

FOR THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

CONDUCTED BY S. JOHN DUNCAN-CLARK.

International S. S. Lesson.

LESSON X.—WARNING TO THE DISCIPLES—JUNE 7.

(Luke xxii. 24-37).

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”—Phil. ii. 5.

OUTLINE.—{ Selfish ambition and its rebuke (v. 24-30).
Self-confidence and its rebuke (v. 31-34).
Forewarning of danger (v. 35-37).

TIME AND PLACE.—A. D. 30, Thursday evening, April 6th. An upper room in Jerusalem.

INTRODUCTION.—From the Mount of Olives, where the words of our last lesson were spoken, Jesus, with His disciples, went to Bethany, on the eastern slope of the mount. There Jesus remained until the evening of Thursday. On the morning of that day He sent Peter and John to Jerusalem to make the necessary preparation for the observance of the Passover, which He desired to eat with His disciples. As they gathered in the upper room which had been prepared for the purpose, the disciples manifested something of the Spirit which had before this been shown, a spirit of self-seeking, which was rebuked by Jesus, as recorded in this lesson.

VERSE BY VERSE.—V. 24. “A strife.”—They sought seats of honor. “Which should be greatest.”—They still believed that Jesus was about to establish a powerful earthly Kingdom, and that they would be His chief counsellors, and the question was which should have the first place.

V. 25. “Kings of the Gentiles.”—Kings of earthly kingdoms. “Benefactors.”—Those occupying such high positions are counted worthy of honor as benefactors of their kind.

V. 26. “Ye shall not be so.”—That is, this is not the law of my Kingdom. “He that is chief, as he that doth serve.”—He that best and most faithfully serves shall be counted the greatest.

V. 27. “I am among you as he that serveth.”—Jesus, to enforce His words, had taken the office of the lowest servant, and had washed the disciples’ feet.

V. 28. “Continued with me in my temptations.”—The word is used in the sense of “trials.” His disciples had been faithful to Him, and would therefore have their reward.

V. 30. “In my Kingdom.”—The heavenly Kingdom.

V. 31. “Simon.”—Simon Peter. “Sift you as wheat.”—In order to show that there was nothing but chaff.

V. 32. “I have prayed.”—That he might not finally fall. “Converted.”—Brought back from his apostasy. “Strengthen thy brethren.”—His fall was to be made the means of fitting him for this service.

V. 33. “I am ready . . . prison and to death.”—He was called at last to meet death for his Master’s sake.

V. 34. “The cock shall not crow.”—The cock crows in the early morning, and the meaning is “before the morning comes thou shalt deny,” etc.

V. 35. “When I sent you, etc.”—The occasion referred to is that when the disciples were sent out two and two to preach and to heal.

V. 36. “He that hath no sword, . . . buy one.”—That this was not designed to be understood literally is shown by the fact that immediately afterward Jesus declared two swords enough, and rebuked Peter for too hasty use of his sword. It was a direction to use all suitable means for their support and their defence in the prosecution of their future work.

V. 37. “And he was reckoned, etc.”—Quoted from Isaiah liii. 12. Have an end.—He was approaching the completion of the work he came to do.

HINTS ON THE LESSON.

After delivering the discourse which we studied in connection with the last lesson, Jesus retired to Bethany, where He remained in retirement, so far as the record informs us, until Thursday evening before His death. During this period Judas seems to have made his arrangements with the Jewish authorities to betray Jesus.

Apparently some time on this Thursday, probably early in the morning, Jesus sent Peter and John to Jerusalem to prepare for the celebration of the passover. Later in the day He repaired with the other disciples to this place, an upper room somewhere in the city. The order of events occurring after they assembled there, seems to be as follows, though Luke’s narrative indicates otherwise:

1. The beginning of the Paschal Supper.
2. The contention as to precedence.
3. Jesus washes the disciples’ feet.

4. Jesus points out the traitor.
5. The institution of the Lord’s Supper.
6. Warning addressed to Peter.
7. Instructions addressed to all the disciples.
8. The last discourse, and the intercessory prayer.

Luke groups together the contention as to precedence, the warning addressed to Peter and the instruction to the disciples—all of which are embraced in our lesson, which, therefore, consists of three distinct parts.

In some respects our lesson is one more than usually difficult to teach, especially to small children. It should be very carefully analysed and studied, and special preparation should be made for the class work. Primary teachers will do well to avoid the interesting but difficult topics presented in verses 29, 30, and the directions as to buying a sword, verse 36. The general scope and meaning of these passages may be clear, but their particular explanation is difficult and doubtful.

FOR TEACHERS OF PRIMARY CLASSES.

1. Review the last lesson, and describe the events which brought Jesus and His disciples to the upper room in Jerusalem on this Thursday evening. Question your scholars as to the original institution of the Passover; or, if they are not acquainted with it, tell the story of its institution in connection with the Exodus.

2. Then take up the lesson, telling how the disciples began to quarrel with each other as to which was the greatest, and which should have the best places at the table. We may suppose that each one wished to be next to Jesus at the table, supposing that this would help to secure for Himself the best place in that kingdom which they hoped Jesus was about to establish on the earth. All this may be illustrated by the eager desire people, even very little people, now manifest to get the best places and the best things for themselves.

Jesus rebuked this selfish ambition. He shows that the heathen and other worldly minded people have this spirit; but that His people must be very different. The law of greatness in His kingdom is this: *The servant of all is the greatest of all.* He Himself is an example of the truth of this law. He is among His people as one who serves. He is the greatest of all because He is the servant of all.

Do your utmost to get your scholars to understand this great principle of the kingdom of God, and to see the force and beauty of it, so that they will wish to adopt it as the rule of their lives. Those who thus live will, indeed, have a place—a noble one—in the kingdom of God.

3. If time permits take up the remainder of the lesson. We have:

- (1) Satan’s eagerness to destroy us.
- (2) Our safety in Jesus’ interest in us, His love and prayers for us, notwithstanding our forgetfulness and denial of Him. This point should be illustrated by Peter’s case.
- (3) The reference to their former service, and Jesus’ instructions in regard to it, with the charge as to the instructions respecting their future service. The chief point here to be noticed and enforced is that while Jesus is absent in person from the world, we are to do our part for the support and defence of His cause.

STORY

1. Self-seeking is a trait of fallen human nature.
2. The desire for the pre-eminence is a worldly, and not a Christian characteristic.
3. In Christ’s Kingdom the highest place is assigned to humility and service.
4. Jesus ennobled service by Himself becoming servant to all.
5. The disciple may have tribulation, but he will share with Jesus the fellowship and honor of his kingdom.
6. The intercession of Jesus is our safeguard against Satan.
7. Pride and self confidence go before a fall.
8. Trust in Providence, but use appointed means.

LESSON SONNET.

Ambition’s votaries! where are they not?

The well-put lesson which the Master gave
Is all forgotten when we seek to have
Our own conceits of what we are outwrought,
And strive to shape our bearing as if fraught

With great import; vanity puts on grave
Manners and postulates as if to save

A larger dignity than we ere brought

Upon life’s stage; this may a weakness be,

But may Ambition have no higher aim?

Yea! let the mind forecast life’s range and see

The emptiness of fortune and of fame,

Then in the light revealed of God agree

To seek heaven’s crown with high ambition’s flame.

—H. W.