

Thy soul hath mounted in the scale of fate.
The Lord hath weighed thee, and thou lackest weight;
Now in thy palace porch the spoilers stand,
To seize thy sceptre, to divide thy land."

—Sir Edwin Arnold.

Religion for Men

Ephesians 4: 1-15.

TOPIC FOR WEEK OF JANUARY 25.

See Mr. Tucker's article on page 5.

A SUGGESTED PROGRAMME.

Song Service—Hymns 37, 163, 192.
Lord's Prayer, in unison.
Hymn—386.
Scripture lesson—Eph. 4: 1-15.
Sentence prayers.
Hymn—167.
Paper on "Laymen's Missionary Movement."
Hymn—27.
Paper on "Men and Religion Movement."
Hymn—193.
Topic—Religion for Men.
Hymn—426.
Discussion—"What Can the Men Do in Our Church?" led by the pastor.
Closing hymn—431.
Benediction.

Material for the first two papers can be procured from the pastor in the form of pamphlets. Other musical selections may be substituted for any of the hymns.

Personal Interviews of Jesus

X. With a Rich Young Ruler: Complete Surrender Required.

Luke 18: 18-30. (Matt. 19: 16-30; Mark 10: 17-31.)

TOPIC FOR FEB. 1.

REV J. H. McARTHUR, S.T.D., EMIN.

Note: In the preparation of this topic it is the writer's purpose to give only a suggested outline with suggestive thoughts and themes for discussion and development. The individual leader who deals with this topic at the meeting of the league will find that a great deal is left for him to do. He cannot pick up the "Era" and read this topic at the meeting, for the presentation here given is unsuitable for that kind of treatment. The questions suggested in this treatment he must think out for himself.

Study the social and religious status of this man. To what social and religious class did he belong, and what was the attitude of this class towards Jesus and his teaching? He would be wealth and his culture and his social standing tend to separate him from the poor with whom he would have but little sympathy?

Study the character of this rich young lord. What evidence have we that he was a man of moral parts, of religious convictions and habits, of uncommon courage, and yet dissatisfied with himself?

Ask how he regarded Jesus? Was he drawn to Jesus by the beauty of His character, or driven to Him by the disturbed state of his own heart? Develop this thought.

Find out his idea of goodness? What did he mean by eternal life? Jesus saw in this ruler a man of high aspirations and lofty ideals; he has much goodness and desires more. But his goodness is defective, for it is self-centred. How can Jesus lead him to relate his goodness to his needy fellowmen? He would be wealth, his ease, his social position more than he loves his fellow-men.

See now—the task which Jesus undertakes in His conversation with this man?

Jesus suggests by means of a question

(v. 19) that there is something wrong with the man's idea of goodness. Where is his goodness defective? What is the chief defect in his character? What is the difference between the goodness which simply refrains from doing evil, and that which goes out in helpful sympathy towards others? This young lord was the type of many leaders who have passive goodness, but who fall in the manifestation of active goodness. A stone has passive goodness.

Jesus refers him to his commandments. Moses gave the commandments on two tables of stone, the first referring to duties towards God, and the second to duties to our fellowmen. Why does Jesus refer him to the second table and apparently ignore the first? Jesus knows the weak spot in this young man's character and conduct. He is religious enough, but he is not properly related in sympathy and service to his fellowman. Jesus wants to press this matter upon his conscience. Notice the order in which Jesus enumerates the commandments, and how he sums them all up in one principle, *Love thy neighbor as thyself*.

The man does not yet see that there is anything wrong with his character or his conduct. He claims that he has kept the commandments. Was he right or wrong? If wrong was he dishonest or deluded? Develop this thought. (The selfish man is always a deluded man. He cannot appreciate truth and righteousness. His eyes are blinded by the thick scum of selfishness so that he is unable to see the value and the joy and the necessity of loving service and sacrifice for others.)

Observe the Master's look of love. That love reveals the heart of Jesus. It speaks volumes. It tells of the Master's joy in meeting a young man of such noble bearing and high aspirations; of the Master's sorrow at seeing such a one just outside the Kingdom; of the Master's fear lest the allurements of this world would prove the ruin of his life. It tells of a heart full of sympathy that would tend to encourage the young man, and to draw him to himself. Perhaps, too, that look of sympathy would tend to counteract the jeering looks and odious remarks of the Pharisees, who doubtless are disgusted and displeased to think that one of their own number has gone over to Jesus, and that publicly.

This man, amiable and noble and moral as he is, does not know the chief defect in his goodness. But Jesus knows, and resolves to make it plain to him. He is a self-centred Jew; all that he possesses, he possesses for his own good; all that he hopes to be, is for his own sake; and his religion, too, he holds for his own sole benefit. But no such self-centred man can be a true follower of the unselfish Jesus. Hence this man must learn how to relate his wealth and his religion and himself to his needy fellow men, and Jesus brings him straight to the point: "If thou wouldst be perfect sell all that thou hast and"—Here is a specific direction. Will he follow it? Jesus has told this man how the principle of consecration is to be interpreted for him, and how it must be expressed in his life. Is there any hint here as to how we should interpret the same principle in our lives?

Note the young man's decision. What influenced him? How are men making decisions to-day? Discuss the influences at work in leading men to make wise or foolish decisions in their relation to God and to their fellow-men.

THEMES FOR DISCUSSION AND DEVELOPMENT.

What is the chief defect in the character of modern religion? Or in the conduct of modern Christians?

Notice how Jesus always endeavored to reach the conscience of those whom he taught. He was not satisfied in merely informing the intellect, he sought to reach the heart, to quicken the conscience. How did he endeavor to reach the conscience of the Samaritan woman. (Topic for June 1); of the ambitious Disciples (Oct. 5); of the lawyer (Nov. 2)? Of the Dissatisfied Heir (Jan. 4)? Of this rich young lord? Notice how Jesus probes until he finds the weak spot in the life and character of those whom he would lead into the truth.

Study the answer which Jesus gave to this man's question, and compare it with the answer which he gave to a similar question asked by a shifty lawyer, (Luke 10: 25-27), or the answer which Peter gave to a similar question on the day of Pentecost, (Acts 2); or with the answer which Paul gave to the Philippian jailer, (Acts 16).

Notice how Jesus' pity for the poor is exemplified in his command to the young man to give the proceeds of his property to poor people. Jesus' sympathy for the poor placed him in striking contrast to the self-complacent and hard-hearted Pharisees. Everywhere we find Him manifesting an interest in their welfare. This outgo of his soul in behalf of suffering humanity seems to have been a new thing in the world. He loved the unlovely, the publican and the sinner, the poor and the needy. He provided food for the hungry in a miraculous way, though he would not do so for himself. He brought healing to aching hearts and suffering bodies when he himself was tired and hungry and all but exhausted. He administered to the needs of others before he thought of his own. When the sick were brought to him he tenderly laid his hands on them and healed them. While he went to the homes of the rich and the elite of society, his soul was specially drawn out towards the poor and needy. He exhorts the well-to-do people among the Pharisees to invite the poor when they make a feast. He would have the rich young ruler sell all he has and distribute to the poor. What does he require of us? We are inconsiderate and cold, but he was sympathetic and full of compassion. If we help the poor at all we do it with a patronizing air; but Jesus brought the needed help in the spirit of an elder brother.

Thomas Crosby as Teacher and Preacher

TOPIC FOR WEEK OF JANUARY 11.

Matt. 16: 24-28.

MRS. F. C. STEPHENSON.

Last month in our missionary meeting our subject was "Thomas Crosby and his Call to the Indian Work." We found that he was a man of faith, that he bravely faced all difficulties and overcame them, that he was not afraid of hard work, that he did not wait for the opportunity—he made it, that at twenty-three years of age he was in the mission field at Nanaimo, ready to begin his great life-work. This month we shall study about his work as teacher and preacher.

THE AIM OF THE PROGRAMME.

The aim of our programme is to so present Crosby's work as teacher and preacher that it will not only give the early history of our Indian work in British Columbia, but will also make an appeal for the Indians to-day and show us our duty towards them.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE MEETING.

1. A committee, one of the members of which is the missionary vice-president,