

(Matt. 26: 14); but the sin of Judas was his own; he was not pre eminent as a cause of stumbling to others, a seducer of the innocent.

8, 9. Wherefore—(ch. 5: 29, 30). "Wilt thou avoid being the man on whom this woe is pronounced? then cut off all occasion of offence first." (Alford.) "Our Lord makes special mention of the hand, the foot, the eyes, those members whereby we do amiss, or walk astray, or gaze on what is sinful." (Macleay.) If anything, no matter how dear, or how useful, is the cause of our doing wrong, or stands between us and perfect obedience to God's will, we must part with it whatever the cost may be. It is better—R. V., "it is good for thee." The Greek includes the idea of beauty as well as advantage—"it is fair for thee"—and this suits the context well. Moral completeness is secured by the sacrifice of physical symmetry. Enter into life—the life eternal. We know that the resurrection body will be perfect (1 Cor. 15: 42-44). Our Saviour merely carries out this rhetorical figure, and means that it is better to go to heaven without these members, than to retain them if they endanger our salvation. **Halt**—lame in the feet. **Maimed**—deprived of the use of a limb. **Everlasting fire**—R. V. "the eternal fire." In Mark there is the solemn repetition three times of "Where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." (Isa. 66: 24.) The figure refers to the two modes of disposing of the dead, by burial and by burning. The awful and sublime imagery is lost when we try to work out the details of the metaphor. It simply means that loathsome, dreadful and eternal sufferings are the inevitable consequence of sin. (2 Thess. 1: 8, 9; Rev. 14: 10.) **Hell-fire**—R. V. marg. "Gehenna of fire." *Gehenna* is Hebrew for "the valley of Hinnom." It was "a narrow glen to the south of Jerusalem where, after the introduction of the worship of the fire gods by Ahaz, the idolatrous Jews offered their children to Molech. In consequence of these abominations the valley was polluted by Josiah (2 Kings 23: 10); subsequently to which it became the common lay-stall of the city, where the dead bodies of criminals, and the carcasses of animals, and every other kind of filth was cast." (Smith.) It is said by some that perpetual fires were kept burning there to consume the refuse, and by others, that the region is volcanic, and subterranean fires sometimes burst out there. The Jews regarded this accursed and loathsome spot as "the gate of hell," and used the name as synonymous with the abode of the lost. The R. V. always translates it by "hell."

10. Their angels—Jesus prefaces this with a solemn "I say unto you;" it is therefore an important truth to be reverently and undoubtedly received. What is meant by "their

angels?" (1) "Angels in general who are the ministering servants of God's people (Heb. 1: 14)." But this view robs the statement of much of its force. (2) "Their spirits after death." But these are never called angels, which are a distinct order of beings from the souls of men. (3) "Each one has a particular angel as his guardian, and these guardian angels are of a rank very near the throne of God himself." Read Ps. 34: 7; 91: 14; Luke 1: 19. The Jews of our Saviour's time believed this, and would so understand his words. Alford and most recent commentators take this view. If angels minister to God's people, is it not likely that their service is regulated by definite appointments? Our Lord here assures us that this is the case, and that the highest of the holy ones are entrusted with the charge of the humble and the meek—the children in age and the children in grace. (Alford.) Those who hesitate to go so far as this, may take the first view. The meaning is, "If such exalted beings count it an honor to wait upon 'these little ones,' it is not for you to treat them with scorn."

III. GOD LOVES YOU. 11—This verse is omitted in the R. V. It occurs, however, in Luke 19: 10, and some of the best critics believe that it is genuine. For—This is an additional reason for not despising the "little ones." Christ came to save them. Verse 14 adds another, the Father does not wish them to perish. "Here is Jacob's ladder planted before our eyes; beneath are the little ones; then their angels; then the Son of man in heaven; and above him again the Father himself and his good pleasure. (Stier.) Lost—Those who have strayed away and are in danger of eternal ruin. (Luke 9: 56; 19: 10; John 3: 17; 12: 47; 1 Tim. 1: 15.)

12—See Luke 15: 3-7. Jesus left the millions of holy angels who never sinned, and came to the wilderness of this sinful world to find lost man. So we should care most for the weak and erring.

13. Rejoiceth more—(Luke 15: 7-10). Not that he values it more highly, but he knows the danger in which it stood, and calls upon his neighbors to share his joy. So the angels are represented as rejoicing with the Father over the penitent sinner. (Isa. 53: 11; 62: 5; Jer. 32: 37, 41; Micah 7: 18.)

14. It is not the will of your father—God sincerely desires the salvation of all men. Those who are lost, are lost because they refuse to be saved. (2 Pet. 3: 9; Ezek. 33: 11; 2 Sam. 3: 33; Hosea 11: 8.) Dr. Riddle finds in this parable and its application a warrant for the belief that children dying in childhood are all saved; yet not on the ground of their innocence, but because the Son of man came to save them.

SUMMARY AND REVIEW.

We would impress three points upon the minds of the scholars: Be humble, Hate sin, God loves you.

BE HUMBLE.—Pride and self-conceit are not the marks of real worth. Be ready to