

John tells us that on to near the close of his ministry his brethren did not believe in him (John 7: 3); (3) his brethren were most likely constrained to believe in him by our Lord's special appearance to James after his resurrection (1 Cor. 15: 7); (4) after they did become believers, and were of consequence in the infant church, they are distinguished from the disciples (Acts 1: 14). Our Lord's brethren are always mentioned in connection with Joseph and Mary (Matt. 12: 47; 13: 55; Mark 6: 3; John 2: 12; Acts 1: 14), never in connection with Clopas and his wife Mary; and, lastly, it is likely that when the Scripture says brethren, it means brethren and not cousins." (Lindsay.)

NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS.

INTRODUCTORY. The multitude thronged around Jesus so that he and his disciples could scarcely find leisure to eat bread. So little did his friends and relatives understand the meaning of this that they began to fear that the excitement had affected his reason, and proposed to place him under restraint. Taking advantage of this the Pharisees declared him to be in league with Satan himself. This charge was the culmination of their calumnies, and, reflecting as it did upon the character of that power which he wielded as the Son of Man, demanded severe rebuke. Our Saviour's unanswerable reply and solemn warning form the subject of our lesson to-day. Parallel passages, Matt. 12: 22-50; Luke 11: 14-23; 8: 19-21.

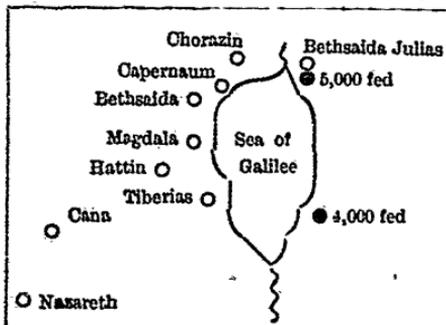
LESSON PLAN. I. Christ's Enemies. vs. 22-30. II. Christ's Brethren. vs. 31-35.

I. CHRIST'S ENEMIES. 22. Which came down from Jerusalem.—They came from the great centre of Jewish piety and learning, and would be much venerated by the "provincial" Galileans. He hath Beelzebub—Matthew (11: 22-24) tells us that he had just cured a man who was possessed with a devil and was blind and dumb. The people were beginning to ask one another, "Is not this the Messiah?" Then the enemies of Jesus tried to make the people think that these evil spirits only pretended to be afraid, and that they were really in league with him to make the people believe that he was the Messiah, when he was one of themselves. *Beelzebub* was the God of Ekron (2 Kings 1: 2). The name meant "the god of flies." The Jews, by changing one letter, *Beelzebub*, made it mean "the god of filth," and applied it to Satan. This last name is the one Luke wrote and the scribes used. They never denied the fact that demons were there, and that Jesus really cast them out. Matt: 9: 34; 10: 25; Luke 11: 15; John 7: 20; 8: 48, 52.

23. He called them unto him.—Matthew says "he knew their thoughts." He would see them passing around among the people and whispering their self-contradictory slander. So he called them to the front, that their complete refutation and utter confusion might be seen of all. Their action was mean

and cowardly. In parables—The word means, literally, "a placing together," a comparison, a similitude. A mere comparison without a narrative is called a parable (1 Sam. 10: 12; Mark 13: 28) as in the lesson. Generally, however, it means a fictitious story, true to nature, in which persons and places have real, not allegorical, names. A *fable* does not regard probability, but intentionally violates it. The parable usually aims at imparting *religious*, the fable *moral*, lessons. An *allegory* differs from both parable and fable, in giving its characters self-interpreting names. It describes real facts in a figurative manner; the parable gives a figurative meaning to real facts, while the fable gives a figurative meaning to an unreal narrative. Four parables or illustrative stories were spoken on this occasion. Three are found in the lesson and another in the parallel passage, (Matt. 12: 43-45). **How can Satan cast out Satan.**—He would be fighting against himself, pulling down with one hand what he built up with the other. It was the part of Satan to torture with disease (Luke 13: 16), but Christ came to deliver from this bondage. He made men well and happy. This was not Satanic work.

23-28.—"Satan must have less than human prudence if your charge be true. The kingdom of darkness is at war with itself, and must speedily fall." In Matthew's account Jesus said, "If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges." (Matt. 12: 27.) "Your children," means the disciples of these rabbis. In the schools of the Pharisees, a so-called higher magic was taught, by which demons were to be expelled and drawn out of the noses of persons possessed, by means of certain roots, by exorcism, and by magic formulas, supposed to have been derived from King Solomon." Our Saviour does not acknowledge that these unmeaning and superstitious practices ever ejected a demon, but he uses the *argumentum ad hominem*. "If one who really casts out devils must be in league with Beelzebub, then your disciples are impostors or they, too, are in league with Satan." If it



(The Home Study Leaflet and the Teachers' Monthly for 1895 will be frequently illustrated with outline maps.)