

Sabbath School Teacher.

LESSON XXVIII.

THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS. (Mark 1: 1-27.)

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 25-27. PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. iv. 18; Luke iv. 33.

With v. 16-18, read Luke xiv. 33; with vs. 19-21, Matt. iv. 13; with v. 22, Heb. iv. 12; with vs. 23, 24, Ps. lxxxix. 18, 19; with vs. 25, 26, Luke iv. 41; and with v. 27, John vi. 46.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—JESUS SPEAKS WITH AUTHORITY.

LEADING TEXT.—AND JESUS CAME AND SPOKE, SAYING, ALL POWER IS GIVEN UNTO ME IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH.—Matt. xxviii. 18.

After his introduction by the Baptist and by the voice of his Father from heaven, to his work as Messiah, Jesus endures the temptation of the wicked one. He is the second Adam. He stands, where the first Adam fell (Rom. v. 17). He is alone, in the desert, in need of all things. The first Adam had all things. He began his trials and triumphs here, at the same time that he illustrated to us that the time of temptation often follows immediately the time of privilege, and showed how Satan is to be overcome.

Immediately after his temptation he began his public ministry, in the same strain as the Baptist (v. 15), "Repent ye and believe the gospel." Jesus Christ has to do two things:

(1) You are to be taught divine truth. He bears witness to it, and reveals the Father. That he may be certified as the Messenger and Son of the Father, miracles have to be wrought. Men expect a divine messenger to be accredited. Hence his mighty works, which were never mere spectacles, but signs, evidences, proofs that He came from God (John iii. 2). So Moses was attested. So Samuel. So Elijah.

(2) He had to organize a company, society, community, that should remain after his removal, be the nucleus of the Christian Church, carry on the work of teaching, and represent to the world in true and pure life, the influence and effect of his own gospel.

I. AUTHORITY OVER MEN.—Simon and Andrew, and James and John.

(1) This was not the first interview. It is not God's way to call men by the chance words of an unknown stranger. The Baptist had pointed out the Saviour as the Lamb of God to Andrew (John i. 36), who sought an interview with Jesus, and spent a day with him; then brought Peter. Both had their minds turned to Messiah; both were drawn to Christ. When he invited them to come and follow him, as he did when apparently walking in a casual way, by the Sea of Galilee, they had some preparation of mind for the invitation. John (i. 41) relates their introduction to Jesus, Matthew and Mark describe their formal call. The Lord uses means adapted to our circumstances for leading us to himself. Andrew was of Bethsaida, and had been the disciple of the Baptist.

(2) They were humble men, fishermen. But this does not imply beggary or pauperism, nor even so lowly a place in society and intelligence as labourers occupy. All who know life in fishing villages, know that fishermen in point of observation, knowledge, and influence (especially when, as here, they owned their own boats), have a comparatively high place. Zebedee's means seem to have been exceptionally good, as we infer from the "hired servants" (v. 20), their mothers substance (Luke viii. 3) John's "own house" (John xix. 27), and his being known to the high priest Caiaphas. This may have led to the request of the mother of Zebedee's children (Matt. xx. 20). John was a common name at that time.

(3) They were engaged in their honest and lawful work when called. Toil is no dishonour, while idleness and dependence become at once a snare and disgrace. To Moses feeding his sheep, to Gideon threshing wheat, to Elisha ploughing, came divine communications. Let no boy or girl feel demoralized by working, by manual labour. "Let him labour, working with his hands the thing that is good," Eph. iv. 28.

(4) They were called to noble and dignified work—to be "fishers of men," the term coming naturally and fitly from their occupation. From casting their nets and repairing them when broken, they are called to employ the same diligence, patience, ingenuity, adaption to circumstances, in catching men: but with this difference, that while the fish were killed in being caught, men are caught that they may live.

(5) Christ's authority is seen in teaching as well as in calling. He was in the habit of keeping the Sabbath by "going to worship," Luke iv. 16. The elders or rulers of the synagogue appointed or invited a known teacher to read and speak to the people, Acts xiii. 15. Jesus was accustomed to read, and was already regarded as fitted to teach, from which we may see that he was esteemed as sober and exemplary, and in good repute among those with whom he was brought up. His expositions amazed the hearers, not being composed, as Rabbinical sermons were and still largely are, of quotations from former Rabbis, but of forcibly, weighty statements, which they could not gainsay, and on his own authority. See the style of the Sermon on the Mount: "But I say unto you;" or in John (x. 1), "Verily, verily, I say unto you." He drew his authority from no preceding teacher.

II. AUTHORITY OVER THE INVISIBLE WORLD. It is not too much to conclude that Satan had permission at the time to use all his resources to counteract the truth, and that the "unclean spirits" represent this agency. No diseases of any known kind are attended by such signs as the declarations made by the unclean spirits; and if it be said that diseases are or were so described by the Jews, it is sufficient to say that Satan imitates, or rather seeks to caricature God by working through common and familiar facts.

Here was a protest, that might have seemed supernatural, against Christ (v. 21). The man was well enough to be in the synagogue (v. 23). No mentally or bodily disorder would explain his anger ("Let us alone") mingled with fear ("Art thou come to torment us?"), and this intelligence ("I know thee," &c. See Acts xvi. 16.) This title used in Ps. xvi. 10. Whatever the life now lived by this spirit, it was better than the usual, or the expected state He believed and trembled. Little more can we know. Heaven had witnessed to Christ. So does hell. Christ will not receive such testimony, which was given with no good will; there are agencies which we would not accept as helps to anything good; being premature, it might even do evil. He in his own name rebuked (see Jude v. 9) the spirit ("Hold thy peace"), and delivered the man ("Come out of him"), which was obeyed with the spate, rage, and unreasoning vindictiveness that will avenge itself on anything that comes under its power—which one sees in baffled bad men as well as in unclean spirits. (See ch. ix. 26; Luke ix. 42; and Acts viii. 7.)

The thoughtful ones see it and wonder, and question among themselves. A strange teacher! miracles! thus new revelations had come before. "What new doctrine is this?" For he not only teaches as "Moses and Elias" did, but like them he has power from God. "Unclean spirits do obey him!" So began in form the war between Christ and Satan.

ILLUSTRATION.

Dr. Thomson in Land and the Book, describes four ways of fishing practised in the Sea of Galilee, all probably alluded to in the Gospels: (1) with a hook and line (Matthew xvii. 27); (2) a hand net. Peter and Andrew casting a net; (3) a bag-net or basket-net for use in deep water; (4) a drag-net, very large, requiring several men to work it.

SUGGESTIVE TOPICS.

How Christ was introduced—how his work began—why—like Adam—yet unlike—his preaching—how like the Baptist—the two things to be done—place of miracles—why men called—his two-fold authority here shown—the men called—their names—occupation—preparation for the call—their future work—the teachings of Christ—his habit on the Sabbath—called to read—by whom—what this shows—the unclean spirit in the synagogue—the nature of the cry—the Lord's word—the affect—spirit's rage—the effect on the people, and lessons to us.

Facts for Parents.

A number of physicians, practicing in New York and Brooklyn, having compared notes, have come to the conclusion that one leading cause of the mortality among children arises from their being left too much to the care of servants. It has been observed that children who are taken care of by their parents, undressed and put to bed by them, and by them dressed in the morning, and kept under a loving mother's eye during the day, are, as a general thing, far more healthy, good tempered, and intelligent than such as are left almost exclusively to the care of servants. In addition to this, it must be remembered that most of the accidents which happen to children, whereby they are seriously injured, and sometimes crippled, maimed, and rendered idiotic, occur through the negligence of those in whose care they are left by unthinking or unloving parents.

The Training of Children.

"Who knows," asks Bishop Beveridge, "but that the salvation of ten thousand immortal souls may depend upon the education of one child?" Let no one be discouraged by the difficulty or magnitude of the work. Fruit does not always immediately appear. Cases have been known in which a mother's counsels, example, and prayers produced their effect many years after she was laid in the silent grave. "We can not give our children grace," it is often said; but they who thus speak must know there is One who can, One with whom "all things are possible." "The God of all grace" has said, "I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." What are difficulties before Omnipotence? What stiff neck can not be bent? What hard heart can not be softened? What refractory spirit can not be subdued? What wayward prodigal can not be reclaimed?

It must be admitted, indeed, that in some instances faithful mothers have been comparatively unsuccessful. A son may wander from the true path which has been marked out for him. But these are the rare exceptions. The general rule is, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Dr. Clarke, commenting upon this passage, says, "The Hebrew of this clause is curious: Initiate the child at the opening (the mouth) of his path. When he comes to the opening of the way of life, being able to walk alone and to choose, stop at this entrance and begin a series of instructions, how he is to conduct himself in every step he takes. Show him the duties, the dangers, and the blessings of the path; give him directions how to perform the duties, how to escape the dangers, and how to secure the blessings which all lie before him. Fix these on his mind by daily inculcation, till their impression has become indelible; then lead him to practice by slow and almost imperceptible degrees, till each indelible impression becomes a strongly radiated habit. Beg incessantly the blessing of God on all this teaching and discipline; and then you have obeyed the injunction of the wisest of men. Nor is there any likelihood that such impressions shall ever be effaced, or that such habits shall ever be destroyed.

Bishop Whipple, of the Episcopal Church, often speaks right out and to the point. At a late missionary meeting in Christ Church, in Cincinnati, he said: "If a man has grasped Christ with one hand he will be sure to extend his other to his fellow-man;" and in another connection he said: "We have managed our churches so that they have become mere Sunday club houses."

Our Young Folks.

"I Don't Care."

"I am sorry to see my son give way to anger, said a patient mother. "I don't care," replied the passionate child.

"You will become an ignorant man unless you study better," said the faithful teacher later.

"I don't care," he muttered, under his breath.

"Those boys are not the right sort of companions for you," said the pastor.

"I don't care," he answered, turning on his heel.

"It is dangerous to taste wine," said his friend, warningly.

"I don't care," was his still obstinate reply.

A few years after, he was a worthless drunkard, plunging into every excess, and finally ending a miserable life of crime, without hope.

"I don't care," was his ruin, as it is the ruin of thousands. Look out for it, boys and girls. Keep away from it. Always care. Care to do right, and care when you have done wrong.—Little Sower.

The Letter.

A little boy, who had always lived at home, was going away for the first time to live at a boarding-school. His father kissed him and said: "Always write me a letter every week, and tell me how you are getting on at school; and if you get into any troubles or difficulties, do not hide them from me, but let me know, and I will write back to you and tell you what you ought to do, and I will let you know all that goes on at home, about your mother and brothers and sisters, and your little garden, and your rabbits and pigeons."

When the boy found himself at school, at first he felt rather down-hearted, being among strangers and away from his parents, and when he sat down to write his first letter home, he told his father of all his troubles, and when he received his father's letter in answer, he was so interested in reading it that he forgot he was at school, and he fancied for a moment that he was back again at home among his kind friends, and his garden and his rabbits. His father's letter was a great help to him; it told him to be a good scholar in the second place, but a good boy in the first place, and not to mind his school-fellow's jokes and fun, if they laughed at him for doing right. "If you do what is right," said the letter, "your school-fellows may laugh at you and tease you at first, and perhaps for a long time, but they will respect you in the end."

But in a week or two he became used to the boys and to his studies, and he liked very well to be at school, and did not so much care to hear from home, and when he sat down to write home, he did not feel that he had much to say; so he began now to write shorter and shorter letters every week, and at last he forgot to write at all, and when his father's letters came (for his father never forgot to write), he used to pay less and less attention to them, and at last he used to feel annoyed by the good advice in the letters, and he left off reading them at all.

Now, he used to think much about his father, and he began to fall into idle and bad ways, to cheat in his lessons, and to use bad language. At last he told a lie to his master; and his master punished him, and said to him, "What will your father say when he hears this?" Then the little boy burst into tears, not because of the punishment, but because he felt he had been very ungrateful and forgetful of his father. That same day he wrote to his father, telling him how sorry he was he had behaved so badly. His father wrote back, forgiving him and saying, "Pray write regularly, for whenever you write you will think of me, and the thought of me may keep you from temptation."

You are that child. Your Father is God in heaven. The letter is prayer. Pray regularly to God, for God says to you, "Whenever you pray I hear what you say, and I will send you an answer. I shall not answer you aloud, but in your heart."—From Parables for Children.

Little Arlie.

BY N. B. I.

How we loved the little girl. The bright eyes and happy face appeared before us Sabbath after Sabbath, and her little verse was repeated as if the little child understood and loved the words of her Saviour. It was her custom to leave the infant class after her lesson was over, and join her sister, who was a little older than herself, and had become a member of another class. She was always ready to repeat her verse to her sister's teacher.

One bright Sabbath day she said "I'm coming out of the infant class in a little while." Sweet child; she has come out from the little band of scholars and gone to join the angel band. This was her last time at Sabbath-school. She sickened, and for many weeks suffered intensely, but God was fitting her for the change. She never murmured, but in the midst of great pain would slowly repeat some precious promise.

As her mother, in her untiring devotion, bestowed upon her needed care, she exclaimed, "I love you mamma, but I love God better."

We stood by her little bed one day, and asked if she would like to go and live with Jesus. Her face lighted up with the brightness which was so soon to dawn upon her, and she replied, "O, yes!" "Jesus will take you in His arms," we said. "I know He will," was the answer, full of childish faith and trust.

A few days later, when so many were on their way to scatter flowers upon the graves of our fallen heroes, we weeded

our way to the home of little Arlie, "to place in her little hands some violets, knowing how she loved them; but she had gone, only a few moments before, where flowers never fade, and where there is no pain or sorrow. As we placed the flowers upon her lifeless breast, and missed the bright smile with which we had expected to be greeted, we thought of the heavenly glory which had opened before her, and the shining ones seemed so near we could almost see the sweet spirit soaring to eternal rest. Good by, Arlie, Jesus has taken you to His arms.

Walking over the hills in the country, one day, we met a man carrying a lamb in his arms running behind, were several all sheep and lambs crying piteously.

"What are you going to do with the lamb?" we asked. "Only carrying him over into a better pasture. I know that if I took up this one the others would follow." We watched them out of sight, as they continued their cry, and thought, "poor things, you don't realize you are to be with your little one again, in a better pasture." How like our own lives. We grieve and mourn when our dear ones are taken over to a better home; but O, if we could but look with strong faith and love into the loving heart of our tender Shepherd, and see all the plan our Lord has marked out for us, how much comfort we should find.

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."

We know how sweet is the comfort of a mother's love when the child is in pain or sorrow. O, the sweetness of knowing that thus our Lord will comfort us if we only trust Him and look up to Him with the child's faith and love. He has promised, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." "I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee."

Moment by moment, then, He will keep us, pitying us like a father, comforting us like a mother, never leaving us; but saving us by His mighty power.

The Forget-Me-Not.

I laid aside my pen as the far-off chiming of the cathedral were tolling the midnight hour, and sat dreamily gazing into the embers of the dying fire.

"Forget-me-not!"

Was I dreaming? Or did a voice really pronounce the words close to my ear? I looked carefully around. No one could have entered through the bolted door. The arrangements of the room were undisturbed. Clearly, I was dreaming.

I settled myself again to think, when the odor of the Forget-me-nots in the little vase attracted my attention. The flowers seemed moved by some fresh instinct of life; the hue was deeper, the perfume was stronger, and—Could it be? Yes, surely! Even as I gazed, the flowers lifted their heads, and from the midst of the tiny cluster of bloom came again, in clear, ringing tones, the self-same tones which I have heard, "Forget-me-not!"

"Was it thou, Bluncheon?" I asked, wondering.

"Yes," said the flower, in the same silvery accents. "Dost thou not know that just at midnight all plants of my race are permitted, for one hour, the gift of speech? Listen, and I will tell thee why we are so gifted above all others.

"In the Garden of Paradise, when the pure Eve walked among the flowers, and gave each a name, according to her liking, all flowers and plants had a language of their own, as this was given to Eve to understand; and during the long hours she conversed often with them, and they told her many things; but, above all, she loved the tiny blossoms of a little blue flower, and kissed it often, and twined it in her sunny tresses. And the flowers all loved her, but, best of all, the little blue flower, which she named Heaven-blossom, because its hue was so like that of the skies.

"But at length came the dark day when sin entered into Paradise, and the Lord commanded the pair to leave their Eden-garden, and wander in the bleak wilderness, beyond the gates. And as, for the last time, the weeping Eve passed, hand in hand with Adam, through the fragrant lanes of Eden, the flowers shrank trembling from her, and bowed their heads with shame, or gazed scornfully upon her; and this, more than all else, rent the heart of Eve—that those whom she had named and caressed and called her children, should shrink away from her in scorn and shame. And her tears fell faster and faster, so that, when she reached the gates where stood the Cherubim with that flaming, terrible sword, she scarcely saw at her feet the little tuft of Heaven-blossom, until it murmured, in piteous accents, 'Forget-me-not!'"

"Eve bent down and plucked the tiny plant, which shrank not from her touch, but nestled lovingly toward her, and she pressed it to her lips and to her sorrowing heart. Then she turned, and with one long sad look upon her lost kingdom, went slowly out, past the Cherubim and the flaming sword, into the bleak wilderness; and all that remained to her of the glorious bloom of Paradise was the one little sprig of Heaven-blossom which she held in her hand. "Be no longer named bloom of heaven, dear blossom!" cried the grateful Eve; "henceforth I shall call you by a dearer name—my Forget-me-not."

"So Eve kept the flower near her through all the dark days that followed; and when Adam had made for them a home in the new place, she planted it, and tended it carefully, and it became to her an emblem of that old life of purity and happiness before the fall.

"In time this new land also was enriched with many flowers, some of them even as beautiful as those of the lost Eden, but, best of all, Eve loved the tender Forget-me-not; and later, when the little Cain and Abel played around the home, she told them many and many a story of the glories of that Garden of Paradise, wherein the angels had walked and talked with their parents of old.

"And when Eve died, the loving flower covered her grave with thick clusters of its blossoms. Ah! I am sure that the first flower which met her sight in that new life beyond the tomb, was her dear Forget-me-not.

"The children of Adam long cherished the little blue flower; but after many years when the world became more and more wicked, and the hearts of men were turned away from God, they lost the power to understand its language.

"When the waters swept away after the Deluge, the first plant that blossomed was the Forget-me-not, but it no longer spoke to the children of men. It was voiceless for long, long years; until, one day, a child upon the hills of Galilee bent down and kissed its blossoms clustering in his path. I was the Christ-child! And from that hour, each night at midnight, if one who loves flowers listens, the blossoms of the Forget-me-not may tell this history.

"Hark! the Cathedral chimes are striking the first hour after midnight. I have spoken. Adieu!"

The flower now drooped drowsily upon its slender stalk, and was silent.—Alice Williams, in St. Nicholas for Jul.

An Example for Young Christians.

A correspondent writes us that, at the last preparatory services of the communion season, on Saturday, two of the congregation walked to Cane Run church. The horses were all engaged, and with a commendable zeal, they determined to go afoot, and walked to the church, over three miles off—and back again, making six good miles, on a warm day. One of them is in her seventy-fifth year, and the other in her fifty-fourth.

At another church, one of the members, an old lady, age seventy-six, rides to church on horseback a distance of five miles, and over one of the worst roads probably in the State.

Such a zeal is rare, and worthy of imitation by all our people, especially the younger members, in these days of soft refinement and devotion. This indicates somewhat more than what is called "Sunday religion," even true love for God and the ordinances of His appointment.—Christian Observer.

Anecdotes of Tillotson.

Archbishop Tillotson, before the elevation to the post of Archbishop of Canterbury, which is the highest station in the Church of England, was dean of Canterbury. One day he had a large dinner-party at the deanery. In the middle of the repast a servant came in and said that a countryman, talking very broadly, who had come all the way from Yorkshire, said he wanted to see one John Tillotson, and would not go away, though he had tried to drive him from the door for being so disrespectful. The dean guessed in his own mind who it was that asked for him in this way, and might have gone out and brought him into a private room, if he had cared for his own dignity. Instead of this, he ran out eagerly, and in the presence of his astonished servants embraced the old countryman, crying out, "It is my beloved father!" and falling on his knees, asked for his blessing. Then he took him in and introduced him to his guests, who were charmed with this instance of the good man's love and respect for his old father.

Sins of Thought.

In contending against sensual sins, the main stress must be laid on the principle of exclusion—the absolute keeping away of bad suggestions from the mind. Once in, the stain has struck upon a substance so sensitive that, if quite indelible, it is still terribly tenacious, and terribly prolific of sorrow.

It is here with beginnings that we have chiefly to do, in ourselves and in our children. Here, peculiarly, the battle is secret and invisible. Not much can be said, and so the more must be done by prayer and instantaneous self-command, expelling the first contamination, and crying, "Cleanse Thou me from secret faults."

In respect to many sins, self-examination may be safe and even necessary; but there are others where it is scarcely wholesome or profitable. Simply presentation, avoidance, the shutting of the eyes and ears, and pressing on to known duty, are the best security.

No Compromise.

As I grow older as a parent, my views are changing fast as to the degree of conformity to the world which we should allow to our children. I am horror-struck to count up the profligate children of pious persons and even ministers. The door at which those influences enter, which counteract parental instruction and example, I am persuaded, is yielding to the ways of good society; by dress, books and amusements, an atmosphere is formed which is not that of Christianity. More than ever do I feel that our families must stand in a kind but determined opposition to the fashions of the world, breathing the waves like the Eddystone lighthouse. And I have found nothing yet which requires more courage and independence than to rise even a little, but decidedly, above the par of the religious world around us. Surely, the way in which we commonly go on is not that way of self-denial and sacrifice and cross-bearing which the New Testament talks of. Then is the offense of the cross ceased. Our slender influence on the circles of our friends is often to be traced to our leaving so little difference between us.—Rev. J. W. Alexander, D. D.

How to Avoid Anxiety.—Payson, on his dying bed, said to his daughter, "You will avoid much pain and anxiety if you will learn to trust all your concerns in God's hands. "Cast your care on him, for He careth for you. But if you merely go and say that you cast your care upon Him, you will come away with the load on your shoulders."