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THE Teachers' Preparation Leaflet

LESSON 8.

NOVEMBER 25th, 1894.

4th Q^RTRER.

Opposition to Christ. MARK 3: 22-35.

(Commit to memory verses 23-26.)

GOLDEN TEXT.

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not." John 1: 11.

PROVE THAT

God cares for his people. Ps. 103: 13.

SHORTER CATECHISM.

Quest. 103. *What do we pray for in the third petition?* A. In the third petition (which is, *Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven*), we pray, That God, by his grace would make us able and willing to know, obey, and submit to his will in all things, as the angels do in heaven.

LESSON HYMNS.

CHILDREN'S HYMNAL, Nos. 4, 80, 39, 99.

DAILY PORTIONS.

(The Selections of the I. E. R. A.)

MONDAY—Opposition to Christ.

Mark 3: 22-35.

TUESDAY—The Occasion.

Matt. 12: 22-30.

WEDNESDAY—Christ the Enemy of Satan.

1 John 3: 1-8.

THURSDAY—Satan Cast Out.

Rev. 12: 7-11.

FRIDAY—Resistance to Satan.

Eph. 6: 10-20.

SATURDAY—The Sin of Apostasy.

Heb. 10: 21-31.

SABBATH—The Son Rejected.

Matt. 21: 33-42.

THE BRETHREN OF OUR LORD.

Regarding these there are three theories: (1) They were children of Joseph and Mary; (2) they were children of Joseph by a former wife; and (3) they were children of Cleophas and Mary, the sister and namesake of the Virgin.

(1) The first view we believe to be the correct one for, (a) it was the view of the early Christian church; (b) it is a plain inference from the language used, note what is implied in Matt. 1: 25 ("till"); Luke 2: 7 ("first-born" compared with Rom. 8: 29; Col. 1: 15, 18; Heb. 11: 28; Rev. 1: 5, this term has no meaning if there were not others afterwards), and (c) the term "brother" never has any other meaning than its common one in the New Testament, and terms for kindred merely are used when required. The only real argument against this view is the fact that Jesus on the cross committed his mother to the care of John. It is inferred that if he had had brothers he would have entrusted her to them. But his brothers did not believe on him, and John was much nearer in sympathy to both his mother and himself.

(2) The second view has no support from Scripture or history.

(3) "The third theory was introduced by Jerome, avowedly in defence of the extreme value set on the virgin life by himself and several of his contemporaries. It has no ground in tradition, and therefore rests exclusively on what evidence can be adduced for it from Scripture. It proceeds on the idea that James, our Lord's brother, was one of the apostles (Gal. 1: 19); if so, he must have been James, the son of Alphaeus. The mother of James and Joseph—Mary—was present at the crucifixion, and she must have been the wife of Alphaeus, who was father of James. John (19: 25) tells us that 'Mary of Cleophas or Clopas,' perhaps the Virgin's sister, was at the crucifixion; she was the mother of James; James was, therefore, the *cousin* of our Lord. This statement is further supported by asserting that in Scripture brother frequently denotes mere relationship, as when Abraham calls Lot his *brother* (Gen. 13: 8); by the plausible identification of Alphaeus and Clopas; by stating the improbability that there could be two sets of brothers, called James, Joseph and Simon, the one disciples, the other brethren of our Lord. On the other hand it is alleged, and with great truth, that this argument from Scripture is very weak. It is not at all improbable that there were two sets of brothers bearing these names, the commonest among the Jews, more especially if they were cousins. It is almost impossible to believe that the brethren of our Lord were among the twelve apostles, as this theory supposes, because we find (1) that our Lord's brethren were not among his followers after the calling of the Twelve (compare Mark 3: 13-19 with 31-35); (2)

The TEACHERS' PREPARATION LEAFLET is published weekly by the General Assembly's Sabbath School Committee, Presbyterian Church in Canada, at 35 cents a year, or 25c. if four or more copies are sent to one person. Address Rev. T. F. Fotheringham, 107 Hazen Street, St. John, N. B.

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.

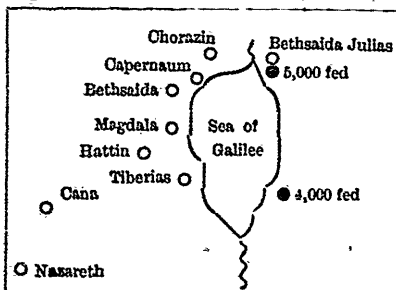
LESSON PLAN. I. Christ's Enemies. vs. 22-30. II. Christ's Brethren. vs. 31-35.

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.)

is not Satan's work, but God's, then it is an evidence of the advent of the kingdom of God, the Messianic dispensation."

27. The strong man—By the "strong man" Christ means Satan. His house, or palace, is the place where he holds power, either this world generally, or the persons of the "possessed." Christ, by casting out the "strong man," and rescuing men from him, shews that he has conquered and bound Satan, and is therefore not in alliance with him, but his mortal foe. Isa. 49: 24; 61: 1. Christ conquered Satan at His temptation. **Spoil**—plunder, carry off.

28. All sins shall be forgiven—There is no limit to God's forgiving love except the one which wicked hearts make for themselves. While men continue in sin they cannot be forgiven.

29. Blaspheme against the Holy Ghost—(Matt. 12: 31; Luke 12: 10; 1 John 5: 16.) "The sin against which these words are a terrible but merciful warning, is not so much an *act* as a *state* of sin on the part of one who, in defiance of light, and of *set purpose*, rejects, and not only rejects but *perseveres* in rejecting, the warnings of conscience and the grace of the Holy Spirit." (Maclean.) "Our Lord intimates that his slanderers were on the brink of that sin from which there was no redemption. There is a limit to divine mercy and forgiveness." (Lindsay) (Eph. 4: 30; 1 Thess. 5: 19; Gen. 6: 3.) There is such a thing as a sin which is never forgiven. But those who are troubled about it are most unlikely to have committed it." (Ryle.) "All wilful, wanton, determined opposition to the work of the Holy Spirit, either in others' hearts or our own, especially when engaged in by those who profess allegiance to the Holy Ghost, approximates this sin. To a certain extent the sin appears to have been left purposely undefined, the note of warning is indefinite, that it may caution all against transgressing the bounds beyond which forgiveness never reclaims." (Abbott.) **Hath never forgiveness**—Not because even this was in itself and in the nature of the thing absolutely unpardonable (for no reason can be given why speaking against the person of the Holy Ghost should be in itself of greater malignity than speaking against Christ, or against God the Father himself), but because it was an obstinate rejection of the last means of conviction, and an evident token of incorrigible malice." (Clarke.) It is not a sin of ignorance or presumption, but of *defiance*. (Heb. 10: 26-29.) Matthew's account adds, "neither in this world, neither in the world to come." "He meant simply to say there were no possible circumstances in which the offender could find forgiveness. He certainly did *not* say that any sin unpardoned here would be pardoned hereafter." (Barnes.) **Is guilty of an eternal sin** (R. V.)—(John 3: 19.) The punishment is perpetual because the sin is perpetual. The

sin excludes pardon because it excludes repentance." (Schaff.) "Forgiven sins are sins that are taken up by God from the burdened conscience of the sinner, and, as it were, 'cast behind his back,' or 'into the depths of the sea,' but unforgiven sins abide forever on the souls that committed them. The language is, of course, strongly pictorial, but most solemnly significant." (Morison.) In Matthew's narrative Jesus adds in effect, "Be consistent. If the fruit is good the tree must be good. If my doctrine and works are contrary to those of Satan then they cannot spring from him—the tree is known by its fruit." (Matt. 12: 33.)

II. CHRIST'S BRETHREN. 31. His brethren—(Matt. 12: 46; Luke 8: 19.) Their names are given in Matt. 13: 55 and Mark 6: 3. They thought that he had gone out of his mind, and wished to persuade him to come home with them and be taken care of (verse 21). "To the world there has ever been a tendency to confuse the fervor of enthusiasm with the eccentricity of disordered genius. 'Paul thou art mad,' was the only comment which the apostle's passion of exalted eloquence produced on the cynical intellect of the Roman procurator. 'He hath a devil,' was the inference suggested to many dull and worldly hearers after some of the tenderest and divinest sayings of our Lord. 'Brother Martin has a fine genius,' was the sneering allusion of Pope Leo X. to Luther. 'What crack-brained fanatics,' observed the fine gentlemen of the eighteenth century when they spoke of Wesley and Whitfield. Similar, though not so coarse, was the thought which filled the minds of Christ's wondering relatives, when they heard of this sudden and amazing activity, after the calm seclusion of thirty unknown and unnoticed years. As yet they were out of sympathy with Him; they knew Him not, did not fully believe in Him; they said, 'He is beside Himself.'" (Farrar.) **Standing without**—Probably they could not get into the house for the crowd, and passed the word in that they wished to see him.

33. Who is my mother?—He implies that there is a relationship to him as the Son of God which is holier than even that of mother. "It is remarkable that in the only two instances, until the crucifixion, where Mary figures in the gospel, she appears in order to be reproved by the Saviour, and to be placed, as far as the mere maternal relation is concerned, below obedient servants of God. These passages must be regarded as protests laid up in store against the heathenish eminence which the Roman Church assigns to Mary, and especially against that newly-established dogma, of her being without sin from her birth, which they so signally contradict." (Woolsey.)

34. He looked round about—Notice how often the *look* of Jesus is referred to (Luke 6: 10; 22: 61). Them which sat about him—his disciples. Matthew says, "he

stretcheth forth his hand toward his disciples." How tender and full of gracious meaning the look, gesture and words. Rom. 8: 20; Heb. 2: 11; 1 John 3: 2.

38—Those who are "born of God," are the children of God, and Jesus is their elder brother. Painters have shown us Jesus, and

Mary, and Joseph, and have called them "The Holy Family," but there is a holier family than this, and every Sunday School scholar may be a member of it. Christ will call you his "brother," his "sister," if you will try to do the will of his Father from the heart. Matt. 10: 37; John 15: 14; 14: 21; Heb. 2: 11.

BLACKBOARD REVIEW.

Christ's Enemies

Christ's Brothers

**A MALICIOUS SLANDER
MORTAL SIN**

**A NIXIOUS FRIENDS
ATTACHED FOLLOWERS**

"He is not ashamed to call them brethren."—HEB. 2: 11.

Ten Minutes Normal Drill

Based on the text-book, "The Sabbath School Teacher's Handbook; or, The Principles and Practice of Teaching, with special reference to the Sabbath School," and prepared by Principal Kirkland of the Toronto Normal School.

TELLING AND QUESTIONING. (CHAPTER VII.)

(Continued.)

II. Qualifications of the Questioner.

1. A thorough knowledge of the subject
2. Power to think logically and clearly.
3. A knowledge of good models of the art of questioning.
4. Practice in the actual effort of questioning.

III. Tests of a Good Question.

1. The language of the question should be simple and familiar to the scholar.
2. The question should be definite and free from all ambiguity.
3. " " " " suited to the capacity of the scholar.
4. " " " " asked in the fewest possible words.
5. " " " " easy at first and gradually increase in difficulty.
6. " " " " in proportion to the importance of the subject.
7. " " " admit of a definite answer.
8. " " " be given in such an order as to form a systematic and progressive development of the subject.
9. A good question must have the element of the unexpected in it. It should surprise the mind with some fresh and novel view of the subject.
10. Questions should be (1) On the words of the lesson; (2) To exercise the understanding; (3) To develop spiritual truths.