—Charles Wagner, *On Life's Threshold.*

Man has only one day of life—to-day: he did live yesterday, he may live to-morrow, but he has only to-day.—Wm. George Jordan.

The first thing to consider in life is the end of it, its highest and ultimate design.—W. L. Watkinson.

Our solace in suffering is that the Man of Sorrows is sure to walk that way.—Sunday School Times.

As there are blind beggars in the East who would on no account have their sight restored and be forced to earn their own living through toil, so there are those in our land who are content to be spiritually blind rather than be troubled by the sense of duty to others which would come with their spiritual sight.

(FROM PELOUBET'S 'NOTES.')

Canon Tristram states that 'blindness is common in Palestine to a degree which we in Western lands can scarcely realize. There is probably no country in the world, except Egypt, where this affliction is so prevalent. At Gaza, for instance, it is said that one-third of the population have lost one or both eyes; and, from my own observation in that city, I should unhesitatingly say that the statement is not exaggerated.'

Verse 3. 'God,' says Davidson, 'confers on some the high prerogative of suffering, to demonstrate to a scoffing world or an incredulous accuser of the brethren what righteousness really means.' The martyrs, prophets, apostles, Christ himself, are examples. Many more in private life.

Verse 4. 'The last sentence ever formed by the lips of Cecil Rhodes was this: "So much to do, so little done; good-by." Do the lengthening shadows of the long, long night never affect you? . . . "After that—the dark." "We shall never pass this way again." There are thoughts like these with which I can scourge my soul almost to frenzy. It is a frightful thing to make no deeper mark on the world than some of us are making.'—Sunday School Times.

BIBLE REFERENCES.

Isa. xxix., 18; xxxv., 5; xli., 6, 7; II. Chron. xxxiii., 12, 13; Rom. v., 3, 4; II. Cor. i., 3, 4;

xvii., 18; Rev. vii., 13-15; John viii., 12; Gal. vi., 10; Ps. cxix., 18.

Junior C. E. Topic.

Sunday, March 15.—Topic—The wise use of money. I. Tim. vi., 17-19.

C. E. Topic.

- Monday, March 9.—What Moses Gave up. Heb. xi., 24-27.
- Tuesday, March 10.—What the disciples gave up. Matt. xix., 27, 28.
- Wednesday, March 11.—Not willing to give up all. Matt. xix., 21, 22.
- Thursday, March 12.—The reward of self-sacrifice. Mark x., 29, 30.
- Friday, March 13.—What Matthew left. Luke v., 27, 28.
- Saturday, March 14.—Matthew's feast. Luke v., 29-32.
- Sunday, March 15.—Topic—What Matthew gave up for Christ. Matt. ix., 9.

Religious Notes.

It is said that a noticeable reaction has followed the great revival in Wales. The National Free Church Council sent a special commissioner to South Wales, where he visited no less than thirty-seven centres, finding that there has been enormous loss in the membership of the churches, and that many of the presumed converts have fallen into evil habits. This is particularly true among the young coal-miners, whose lives are rough and surrounded by very few helpful influences. The conclusion of the commissioner is that there is need of a great change in religious methods if the results of the revival are to be conserved. The reaction is compelling the churches to reconsider their methods of organization, and many are looking toward institutional methods as a means of retaining the youth within the ranks of the churches. All this confirms the misgivings of those who feared that the revival was too emotional to be substantial.

Our own observation, after months in Wales, will scarcely confirm the above statements which are substantially from the 'Christian World' of London. No doubt there has been a reaction and that is inevitable after months and more than a year of high spiritual tension. But Prof. Keri Evans, of Camarthen, who is very familiar with the conditions, said to the writer that while the form of manifestations has changed, the work of the Spirit is no less unmistakable. At the same time he says that the new converts have much need of guidance. It is true some Paul and Silas went through Wales, visiting converts to see how they do and confirming the churches.—'Missionary Review of the World.'

Mirza Ibraheem was a Moslem in the region of Khoi. He was led to Christ by a helper there, and when it was known he was a Christian all his property was confiscated and his wife and children were taken from him. He finally had to flee for his life to Urumia, where the American Mission made him a small allowance in return for some writing done. Then it was found he was giving away half of his earnings to the poor and preaching as best he could to Moslems in the city.

Finally he felt it his duty to preach openly, although as he himself said, he knew it meant death. But said he: 'Someone must die, let it be me.' Preaching in the villages, he was soon arrested and brought before the governor. Asked if he had 'turned a Christian,' he said, 'Yes,' and was then tortured—beaten until nearly dead, and thrown into prison. Visited there, he was found covered with bruises and wounds, but preaching to the prisoners. He was finally summoned to Tatrig, when large sums of money and a high position were offered him if he would recant. These he indignantly refused, and suffered on. Finally, one day some rough prisoners attacked him and strangled him to death. He died confessing Christ, and when dead word was sent to the missionaries to 'take the dog and bury him.' They look forward to the day when they can erect a monument over the grave of this noble martyr.—'Missionary Review of the World.'