

# THE BIBLE STUDENT

A Bible Study Quarterly  
for Young People, Adult Bible Classes,  
and Home Study

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By

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THE CHRISTIAN LIFE



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THE WALTHER LEAGUE OF THE EV. LUTHERAN  
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## DIRECTIONS

These lessons may be studied by Bible classes according to customary lines, the leader or chairman reading the basic lesson material (**printed in heavy black type**) and the class members in rotation reading the other material, looking up Scripture references, and answering questions.

Wherever practical or desirable, the following scheme of class organization may be adopted:

Organize the class in groups of three. If the class numbers more than thirty, make groups of four or more. The number of groups in the class should never be more than ten.

Each group chooses a group leader who holds office for one quarter or for one year, as the class may decide.

The group leaders serve in rotation as class leaders, each in one meeting, until all have served, when the leader of group number one serves again as class leader, and so through to group number ten.

The class leader of each meeting takes his or her place at the table with the chairman, who is the pastor or some one appointed by him or chosen with his approval.

The chairman, if chosen by the class, will serve one quarter, or a year, as the class may determine. He has general control of the meeting and directs the study of the lessons during the Bible hour. He may apportion details of this work to the class leader as he may see fit.

You will note that each lesson consists of opening devotion, lesson study material, and closing devotion. The chairman, or in his absence the class leader, opens and closes each meeting by reading the prayers and Scripture lessons indicated and by announcing the hymns.

The passage to be studied in a particular lesson as well as all portions printed in **heavy type** are read by the class leader. The comment on the lesson printed in ordinary Roman type (like this) is read by the group leaders, in rotation.

All material printed in italics (*slanting letters*) is read by the class, each group being given one section in rotation. A member of group One reads the first italicized section, looks up and reads texts referred to (all other members of the class looking up these texts in their own Bibles), and answers any question printed in that section. The next section is taken up precisely in the same way by group number two and so on. These sections may be so assigned to the groups for study in advance.

The chairman will intersperse as he sees fit explanations and application, supplementary to the material contained in the printed lessons. He will also give opportunity for questions by members of the class, in addition to the question material of the lesson. He will also occasionally ask a member to tell the contents of a chapter, or paraphrase a story in his own words. Written reports of this nature may be called for at intervals. The lessons are considered not as a maximum but as a minimum for Bible class work. Frequent opportunity should be given to the members of the class to sing hymns of their own choice especially at

the close of the meeting. The hymns indicated are numbered according to the new Lutheran hymn-book of the Missouri Synod as well as of the Wisconsin Synod. Where necessary, the Wisconsin Hymnal numbers indicate substitutes. When singing hymns the class ought to rise.

The group leaders see to it that the members have their Bibles with them. They also distribute the hymnals, and in other ways aid in the management of the class and its work.

In the use of these lessons, the utmost variety is permissible. For instance, it is possible to leave all italicized lesson study material for home work. Or written reports may be asked, each group reporting on one of the numbered portions. At first the looking-up of texts will take much time, but there is no better way to get acquainted with the whole Bible. If the texts to be looked up (referred to in italicized portions) are assigned in advance to individuals (or to groups), there will be a saving of time for the class meeting.

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## PREFACE

The lessons in this number of the Bible Student are a return to the topical plan. Twelve subjects related to the Christian Life are treated, with two or three lesson texts for each topic. Frequent questions, calculated to enliven the discussions, are again interspersed.

It will be noted that when questions apt to raise considerable discussion are submitted, less text material and comment are provided, thus causing an unequal amount of printed matter in the lessons here submitted. In actual use, the **time** necessary for the study of these lessons will, nevertheless, prove of equal length for all, or nearly so.

However, the writer cannot too much emphasize the **flexibility** of the system advocated in these lessons. He has aimed at the elimination of all rigid form. The object is not at all to cover the same number of verses in each lesson. Again, the sessions of the class need not be of the same length but may vary from 40 minutes to 60 or more. Discussion should flow freely, even if only one **section** of a lesson is finished in that session of the class. There is no reason why these twelve lessons should be forced through in exactly twelve meetings of the class, or why each meeting should last exactly one hour.

It is, of course, to be preferred for practical reasons, to have the length of session limited to a certain time, as 60 minutes. Average classes will, ordinarily, complete each manual in twelve lessons. But if one question or Scripture reference should elicit discussion which claims even half the lesson hour, no harm is done, but quite the reverse. If the author could achieve this result, that classes actually **discuss** the Bible and its doctrines, success would be achieved even though a class spent an entire year on just one lesson quarterly. The lesson material is so divided that short sections of the Scriptures are the subject of study, and the end of any section may fitly be made the conclusion of the session's work, if the time is exhausted.

Not all classes are alike. Some will ask many questions, others few, some will work fast, others slow. It is believed that the average class will be able to complete each of the twenty-four lessons within a sixty minute study period. If it is found that the **study of the lessons transgresses this allowance of time, various expedients may be used in order to complete each manual in twelve weeks.** 1) The reading of the lesson texts, as suggested in the directions above, by the class-leader instead of verse by verse by members of the class; this will mean a saving of time if the class leader has carefully studied the text in advance so as to insure rapid reading. 2) The various sections which constitute the lessons may be assigned in advance each to a student, or to a group of students, if the class is organized into groups. Such special advance work (in addition to the preliminary reading of the lessons which all students are expected to do) will very much speed up the work in class. 3) Each student (or group) may be given one Application or Question (the matter in italics, or slanting type), to report on when the class meets. 4) Out of each lesson an entire section may be assigned to the class, or to a group in the class, to be reported on at the next meeting. In such case, none of the lesson material of this section except the text itself would be read in class. The entire work on such section would consist in a report from

members of the class. 5) The parallels from Jude in 2 Peter may be omitted. 6) The Meditation may be assigned for home reading.

Now some cautions and don'ts:

DON'T, for the sake of "getting through," omit the "Questions." These questions are designed to be **thought-compellers**. Furthermore, they are intended to call out discussion, action, so that the class does not merely listen to a lecture while in session but **studies the Bible and discusses it**.

DON'T omit looking up the references called for in the comment and questions. These references are essential to the understanding of the lesson. By looking them up, you enable the Bible to **interpret itself**. Hence these lessons cannot be properly used unless each member has a Bible at hand.

DON'T try to gain time by omitting the hymns. These have been selected with the greatest care and will add greatly to the deepening of impressions. Sing them, or at least sing a number of stanzas judiciously selected from each. They will prove a wonderful stimulant to the class.

Once more,

**Don't omit the Questions, the References, the Hymns!**

And now one more caution. Do not think, because many passages treated in these lessons are familiar to us, that we cannot receive from them new knowledge, new impressions of divine truth, new strength for daily life, new comfort and hope. The Bible is an inexhaustible well of Living Water. You will never go in vain when you go to it for knowledge, strength, and consolation. You will find this to be true when you study these passages treating the Christian life. All that the editor's comment can do is to remove obstacles to the understanding of the text. His work is not a substitute for the work of the class, but only as an aid to it. If it will open anew the eyes of our Bible student to the unsearchable riches of Christ and His salvation, the purpose which this Bible Study Quarterly is designed to serve has been served.

And may God bless you!

TH. GRAEBNER.

## THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

## FIRST LESSON

## REPENTANCE

## OPENING DEVOTION

Hymn No. 307: Lord, we confess (Wisc. 133)

Scripture Reading: Psalm 32. Prayer

## I. THE PARABLE OF THE FIG-TREE

Luke 13, 1-9

1. There were present at that season (time) some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye (Do you think) that these Galileans were (worse) sinners above (than) all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? 3. I tell you; Nay: but, except (unless) ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. 4. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were (worse) sinners above all (the rest of the) men that dwelt in Jerusalem? 5. I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

6. He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought (searched for) fruit thereon, and found none. 7. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I came seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground (should it take up space)? 8. And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it (put in manure): 9. And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

The importance of repentance is taught in this lesson. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." "If the fig-tree does not bear fruit, it shall be cut down."

Jesus had spoken to the people about the Last Judgment. Some were present who brought a piece of news from Jerusalem: Pilate had caused some Galileans, probably rioters who were making a demonstration in the Temple, to be slain by his soldiers at the altar of sacrifice. The questioners implied that these men must have been especially wicked, to be punished so suddenly. Jesus asserts that this conclusion could not be drawn, and warns the Jews that they all were equally guilty and would be forever lost unless they repented. About the same time a tower in the city of Jerusalem, near the pool called Siloam, had fallen over and killed some people. Again, Jesus says that these people were no sinners above others. Because His hearers had not been punished, they must not believe that they were sure of being saved. Unless they repented, they would all be lost.

1. The word translated repentance means "change of mind." Repentance is more than regret and sorrow for the wrong-doing of the past. It means that one state of mind is exchanged for another; a turning from sin to God.

2. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, what is the turning point? (Luke 15.)

3. We learn from our lesson that unless there is repentance, the sinner's lot will be perdition. What is meant by this? Read 2 Peter 3, 7.

Jesus now tells the parable of the Fig-tree. The owner complains to the gardener that it is not producing fruit; he wants it to be chopped down, because it spoils the ground for good, productive trees. The gardener promises to try all his art and labor, hoping that the tree will yet bear fruit. This fig-tree is a type of the Jewish people. In spite of all the blessings they had received in Old Testament times, they had been wanting in faith and good works. The vine-dresser, Jesus, through His preaching and that of the Apostles, was now giving them an extra time of grace. If the people still refused to repent, God's loving patience would come to an end and justice be carried out.

4. *What, then, is the lesson of the Destruction of Jerusalem and dispersion of the Jewish people? Read Christ's announcement of the punishment awaiting impenitent Jews, Luke 10, 13.*

5. *Does God desire anyone to die impenitent? Read Ezekiel 33, 11.*

6. *Can you mention some modern calamities which are a call to the world to repentance?*

## II. PSALM 51, A PSALM OF REPENTANCE

(To be read responsively)

- a. Psalm 51, 1-5

When David had committed murder and adultery, God sent him the prophet of repentance, Nathan. In this Psalm, David acknowledges his sin and asks for forgiveness. Verse 1-5 he makes acknowledgment of his guilt. He sees nothing good in himself; from his birth he has been a sinner (Original sin).

b. Psalm 51, 6-12

In these verses David prays that through His Holy Spirit God might work that thorough, inward change which is called Repentance. See especially verse 7 and 10. According to the Law of Moses, lepers were sprinkled with water by means of the branch of the plant called Hyssop. The repentant sinner looks upon sin as a loathsome disease. Once he loved sin, now he hates it. This change is worked by the Holy Spirit.

c. Psalm 51, 13-19

Repentance includes a readiness to leave off sinning and lead a holy life. David ends his prayer of repentance with grateful acknowledgments of the divine mercies.

7. *Tell the story of Peter's repentance, after his denial of Christ.*

8. *Is man able to turn from sin through his own power? Read Lamentations 5, 21. Jeremiah 31, 18, 19. Read also explanation of Third Article, first sentence.*

9. *Hymn No. 415, 1-3: Out of the depths. (Wisc. 172.)*

## III. JOY IN HEAVEN

Luke 15, 1-7

1. Then drew near unto him all the publicans (tax-collectors) and sinners for to hear him. 2. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured (complained), saying, This man receiveth (welcomes) sinners, and eateth with them. 3. And he spake this parable unto them, saying, 4. What man (Which) of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? 5. And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I

have found my sheep which was lost. 7. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

This chapter has been called one of the greatest in the Bible. Jesus here teaches in three parables the meaning of God's love to the lost. He tells the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost (Prodigal) son. In these parables the Lord exhibits the unspeakable riches of his manifold love to all men. The people who had been cast out of the Jewish church, publicans (tax-collectors for the Romans, hated and despised by the people) and sinners (people whose wicked lives were generally known) were drawn to Him by His preaching. By receiving these people and eating with them, Jesus angered the Pharisees and Scribes, men learned in the Law of Moses and very particular about the fulfillment of it. Their mocking words have become a song of praise in the Christian Church: "Jesus sinners doth receive!"

It would seem that a man having a herd of sheep would not mind the loss of one. But this good shepherd leaves the flock where it is and sets out after the lost member, traveling rough country and going far until it is found. Then he does not drive it home but carries it, because its strength is spent, and then calls up his friends to rejoice with him in the recovery. Even so there is joy in heaven when a sinner repents and turns from the evil of his ways. But who are those that "need no repentance?" Surely these are the same as those who "need not a physician."

10. Read Matt. 9, 12, 13.

These are the Pharisees, who believe themselves righteous and just because they outwardly lead a good life. They did not feel the need of a Savior. And because they have no idea of their inward wickedness and do not desire grace, they will be rejected, while those who sincerely repent and believe in Jesus Christ will be taken home into the fold of heaven.

11. How is the helplessness of the sinner illustrated in this parable?

12. While the angels rejoice over the conversion of an evil person, sometimes Christians show the spirit of the elder brother in the parable of the Prodigal Son; read verse 27, 28. This elder son is again a type of the self-righteous Pharisees of all times who are always boasting of their own good works and begrudge the poor sinner the unmerited grace of God.

13. Does this parable then mean that Jesus wanted the Pharisees to be lost? Remember it was to them he addressed these three parables with their promise of pardon and heaven!

14. Read the only example of a sinner being converted "in the eleventh hour", Luke 23, 40, 41. What should we learn from the fact that only one such case is recorded?

15. Read Hebrews 3, 7-13.

### CLOSING DEVOTION

Hymn No. 414: Jesus sinners doth receive (Wisc. 114)

Closing Prayer. Benediction

### DAILY BIBLE READING:

Sunday: 1 Kings 1, 1-21

Monday: 1 Kings 1, 22-53

Tuesday: 1 Kings 2, 1-12

Wednesday: 1 Kings 2, 13-25

Thursday: 1 Kings 2, 26-35

Friday: 1 Kings 2, 36-46

Saturday: 1 Kings 3, 1-15



## SECOND LESSON

### TRUST IN GOD

#### OPENING DEVOTION

Hymn No. 367: The Lord is my shepherd (Wisc. 195)

Scripture Reading: Psalm 16. Prayer

#### I. THE LORD OUR PROVIDER

Matt. 6, 25-34

25. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for (Do not trouble about) your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body more than raiment? (clothes)?

26. Behold the fowls (birds) of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better (worth more) than they? 27. Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit (half a yard) unto his stature (height)? 28. And why take ye thought (trouble) for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: 29. And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed (robed) like one of these. 30. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven (furnace) shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? 31. Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat, or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal (With what) shall we be clothed?

32. (For after all these things do the Gentiles [unbelievers] seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 33. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. 34. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought (will take care) for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

"Ye cannot serve God and mammon!" It is impossible to be faithful to God and at the same time be a servant of riches. Our Lord had just uttered this warning in the words preceding our text. If they now continue "Therefore I say unto you, etc." His meaning is clear. The love of money flows out of distrust of God. And this distrust shows itself in worries about the things of this life.

No man is so independent that he does not have to trust someone besides himself. He will trust in idols, or in the support of powerful friends, but most generally his trust is in wealth.

1. Thus the ancient Jews trusted in the might of Egypt when threatened by the Assyrians. Read Isaiah 30, 1-3.

2. Read Psalm 52 which illustrates trust in riches and trust in God.

Verse 25. Do not let questions of food and drink worry you! He, who possesses all things tells us not to worry, not to let cares distract the mind. God has given us the greater, will he not provide the less?

Verse 26-31. Who keeps the birds alive? Who has given the flowers their beautiful colors? Is it not our heavenly Father? When He cares for these humble creatures, will He not provide for His own children?

3. *The Bible does not forbid the making of provision for the life and health of our bodies. Read 1 Timothy 5, 8.*

4. *Because they lack faith in God, many people believe that they must gain the favor of powerful men. Can you mention societies which men have organized for such mutual protection? Read Psalm 118, 8. 9. Can you give examples of miraculous provisions of food and clothing to the children of Israel? — to the Prophet Elijah? (Exodus 16, 35. 1 Kings 17, 5 and 16.)*

5. *Looking around in our congregations, what evidence have we that God still provides for those who trust in Him?*

6. *Recite the explanation of the First Article.*

Verse 32-34. Unbelievers know nothing beyond the satisfying of their bodily desires. Christians know that God is aware of their needs. If we make His Kingdom the main object of our striving and efforts, we shall not only have the gifts of the Holy Spirit but all these temporal things that we need for our body and life.

7. *Give instances how a Christian may "seek the Kingdom of God" through the use of his money? — with his time? — with the gifts of his mind?*

8. *How would YOU answer the Savior's question Luke 22, 35?*

9. *Hymn No. 364: O God of Jacob. (Wisc. 153.)*

## II. THE THREE MEN IN THE FIERY FURNACE

Daniel 3, 14-18

14. Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego? do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? 15. Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut (stringed instrument), psaltery (another stringed instrument), and dulcimer (bagpipe), and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?

16. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful (troubled) to answer thee in this matter. 17. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. 18. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

The story of the three men in the fiery furnace has been recorded as an example of abiding trust in God, where, humanly speaking, there was no hope of deliverance. At the same time it records one of the most remarkable miracles of Old Testament history.

Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylonia and had carried the people of Judea to his country in 607 B. C., after taking the city of Jerusalem. He caused a golden image to be erected and called upon all the people of his great dominion to come and worship before it. When the Jews refused to worship the image, three men of their nation, whom Nebuchadnezzar had entrusted with high offices, — Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, — were accused before the king. It was then that these believers in Jehovah gave their ever-memorable answer, v. 17-18. We know how their trust was rewarded. When the king gazed into the furnace, he saw with them a fourth figure, like that of a God, — an angel — guarding the men against

the flames. When they were brought forth, there was not even the smell of fire on their garments, and Nebuchadnezzar commanded that no one thereafter speak against the God of Israel.

10. *In what did Goliath trust? — In whom, David? 1 Sam. 17, especially v. 45-47.*

11. *Read how Moses sums up the experiences of Israel, Deut. 33, 26-29. Which hymn of the Lutheran church expresses this trust in God most powerfully?*

12. *Hymn No. 273, 1-3: A mighty fortress. (Wisc. 36.)*

### III. HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER

2 Kings 19, 15-20

15. And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord, and said, O Lord God of Israel, which (who) dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth. 16. Lord, bow down thine ear, and hear: open, Lord, thine eyes, and see: and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to reproach the living God. 17. Of a truth (Indeed), Lord, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands. 18. And have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them. 19. Now therefore, O Lord our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord God, even thou only. 20. Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, That which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard.

Hezekiah was king over Judah 726-697 B. C. In the fourteenth year of his reign, Sennacherib, the king of Assyria invaded Judah and took many towns and cities. He sent a messenger to Jerusalem, demanding the surrender of the city. In a proud letter, he asks whether Hezekiah had not heard how ill it had gone with the other nations who had tried to resist the Assyrian armies. He asks: Where are their kings now, have their gods delivered them? "Let not thy God, in whom thou trustest, deceive thee, saying Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria!" It was then that Hezekiah went up into the House of God and uttered the grand prayer which we are about to study.

13. *What does Hezekiah mean by "dwelling between the cherubims?" Read Exodus 25, 18-22.*

The king in his opening words expresses his faith in the promise of pardoning mercies. He approaches the throne of God as a repentant sinner. The basis of all trust in God is faith in His forgiving mercies.

14. *What other attributes of God besides mercy does the king acknowledge? What distinction does he make between the Lord and all other gods?*

The promise made through Isaiah was soon fulfilled. An angel of the Lord smote the army of the Assyrians and 185,000 perished.

15. *Can you give New Testament examples how the trust of the disciples was rewarded?*

16. *Which words of the 23rd Psalm expresses this same trust in the prospect of death?*

### CLOSING DEVOTION

Hymn No. 373: Jesus my truth, my way (Wisc. 108)

Closing Prayer. Benediction

## DAILY BIBLE READING:

Sunday: 1 Kings 3, 16-28  
 Monday: 1 Kings 4, 20-34  
 Tuesday: 1 Kings 5, 1-18  
 Wednesday: 1 Kings 6, 1-20  
 Thursday: 1 Kings 6, 21-38  
 Friday: 1 Kings 7, 1-22  
 Saturday: 1 Kings 7, 23-51

## THIRD LESSON

## SELF-DENIAL

## OPENING DEVOTION

Hymn No. 353: Savior Thy dying Love (Wisc. 180)

Scripture Reading: Col. 3, 1-10. Prayer

## I. TAKING UP THE CROSS

Matt. 10, 32-39

32. Whosoever therefore shall confess (acknowledge) me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. 33. But whosoever shall deny (disown) me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

34. Think not (Don't imagine) that I am (have) come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. 35. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother and the daughter in law against her mother in law. 36. And a man's foes (enemies) shall be they of his own household.

37. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. 39. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

Verse 32-33. This verse, as well as the entire passage, make it clear for the disciple of Christ that there can be no neutrality. Either he will confess Christ, and be confessed by Christ on Judgment day; or he will deny Christ and will be denied by Him on Judgment day. There is no neutral ground; there is a choice only between confession and denial.

1. That Christ here refers to Judgment day is clear from the parallel. Read Luke 9, 26.

2. Notice in Luke 9, 26 the expression "ashamed of me and of my words." To deny is to be ashamed of. The "words" are the teachings of Christ.

3. Can you mention teachings of which Christians are tempted to be ashamed of?

4. Tell about Peter's denial. How did he expose himself to temptation which led to this denial?

Verse 34-36. Jesus is the Prince of Peace; He has established peace between the sinner and God through His redeeming sacrifice. But many refuse to accept this redemption, because to be a Christian demands of them so much self-denial. Through love of sin they are filled with enmity against the Gospel. They will hate even those of their own household

who become Christians. To stand firmly by Christ under such persecution demands utter fearlessness.

5. Notice again how Jesus identifies Himself with his doctrines. This should cure us of the besetting sin of our day, — indifference. In treating the teachings of Christianity as though they did not concern us we thereby dishonor Christ. Those who fight His teachings, are waging war against the Son of God.

Verse 37-39. What is the cross of the Christian? The term is often applied to suffering in general, — "he is bearing a heavy cross," etc. As used by Christ it refers to the sufferings or troubles which we have on account of professing and living up to our religion. Any temporal loss which we have because of adherence to the teachings of Christ is our "cross." The death on the cross was a most painful one. Jesus knows that denying the world and its lusts is painful to the flesh of the Christian.

6. Verse 37 helps us to understand the otherwise difficult saying Luke 14, 26.

7. In what sense is it the easiest thing in the world to be a Christian? In what sense is it the hardest?

8. Which Christian duties are we apt to neglect because of the opposition of un-Christian relatives or friends?

"Life" in verse 39 is used alternately for bodily life and eternal salvation. He that pursues those things which are valuable for the present life, and forgets the care of his soul, loses salvation. Those who are willing to forget the pleasure of the present life will find full compensation in the life eternal.

9. How does Jesus express the same thought John 12, 25?

10. Read the story of the young man with a divided heart, Matt. 19, 16-22. Why did Jesus demand that this young man give all his possessions to the poor?

11. How does Paul describe the self-denial of Jesus, Philippians 2, 5-8?

12. Which things did Paul cheerfully give up for the sake of the Gospel? Read Philippians 3, 5-8.

13. How did Moses give evidence of the sincerity of his faith? Read Hebrews 11, 24-27.

14. Can you give examples from modern church history of people who left home and country in order to find freedom of worship?

15. Hymn No. 335: Jesus & my cross have taken. (Wisc. 105.)

## II. THE STRUGGLE OF THE SPIRIT AND THE FLESH

Galatians 5, 16-24

16. This I say then, Walk in (Lead this life of) the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil (satisfy) the lust of the flesh. 17. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot (are not free to) do the things that ye would (as you please). 18. But if ye be led of (by) the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

19. Now the works of the flesh are manifest (obvious), which are these, Adultery, fornication (sexual vice), uncleanness, lasciviousness. 20. Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance (dissension), emulations (jealousy), wrath (temper), strife, seditions (factions), heresies (taking sides), 21. Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

22. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering (good temper), gentleness, goodness, faith (fidelity), 23. Meekness, temperance (self-control): against such there is no law. 24. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections (emotions) and lusts.

Verse 16-18. The Holy Spirit has by the Gospel created a new life in the sinner's heart; henceforth he is a believer, a Christian. Now he walks in the Spirit, his conduct is controlled by the Word of God through which the Spirit speaks to us. About this there is no compulsion. The Christian is happy in His service of God. But the flesh still clings to him. There are remnants of the old evil nature in man. Our flesh would incite us to sin. Thus there is a continual battle in the heart of every Christian, both flesh and spirit straining their uttermost. He that walks in the spirit will remain victorious and walk in a manner pleasing to God, not because the law demands it but because it is his greatest joy and desire.

16. Read Paul's description of the struggle between flesh and spirit, Romans 7, 18-23.

17. Paul compares the believer's struggle for holiness with a race and with a prize-fight. Read 1 Cor. 9, 24-27.

Verse 19-21. The works of the flesh, recognized as such by every one, are now mentioned. Verse 19 mentions various kinds of sexual uncleanness. To them the ancient heathen were addicted openly, and they are committed enough in the world today. Next follow idolatry (practiced in the lodge today), witchcraft (wonders performed with the help of evil spirits; divine healing; spiritism) and sins of malice against the Fifth Commandment, followed by the taking of life, drunkenness, and general intemperance. All these vices are pleasant to the flesh. Many would not consider life worth living if they could not indulge their lusts. But all who yield to the flesh and its desires here receive sentence of damnation. By walking in the spirit and by regular use of the means of grace (Word and sacraments) we are able to deny ourselves and to overcome the evil inclinations of our heart.

Verse 22-24. Here follows a list of Christian virtues, the opposites of the vices mentioned.

18. Pick out the opposites (in verses 19-21) to the virtues mentioned verse 22.

Those that are in fellowship with Christ have renounced the old Adam and although it hurts the flesh that it cannot satisfy its desires, the spirit must finally conquer. Thus through much self-denial the Christian must go to glory.

### CLOSING DEVOTION

Hymn No. 378: Am I a soldier of the cross (Wisc. 35)

Closing Prayer. Benediction

### DAILY BIBLE READING:

Sunday: 1 Kings 8, 1-21

Monday: 1 Kings 8, 22-43

Tuesday: 1 Kings 8, 44-53

Wednesday: 1 Kings 8, 54-66

Thursday: 1 Kings 9, 1-9

Friday: 1 Kings 9, 10-38

Saturday: 1 Kings 10, 1-15

## FOURTH LESSON

## PRAYER

## OPENING DEVOTION

Hymn No. 395: What a Friend we have in Jesus (Wisc. 215)

Scripture Reading: Psalm 34, 1-10. Prayer

## I. PARABLES OF PRAYER

Luke 11, 5-13

5. And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; 6. For a friend of mine in his (on a) journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? 7. And he from within (the inside) shall answer and say, Trouble me not (Don't bother me): the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. 8. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity (persistence) he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. 9. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. 10. For every one that (who) asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

11. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for (instead of) a fish give him a serpent? 12. Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 13. If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that (those who) ask him?

Prayer is one of the mysteries of the Christian life. But the most mysterious thing about prayer is that God is willing to hear when we call. There is a great contrast between the holy, righteous God and sinful man. That man, nevertheless, is able to approach the omniscient (all-knowing) and omnipotent (almighty) Creator is one of the chief glories of the Christian Gospel. Jesus teaches this willingness of God to hear our prayer by means of several parables, the text above being one of these.

Verse 5-10. A friend pleads for three loaves of bread in order to set a meal before an unexpected visitor. How true to life the action of the man awakened from his sleep! But the house-father finally yields, not so much because he feels that friendship requires it but in order to quiet the nightly disturber. The lesson which our Lord wants to convey is that Christians must pray without becoming weary or discouraged. Prayer, if it is right, is an urging, a storming which is based on belief in God's promises, and therefore cannot fail of its object.

Verse 11-13. A second parable is drawn from the love of parents for their children. Parents who would act as Jesus here describes would be called inhuman. But if even evil human beings will show such affection towards their children, surely the Father from heaven will grant the petitions of His children. Especially will He give the Holy Spirit, — all spiritual gifts, — to the praying believer.

1. Read a similar parable Luke 18, 1-8. On what points does this parable exactly agree with our text?

2. Read the story of Jacob's wrestling in prayer with God, Genesis 32, 24-29.

3. How does the Letter to the Hebrews prove that we may come boldly before God in prayer? Read Hebrews 4, 14-16.

4. How does Paul emphasize Philippians 4, 6 that we may bring all things to God in prayer? Notice in this text the different kinds of prayer; worship in general, petitions for help, and thanksgiving.

5. How was the promise Isaiah 65, 24 fulfilled in the experience of Daniel? (Daniel 9, 19-22.)

6. How was the eagerness of God to hear prayer revealed in Solomon's experience? 1 King 3, 5-13.

7. Can you give examples of fulfillment of prayer from the Old Testament stories of Moses, Hannah, and Jonah?

That we may not only ask for the things we need for this body and life, — food, clothing, health, success in business, etc. — but may boldly come and ask even for the greatest of all gifts, the Holy Spirit is taught by our Savior when he applies this parable. The Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him. The Holy Spirit it is that brings us to repentance, gives us confidence in the promises of God, teaches us how to lead a holy life, and assures us of a blessed eternity after death. All that we know about Jesus, our Redeemer, and about the way of salvation, all the blessed truths of the Gospel are a living power within us through the dwelling of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. And these priceless gifts are freely and abundantly given to those who bring their longing for light, salvation, and holiness to God in prayer.

8. We receive the Holy Spirit through prayer, and again it is the Holy Spirit that brings our prayer before the throne of God. Read Romans 8, 15, and 26.

9. Hymn No. 67, Verse 3-6: Jehovah let me now adore Thee. (Wisc. 100.)

## II. PRAYING ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD

1 John 5, 13-15

13. These things have I written unto you that (who) believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. 14. And this is the confidence that we have in him, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth (listens to) us: 15. And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of (have made to) him.

To believe on the name of the Son of God is the same as possessing the gift of the Holy Spirit, for which Jesus has just taught us to pray. It is also called "eternal life." How wonderful, through prayer we may have even now, in our life-time, eternal life within us! And John emphasizes that we may ask with boldness, as children do who are assured of the love of their parents. The text strongly asserts that all that we ask, whatever it may be, shall be given to us if we ask "according to His will."

This is the condition that must be met before prayer can be answered. The prayer itself must be in accord with the will of God. Not every one that saith unto Him "Lord, Lord," shall enter into the Kingdom, but those only who do the will of the Father. It is a most necessary thing, then, to discover the will of God by studying His holy Word, and then to live in obedience to it. If we partly serve God and partly the world our heart is closed to the influence of His Spirit, and the prayer of such an one is vain.



10. *This throws, indeed, light upon those promises of Jesus in which He assures His disciples that anything they ask of the Father "in His name" shall be given them. To ask in the name of Christ is to ask with faith in His merits, by which our sins are covered up and an entrance has been made to the throne of God. Read John 14, 13, 14.*

11. *Why was the prayer of the Pharisee not heard, Luke 18, 9-14?*

12. *What is meant by praying with "holy hands" 1 Timothy 2, 8?*

The Christian, who is willing to say as Christ did in Gethsemane "Thy will, not mine, be done," knows that God's thoughts are higher than man's thoughts and that He knows best what will profit us eternally and what will be harmful to us. Christians will remember this in sickness and afflictions. Nothing is farther from the truth than the teaching of the so-called Divine Healers, that when people are not cured, their unbelief is the cause.

13. *Why was Paul's prayer for relief from a bodily infirmity not heard? Read 2 Cor. 12, 7-9.*

### III. THE MODEL PRAYER

Matt. 6, 5-15

5. And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may (so as to) be seen of (by) men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. 6. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet (room), and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which (who) is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. 7. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking (the more they speak). 8. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

9. After this manner therefore (Let this be how you) pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. 11. Give us this day our daily bread. 12. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. 14. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

These verses are taken from Christ's Sermon on the Mount. Jesus condemns the vain hypocritical habit of public prayer among the Jews at that time. The desire for public notice and their vain repetition of standard forms in prayer He denounces. The right spirit which should prevail in Christian prayer is then set forth. Christians are to cultivate the habit of private prayer, of having communion with God, not so much to acquaint God with our needs, which He knows before we ask Him, but in order to avail ourselves of the great privilege which we enjoy as His children. The model prayer which Jesus gave His disciples expresses the spirit and the character of the Christian's daily communion with God.

14. *Note that all the petitions of the Lord's prayer are in the plural. Selfishness is excluded if we consider the needs of our fellow-men as important as our own.*

15. *Some of the finest prayers in the Bible are those spoken in intercession for others. Read the blessing of Aaron Numbers 6, 23-25. And the intercession of Abraham for Sodom. Genesis 18, 23ff.*

## CLOSING DEVOTION

Hymn No. 11: On what has now been sown (Wisc. 9)  
Closing Prayer. Benediction

## DAILY BIBLE READING:

Sunday: 1 Kings 10, 16-29  
Monday: 1 Kings 11, 1-13  
Tuesday: 1 Kings 11, 14-25  
Wednesday: 1 Kings 11, 26-43  
Thursday: 1 Kings 12, 1-15  
Friday: 1 Kings 12, 16-33  
Saturday: 1 Kings 13, 1-19

## FIFTH LESSON

## CONSCIENCE

## OPENING DEVOTION

Hymn No. 355: Take my life and let it be (Wisc. 186)  
Scripture Reading: 1 Peter 3, 15-22. Prayer

## I. THE CONVICTING POWER OF CONSCIENCE

John 8, 1-11

1. Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. 2. And early in the morning he came again (returned) into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. 3. And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken (caught) in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, 4. They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. 5. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such (creatures) should be stoned: but what sayest thou? 6. This they said, tempting (testing) him, that they might have to accuse (get a charge against) him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.

7. So when they continued (persisted in) asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. 8. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. 9. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. 10. When Jesus had lifted up (raised) himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? 11. She said, No man (No one), Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more.

The event here recorded took place when Jesus was in Jerusalem at the time of the Feast of the Tabernacles. The object of His journey was to teach in Jerusalem once more before the time of His great passion would be at hand. It was a last call to the leaders of the nation, who had rejected Him. On the last day of the Feast Jesus spoke to them concerning the Water of Life and it is recorded that some of the com-

mon people believed on Him. Even the soldiers of the temple-guard, who were sent to place Him under arrest, returned with the statement: "Never did any man speak like this man." Jesus at this time spent the nights at the Mount of Olives, very likely at Bethany, in the home of Martha, Mary and Lazarus, where He always was a welcome guest.

Verse 1-6. On the following morning He again was in the House of God, teaching the people. While the worshipers were listening to His discourses, the false teachers of the people,—the Scribes and Pharisees,—entered the temple court with a new scheme by which they thought they would ruin Christ's standing with the Jewish people. They brought to Him a woman who had broken the promise of fidelity given to her husband at their marriage. Evidently, there was no doubt at all regarding her guilt. They remind Jesus of the law of Moses concerning such offenders.

1. *Read Lev. 20, 10.*

Would Jesus say Yes, the sentence should be carried out, they would claim that He was contradicting His own preaching of forgiveness, and that He was not a friend of sinners and common people. If He said No, they would say that He was in opposition to the law of Moses. But Jesus disappointed them by His action. To indicate that He had nothing to do with this case, since it was not a matter for Him but (by their own admission) for the Jewish courts, He answered nothing. He stooped and wrote on the ground with His finger. Punishment of crime was the business of the government.

Verse 7-11. The accusing silence had no effect on His enemies. They insisted on an answer; and the answer He finally gave them was one of the most remarkable sayings of Christ. Christ did not shield or accuse the woman. He did not set aside the Law. He simply asked that any that was without sin should step forward and cast the first stone! What a powerful reproof for the hypocrites who were guilty, in secret, of so many sins, no doubt also of adultery! The Lord again bent down and traced letters on the ground (the text does not say what He wrote, so we shall not speculate on that). Jesus did not address a fiery sermon to them as on other occasions, denouncing their hypocrisy; just one sentence: "Let the sinless one throw the first stone!" Now note the effect of these words. One by one, as the conscience of these evil men became active, they slipped out of the hall,—the oldest ones first.

The Savior's heart went out to the abandoned woman. He saw her miserable, filled with shame, yet repentant. Then He spoke the words of absolution and accompanied it with the warning that if repentance is to be sincere it must be followed by an effort to lead a better life.

Much might be learnt from this lesson regarding the manner in which we should treat fallen sinners. The Christian rule is to be charitable, to win back the fallen to the way of righteousness. How unforgiving, hard, uncharitable are so many Christians to those who have disgraced themselves! Let such learn from the example of Christ. At present, however, we want to learn from this story the convicting power of conscience.

Conscience is the voice within us which, by the standard of the law, judges our actions as being either good or evil (excusing voice—accusing voice).

2. *Read Romans 2, 14, 15.*

3. *Of what did conscience accuse Joseph's brethren? Read Genesis 42, 21.*

4. What is the first example mentioned in the Bible of an awakened conscience? (Genesis 3.)

Inasmuch as this inner voice bears witness to the Law of God it is the voice of God. Hence we call those persons "conscientious" who at all times inquire: "Is it the will of God?"

5. Hymn No. 350: *Renew me, O eternal Light* (Wisc. 130).

## II. TERRORS OF AN EVIL CONSCIENCE

Matt. 27, 1-10

1. When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: 2. And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate, the governor. 3. Then Judas, which (who) had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself (he repented), and brought again (back) the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, 4. Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that (it is your affair, not ours). 5. And he cast (flung) down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

6. And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for (would be wrong) to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. 7. And they took counsel (consulted) and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. 8. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day.

Verse 1-5. Very probably Judas had hoped that Jesus would make use of His divine power and thus escape the wrath of his enemies. But when the Jews had condemned Him in their council and were leading Him to Pilate to have Him sentenced to death, the eyes of Judas were opened to the fearful nature of his crime, that he had betrayed the Son of God. A deep remorse now came upon him and despairing of forgiveness he went and committed suicide by hanging. The money which he had thrown into the temple was invested in a cemetery for pilgrims.

6. Read the story of Cain's awakened conscience, Genesis 4, 3. 14. The case of Herod, Matt. 14, 1.

How our evil conscience may be cleansed and how we may obtain a good conscience is told in the Augsburg Confession (Apology Article 3) as follows:

"Far above our purity, yea, far above the Law itself, ought to be placed the death and satisfaction of Christ, presented to us that we might be sure that because of this satisfaction, and not because of our fulfilling of the Law, we have a gracious God. Paul teaches this in Gal. 3, 13, when he says: Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us, i. e., the Law condemns all men, but Christ, because without sin He has borne the punishment of sin, and then made a victim for us, has removed that right of the Law to accuse and condemn those who believe in Him, because He Himself is the propitiation for them, for whose sake we are now accounted righteous. But since they are accounted righteous, the Law cannot accuse or condemn them, even though they have not actually satisfied the Law. To the same purport he writes to the Colossians, 2, 10: Ye are complete in Him, as though he were to say: Although ye are still far from the perfection of the Law, yet the remnants of sin do not condemn you, because of Christ's sake we have a sure and firm reconciliation, if you believe, even though sin inhere in your flesh.

"The promise ought always to be in sight that God, because of His promise, wishes for Christ's sake, and not because of the Law or our works, to be gracious and to justify. In this promise timid consciences ought to seek reconciliation and justification; by this promise they ought to sustain themselves, and be confident that for Christ's sake, because of His promise, they have a gracious God."

7. Note David's description of his pangs of conscience, and how he found peace. Read Psalm 32, 1-7. After a fall into sin, a good conscience can be restored only if there is also a sincere effort to make good the wrong which we have done.

8. What do we learn from the Scripture reading of our opening exercises, 1 Peter 3, 15-22, about the Christian's good conscience?

9. A false conscience is one that is not guided by the law of God. Persons who have an erring conscience will consider that to be sinful which is not sinful. Does Col. 2, 16 remind you of any such cases?

10. Does a Roman Catholic sin when he eats meat on Friday? Give the reason for your answer.

11. Why do we term the freedom of conscience the greatest blessing which Christians enjoy in the United States?

### CLOSING DEVOTION

Hymn No. 325: Rock of Ages cleft for me (Wisc. 177)

Prayer. Benediction

### DAILY BIBLE READING:

Sunday: 1 Kings 13, 20-34

Monday: 1 Kings 14, 1-20

Tuesday: 1 Kings 14, 21-31

Wednesday: 1 Kings 15, 1-15

Thursday: 1 Kings 15, 16-34

Friday: 1 Kings 16, 1-20

Saturday: 1 Kings 16, 21-34

## SIXTH LESSON

### HYPOCRISY

### OPENING DEVOTION

Hymn No. 412: My God accept my heart (Wisc. 135)

Scripture Reading: 1 John 1, 3-9. Prayer

### I. THE MOTE AND THE BEAM

Matt. 7, 1-5

1. Judge not, that ye be not judged. 2. For with what judgment ye judge, (so) ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete (deal out), it shall be measured to you again. 3. And why beholdest thou the mote (splinter) that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not (fail to

see) the beam (plank) that is in thine own eye? 4. Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? 5. Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote of thy brother's eye.

These verses are taken from Christ's Sermon on the Mount. They commence with a warning against uncharitable judging. Not all judging is here condemned; parents and teachers must exercise judgment, and all Christians have the duty to judge the doctrines which they hear; what is condemned is the unkindly, hasty judging of others. Jesus warns us that those who do not love their fellowmen here must expect no mercy here or hereafter. Now follows the parable of the Mote and the Beam. You see a tiny particle of dust in the eye of another, and you remark upon it and offer to remove it. At the same time there is a whole log or joist in your own eye and you don't notice it! Thus men will despise a common pick-pocket but will themselves through deals in big business rob thousands. Some will judge impolite language when directed against themselves, very harshly, but will think nothing of using foul and profane language themselves.

*1. Can you give other examples?*

Notice that Jesus calls such persons hypocrites. They pretend to have virtues which they have not; they find fault with others who are not as bad as themselves.

*2. Does it follow from this that those who reprove others while they are themselves sinners, are hypocrites? Give the reason for your answer.*

What Jesus wishes to teach is that everyone should first watch himself and sincerely try to improve his own life. Such a person will not often be tempted to criticize others uncharitably and will become a real help to those who have been overcome by a fault.

## II. THE PRETENDED HOLINESS OF THE PHARISEES

Luke 11, 37-44

37. And as he spake (was speaking), a certain Pharisee besought (asked) him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat (the table). 38. And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled (was astonished) that he had not first washed before dinner. 39. And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter (plate); but your inward part (inner life) is full of ravening (greediness) and wickedness. 40. Ye fools, did not he, that (who) made that which is without (the outside), make that which is within also? 41. But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are (will be) clean unto you.

42. But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe (pay tenths on) mint and rue and all manner (kind) of herbs, and pass over (disregard) judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. 43. Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats (front bench) in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.

Verse 37-41. The name Pharisees was given to a party among the Jews who devoted themselves to the most careful fulfillment of the Law as explained and taught by the Scribes. They numbered over six thousand in the time of Christ. They expected a Messiah who would come like a king to save Israel from the Romans and by their prejudice were blinded

to the fulfillment of prophecy in the person of Jesus Christ. They expected a reward of a good life as the payment of a debt which God owed them. And a good life meant to them a life which carefully observed all outward acts prescribed by Moses and by the Scribes.

In order to become more closely acquainted with Jesus a Pharisee one day invited Jesus to his home. One of the rules of the Pharisees was to wash one's hands before touching any food. Jesus omitted this, and when the Pharisee wondered at it Jesus read him a lesson on true holiness and pretended holiness. The Pharisees made much of outside purity while their heart was full of evil,—love of money, jealousy, impurity.

Verse 42-43. Mint and rue are spices consisting of small leaves. Yet even of these the Pharisees gave one-tenth. How particular they were to fulfill the Law! But the real important things they neglected: right judgment (instead of unjust, one-sided judgment), and love to God. How these Pharisees loved to be honored, to be respectfully greeted, and to receive the seats of honor!

3. Read a similar passage, Matt. 23, entire chapter, or at least verses 23-28. Do we understand why these Pharisees plotted the death of Jesus?

4. How did the hypocrisy of His enemies reveal itself in their dealings with Jesus? Read Luke 20, 20-22; John 11, 50; Matt. 26, 65.

5. How was the hypocrisy of Judas revealed at the anointing of Jesus? Read John 12, 2-6.

6. In what did the hypocrisy of Ananias and Sapphira consist? Read Acts 5, 1-10.

7. What is meant by lip-worship, Matt. 15, 8? Read also Titus 1, 15. 16.

8. Hymn No. 258: *Come holy Spirit, come.* (Wisc. 292.)

### III. THE DECEITFULNESS OF HYPOCRISY

Jer. 7, 4-11

4. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, are these! 5. For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour; 6. If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt (to your own damage),—7. Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever.

8. Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit. 9. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; 10. And (at the same time) come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered (at liberty) to do all these abominations? 11. Is (has) this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the Lord.

This is part of a prophecy uttered by Jeremiah in the reign of King Jehoiakim, about 600 B. C. The prophet took advantage of a solemn gathering of the people at Jerusalem. Standing at one of the temple gates as they passed in, he warns them against their superstitious confidence that the possession of the temple was itself a charm against

danger from the powers around them. The prophecy was fulfilled when only a few years later Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, and led the people into captivity in Babylon (B. C. 587).

Verse 4-7. It is clear that the Jews at this time were guilty of every kind of wickedness. Yet because they had the temple and performed the sacrifices prescribed in the Law, they thought that their evil life would not be punished. Jeremiah reminds them that only the repentant will find favor with God.

9. In which words is repentance referred to?

10. Can you mention similar cases of hypocrisy today?

11. While there are undoubtedly hypocrites in the church today, who think that by outward church membership they can make up for an evil life, we must beware of judging others also in this respect. Even the fact that a member of prominence falls into grievous sin, does not yet prove him a hypocrite. David had not been a hypocrite, nor Peter, before they fell into sin. Read 1 Cor. 13, 7.

Verse 8-11. Observe that these people not only committed crimes against fellowmen but offended the majesty of God. They trusted in "lying words," the teachings of false prophets. They even worshipped false gods, and thought that by attending the worship of the true God they would have the liberty ("we are delivered") to worship false gods. As robbers retreat to a den between acts of violence, so from their worship of heathen idols they would sometimes retreat to the temple for worship.

12. This kind of hypocrisy is practiced by those who believe that they may be permitted to worship the god of the lodge, the "Great Architect of the Universe," "Good Spirit," etc., because they worship the true God in church on Sundays. The lodge does not pray in the name of Christ. That such prayers are offered to a merely imaginary god, is clear from 2 John 9.

### CLOSING DEVOTION

Hymn No. 411: Thine forever God of love (Wisc. 201)

Prayer. Benediction

### DAILY BIBLE READING:

Sunday: 1 Kings 17, 1-24

Monday: 1 Kings 18, 1-19

Tuesday: 1 Kings 18, 20-46

Wednesday: 1 Kings 19, 1-21

Thursday: 1 Kings 20, 1-21

Friday: 1 Kings 20, 22-43

Saturday: 1 Kings 21, 1-14



## SEVENTH LESSON

## TEMPTATION

## OPENING DEVOTION

Hymn No. 40, 1-6: Abide with me! (Wisc. 29)

Scripture Reading: Mark 14, 32-42. Prayer

## I. THE FIRST TEMPTATION

Gen. 3, 1-6

1. Now the serpent was more subtil (cunning) than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God (really) said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? 2. And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: 3. But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

4. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: 5. For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. 6. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

Verse 1-3. How long after their creation the first man and woman remained in a state of innocence, the Bible does not tell us. It is sufficient to know that while they dwelt in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve fell a prey to the wiles of the devil. Tempted, they yielded to the serpent's arguments and since that day mankind is a sinful race.

The serpent was created good, like all living things (Genesis 1, 31). Its native shrewdness was not a fault, yet it was the reason why Satan employed it in order to tempt man. The question which the serpent addressed to Eve was one of devilish cunning. It was designed to raise doubts in the mind of the woman. Eve should have turned away from the tempter. The exaggeration in verse 3 ("neither shall ye touch it") in itself indicates that she now thought the divine command too strict. The very question: "Yea, hath God said—?" had caused her to begin to doubt the love of God. Thus doubt was the beginning of sin.

Verse 4, 5. First the devil causes Eve to doubt, then boldly denies the truth of what God has said, that transgression would be followed by death; then in a hateful manner casts suspicion on the love of God: he represents God as though He begrudged man the ability to know good and evil. At the same time, the words of the serpent have a double meaning; man's eyes would indeed be opened, if he sinned, and he would, alas, know good and evil! By mixing truth with lies the devil tempted man.

Verse 6. The prospect of becoming like God caused evil, ambitious desires to spring up in Eve's heart. Doubting God's word she had put aside His command; evil desire, raised by false promises, did the rest,—the first actual sin was committed.

1. What similarities to the First Temptation do you find in the temptation of Christ, Matt. 4, 1-11?

2. Again, compare the temptation of Job, Job 1, 6-2, 10. What was the purpose of Satan's attacks upon Job's faith? Why did God permit them? Read 1 Peter 1, 7.

3. What comparison does Peter use when he refers to the Tempter of mankind, 1 Peter 5, 8?

4. Why was Satan able to tempt Judas, John 13, 2?

5. How does Satan most generally interfere with man's conversion? Read Luke 8, 12. 1 Thess. 3, 5.

6. Mention doctrines which he causes man to doubt because "unreasonable?" Is the Satanic source of temptation an excuse for the sinner? Read James 1, 13-15.

7. How do we call man's sinful inclination through which he is always ready to yield to temptation?

## II. TEMPTATIONS OF THE WORLD

Mark 13, 21, 22.

21. And then if any man shall say to you, Lo (look) here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not: 22. For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew (perform) signs and wonders, to seduce (mislead), if it were possible, even the elect.

The passage is taken from one of Christ's last discourses. He speaks of the Latter Days. Many false prophets will arise and by their lying words attempt to draw the Christians from the teachings of Christ. And were it not for the assurance of the Gospel, we should have to fear that even God's elect would fall away,—so great will be the power of the temptation exercised by the false teachers.

8. Can you mention false religious leaders of our day who claim divine revelation, even miraculous power?

9. By what means does God uphold His children in temptation? Read Rev. 3, 10. What then is the purpose of our Bible Study?

10. Let us note that Christ's own temptation was not only part of the suffering which He had to undergo as man, but was a truly vicarious suffering; because man yields to the devil's temptations, Jesus overcame them victoriously; and by faith in Him we now have power to resist temptation. Read Hebrews 2, 18.

11. Read Matt. 6, 13. Study also Luther's explanation of the Sixth Petition. Some translate, in the Seventh Petition: "From the Evil One," which would be a reference to the devil.

12. How does Jesus emphasize the necessity of prayer against temptation, Matt. 26, 41?

13. Can you sum up the means which Christians have for overcoming the temptations of the devil, the world, and their own flesh?

14. Hymn No. 381 verses 4-7: Rise, my soul. (Wisc. 176.)

## III. WARNING AND COMFORT FOR THE TEMPTED

1 Cor. 10, 9-13

9. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. 10. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. 11. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples (as a warning for others); and they are written for our admonition (for instructing us), upon whom the ends (closing hours) of the world are come. 12. Wherefore let him

that thinketh he standeth take heed (care) lest he fall. 13. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to (none beyond the power of) man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer (let) you to be tempted above that ye are able (beyond what you can stand); but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

As the Israelites were not satisfied with the manna, so some Christians are not satisfied with the Gospel. As the Israelites grumbled against Providence, so Christians are apt to grumble when afflicted. The Jews were destroyed for tempting God, let Christians beware of a like fate.

In the tribulations of the Last Days it is especially necessary to avoid the temptation of spiritual pride. "To stand" means to stand in Christian faith. The danger is ever present that Gospel Christians become secure and imagine that no temptation can fell them.

On the other hand let those be comforted who have felt the power of temptation! If we but cling to the promises of the faithful God He will not permit us to perish but will help us to escape from the pitfalls of Satan.

15. What, in the light of the text, is your interpretation of 1 John 4, 4? What lesson do we derive from Peter's experience, Mark 14, 67? What is our duty as Christians over against fallen ones? Read Gal. 6, 1. Give the teaching of this verse in your own words.

### CLOSING DEVOTION

Hymn No. 409: In the Hour of Trial (Wisc. 149)  
Prayer. Benediction

#### DAILY BIBLE READING:

Sunday: 1 Kings 21, 15-29  
Monday: 1 Kings 22, 1-14  
Tuesday: 1 Kings 22, 15-38  
Wednesday: 1 Kings 22, 40-53  
Thursday: 2 Kings 1, 1-18  
Friday: 2 Kings 2, 1-11  
Saturday: 2 Kings 2, 12-25

## EIGHTH LESSON

### RICHES

#### OPENING DEVOTION

Hymn No. 358: Lord of glory Thou hast bought us (Wisc. 129)  
Scripture Reading: Matth. 6, 19-24. Prayer

#### I. GOD, THE GIVER OF RICHES

Deuteronomy 8, 11-18

11. Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: 12. Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; 13. And when thy herds and thy

flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; 14. Then thine heart be lifted up (become proud), and thou forget the Lord thy God, which (who) brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; 15. Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; 16. Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove (test) thee, to do thee good at thy latter end; 17. And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. 18. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware (swore) unto thy fathers, as it is this day.

The long sojourn in the wilderness is drawing to a close. The Israelites are encamped in the Plains of Moab within sight of the Promised Land. Moses, feeling that his death is approaching, delivers his final charges to the people. From these closing addresses, which reviewed briefly the history of Israel from Mt. Sinai to the Jordan, our text is taken. For a last time Moses reminds the people of God's goodness during the time of the deliverance from Egypt. How earnestly the prophet appeals to them to remember all that God has done for them and to keep His commandments! They were about to enter the rich and beautiful land of Canaan. There they were to possess great wealth in cattle, grain-fields, timber, and mines. This land they were to conquer by the edge of the sword, driving out the wicked and idol-worshipping inhabitants. How great the danger that the Israelites would be tempted to forgetfulness and pride! The days of wandering in the wilderness had been hard to bear; but even harder to bear would be the days of prosperity. The later history of the Jews showed how necessary these warnings had been. Often they did forget their God, and boasted as in verse 17. The teaching of the passage is that all wealth and prosperity is a gift of God.

The term "riches" is easily defined. Those are rich who have more than they need for the support of this bodily life. And since most of us have not only the necessities of life,—food, clothing, shelter,—but every convenience not known to people in non-Christian lands, and even luxuries, the warning of this text concerns all.

1. *God does not give riches, as a rule, immediately but through certain means. Can you mention these?*

2. *Through which commandment has God protected the right to hold property?*

3. *Examples of believers possessing wealth. Compare Genesis 13, 2; Job 1, 3; Matt. 27, 57.*

## II. THE NEEDLE'S EYE

Matt. 19, 23-26

23. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly (with difficulty) enter into the kingdom of heaven. 24. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. 25. When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed (utterly astounded), saying, Who then can be saved? 26. But Jesus beheld (looked at) them, and said unto them, With (for) men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

This discourse of Christ on the dangers of riches was spoken after our Lord's meeting with the rich young ruler. This man boasted that he had kept all the commandments and did not realize his chief fault: his love of riches. The love of money stifled the seed of the Word which had gotten a hopeful start; rather than sacrifice his riches he turned away from Christ. From this incident Jesus now draws a lesson for His disciples. Wealth in itself does not unfit us to become Christians. But the danger is ever present that we place our trust in worldly goods and prosperity. Christ uses a figure to bring out this truth. The picture of a camel passing through a needle's eye was a proverbial saying to illustrate an extremely difficult feat. So hard it is for a rich man to become or remain a Christian. Indeed, if they depend on their own strength, the prosperous would never be able to tear their hearts away from their possessions. But with God all things are possible. His Gospel is able to convert the heart and to release it from the bondage of riches. Thus a Christian who has plenty of this world's goods, is, in a special sense, a monument to the sanctifying power of the Word of God.

4. Read again in the first lesson the words in which Moses describes those whose faith in God is destroyed through the love of riches.

5. Note how this same teaching is brought out in the story of the rich man and Lazarus, Luke 16. How is the selfishness of this man described?—his forgetfulness of the Word of God? (verse 29).

6. Which of the disciples was lost through love of riches?

7. Explain the statement that the love of riches is the root of all evil? (1 Tim. 6, 6-10.)

8. Explain, in this connection, the meaning of the thorns in the parable of the Sower. (Matt. 13, 22.)

9. Hymn No. 360: Almighty Father, heaven and earth (Wisc. 33).

### III. THE PROPER USE OF WEALTH

Luke 16, 1-9

1. And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward (superintendent); and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods (property). 2. And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

3. Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. 4. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

5. So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? 6. And he said, An hundred measures (barrels) of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty (barrels). 7. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures (bushels) of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write four-score (eighty bushels).

8. And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely (for looking ahead): for the children of this world are in their generation wiser (look further ahead) than the children of light. 9. And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

The steward had squandered his master's money either by fraud or through extravagance. He is ordered to produce his books. Knowing what would follow, he uses his position to place people under obligations to him. His lord's debtors are called, and their promissory notes changed to read for much smaller amounts. A clever scheme, so that even his master had to admire his smartness! Jesus certainly does not want to teach that we should employ forgery in order to make friends. The lesson of the parable is: Use your wealth (mammon) wisely, with an eye to the future! Let Christians remember that they must one day give an account to God in regard to the use they made of money. So use your money that on the last day those whom you benefited will speak for you before the throne of God testifying to the help which you supplied to make them Christians, to save their souls!

10. State in your own words what is the wise and what is the foolish way to use money.

11. Read the charge given to all ministers by St. Paul how they are to admonish the rich. 1 Tim. 6, 17-19. ("High-minded"=proud; "communicate"=to share.)

12. Can you explain the term "uncertain riches" in this passage?

13. How must our giving be in order to be acceptable to God? Read 1 Chronicles 29, 17.

14. How does Jesus describe the blessedness of giving for His kingdom? Matt. 6, 19, 20.

### CLOSING DEVOTION

Hymn No. 357: O Lord of heaven (Wisc. 161)  
Prayer. Benediction

### DAILY BIBLE READING:

Sunday: 2 Kings 3, 1-20  
Monday: 2 Kings 3, 21-4, 7  
Tuesday: 2 Kings 4, 8-37  
Wednesday: 2 Kings 4, 38-44  
Thursday: 2 Kings 5, 1-14  
Friday: 2 Kings 5, 15-27  
Saturday: 2 Kings 6, 1-23

## NINTH LESSON

### AFFLICTION

### OPENING DEVOTION

Hymn No. 507: Whatever God ordains is good (Wisc. 217)  
Scripture-Reading: Psalm 119, 50-64. Prayer

### I. WHOM THE LORD LOVETH HE CHASTENETH

Hebrews 12, 1-7

1. Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about (encircled) with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us (cling to us), and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

2. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for (in order to reach) the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down (seated) at the right hand of the throne of God. 3. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

4. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving (in the struggle) against sin. 5. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not (where is the son not disciplined by his father)?

Verse 1. The preceding chapter shows how the power of faith was revealed in the saints of the Old Testament. Through this "cloud of witnesses" we are to be taught to be steadfast and unflinching in our faith and, like an athlete that trains for a race, cast aside everything that would hold us back in the appointed course.

Verse 2, 3. In consideration of the joy that was set before Him, the eternal joys of heaven, Jesus disregarded the pains and the disgrace that men were heaping upon Him. When Jesus had completed His sufferings, He was raised also according to His human nature to the right hand of God, the authority and rule over all things. What an example for us! Shall Christians become weary and faint under afflictions, remembering that even the holy Son of God had to pass through suffering to glory? Did He ever grow weary in His work of saving souls? How small are all our troubles compared with the sufferings that Christ endured!

Verse 4-7. The Christians whom this letter addresses had to endure much scorn and ridicule from their enemies; but so far none had been tortured and slain for the sake of the Gospel. God does not lay upon His children at any time more than they can bear, and such sufferings as they endure are in the nature of a "chastening." It is a token of God's love when He trains and educates His children for greater usefulness in His kingdom and final happiness. And this process of training includes the suffering of afflictions. Where is a child which the father does not chasten? Instead of weakening in our faith, murmuring against God, and running away from the school of suffering, we should rather learn, in days of trouble, that God is training us for greater service and for the day of the final revelation of His love and mercy.

1. Can you mention examples of suffering to which Christians are subject in body, soul, property, and reputation (*Explanation of the Seventh Petition*)?

The first effect of suffering upon the believing Christian is that it reminds him of his sinfulness and thus causes him to seek anew the comfort of the divine promise. He reads again the Holy Scriptures, once neglected, and in them seeks anew assurance of divine love and forgiveness.

2. Read Psalm 119, 50, 67, 71.

3. The entire history of Israel is an illustration of this doctrine. Compare especially Deut. 8, 2-6 (in the wilderness), Judges 10, 6-10, (oppression by the heathen Canaanites), and 1 Kings 8, 47-49 (the captivity in Babylon).

4. Read the words of comfort addressed to Israel in Babylon, Isaiah 41, 10-14.

5. *What does Jesus mean by the purging of the vine, John 15, 2?*  
 6. *Hymn No. 498: If thou but suffer God to guide thee (Wisc. 90).*

## II. THE SCHOOL OF PRAYER

### Lamentations 2, 15-19

15. All that pass by clap their hands at thee; they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem, saying, Is this the city that men call The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth? 16. All thine enemies have opened their mouth against thee: they hiss and gnash the teeth: they say, We have swallowed her up: certainly this is the day that we looked for; we have found, we have seen it.

17. The Lord hath done that which he had devised; he hath fulfilled his word that he had commanded in the days of old: he hath thrown down, and hath not pitied: and he hath caused thine enemy to rejoice over thee, he hath set up the horn of (given prosperity to) thine adversaries.

18. Their heart cried unto the Lord, O wall of the daughter of Zion, let tears run down like a river day and night: give thyself no rest; let not the apple of thine eye cease. 19. Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord: lift up thy hands toward him for the life of thy young children, that faint for hunger in the top of every street.

The book of Lamentations was written by Jeremiah at the time of the siege, capture, and destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, 587 B. C. At this time the people of Judah were taken captive to the land of Babylon, where they remained seventy years. The book of Lamentations was written not only as a confession of the people's sins but to show the divine purpose of suffering, and how God loves and pities those whom He is compelled to afflict for their own good. Because of their many shameful idolatries, Jehovah had cast off His people. The passage before us describes the misery and disgrace of the nation but above all calls upon the people to take to heart this terrible lesson, and to turn again in earnest prayer to the true God.

Verses 15 and 16 describe the joy of the victorious enemies. Verse 17 states that this affliction is a fulfillment of the warnings which Israel had despised. (Deut. 28, 15, 52.) Verse 18: When their city was taken they turned again to the living God (wall stands for the city and its people). Verse 19: At last Israel again is worshipping Jehovah. But how great was the disaster necessary to bring them to repentance!

7. *The psalms contain numerous instances of prayer under affliction. Read, for instance, Psalm 18, 1-6.*

8. *The prosperity of the wicked as compared with the suffering of God's children, is frequently mentioned, especially in the Psalms. The class should take time to read Psalm 73, especially verses 16-20.*

## III. EVIL TURNED INTO GOOD

### Genesis 45, 3-10

3. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled (filled with fear) at his presence. 4. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray (beg) you. And they came near. And he said,



I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. 5. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. 6. For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing (ploughing) nor harvest. 7. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

8. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. 9. Haste ye (make haste), and go up to my father and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not (don't delay). 10. And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast.

After testing his brothers in various ways, even as God tests us through suffering, Joseph told his brethren who he was. This scene is described in our text. The conscience of the brethren is awakened. They fear that after these many years they will now be punished for selling their brother into slavery. By the reply of Joseph they are assured, on the other hand, that he had forgiven them their heartless conduct. Above all, Joseph impresses the lesson upon them that it was not they but God who had brought him to Egypt. Through interpreting the dreams of Pharaoh, Joseph helped the Egyptian ruler to prepare for the years of famine. By storing up the grain during the seven years of plenty, enough food was provided, not only for Egypt, but for the surrounding countries which were also in the grip of famine. Thus it was that the patriarch Jacob and his sons were preserved. Not only this, but Joseph was able to find them a home in the land of Goshen, where, during the next four-hundred years, Israel grew into a nation that was able to take possession of the Promised Land of Canaan. Now, all this had been made possible through the afflictions that Joseph had to endure. His separation from his father, the years of slavery in Egypt, his persecution by Potiphar's wife, his imprisonment, all these troubles, under the providence of God, worked out for good, so that the seed of Abraham in which all nations were to be blessed was kept alive.

9. Read also Genesis 50, 20.

10. *It is a comforting thought for afflicted Christians that through their sufferings God, in his hidden councils, is providing a blessing for others. All the Christian's troubles are "blessings in disguise."*

11. *If Christians become impatient under suffering, it is because they cannot see how that which is so hard to bear is bound to turn out a benefit. Yet it is one of the clearest Bible teachings that in electing us to eternal life God has also determined that our way must go through suffering. Read Romans 8, 28, 38, 39.*

That there will be an eternal recompense and exceedingly great reward of grace, for all the afflictions undergone in this life, is one of the sweet, comforting doctrines of the Gospel. As there is strict justice for all those who, while enjoying every blessing of God, reject His Holy Word, so there will be spiritual blessings, glories indescribable, for those who have, as faithful believers, undergone humiliation, troubles, pains, and disappointments.

12. Read John 16, 22. Romans 8, 17. 2 Cor. 4, 17.

## CLOSING DEVOTION

Hymn No. 512: Come, ye d'sconsolate (Wisc. 57)  
Prayer. Benediction

## DAILY BIBLE READING:

Sunday: 2 Kings 6, 24-7, 11  
Monday: 2 Kings 7, 12-20  
Tuesday: 2 Kings 8, 1-24  
Wednesday: 2 Kings 9, 1-21  
Thursday: 2 Kings 9, 22-37  
Friday: 2 Kings 10, 1-17  
Saturday: 2 Kings 10, 18-36

## TENTH LESSON

### PERSECUTION

## OPENING DEVOTION

Hymn No. 376: Fight the good fight (Wisc. 66)  
Scripture Reading: Psalm 3. Prayer

## I. THE FIERY TRIAL

1 Peter 4, 12-19

12. Beloved, think it not strange concerning (do not be amazed at) the fiery trial which is to try (test) you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: 13. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. 14. If ye be reproached (denounced) for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

15. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil doer, or as a busy-body (meddler) in other men's matters. 16. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf (for this reason). 17. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not (refuse obedience to) the gospel of God? 18. And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall (what will become of) the ungodly and the sinner appear? 19. Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

Verse 12-14. "Be not astonished," the Apostle Peter admonishes the readers of his First Letter, "at the burning among you by which your faith is to be tested, as though a strange thing will happen unto you." Even in the days of Peter, the Christian church had drawn upon itself the hatred of the world, and bloody persecutions were beginning. Through undergoing sufferings for the sake of Christ, the Christians

re being lifted, as on the cross, nearer to their Lord. It was not dishonor but glory so to suffer, and by their patient endurance, the Holy Spirit is glorified.

1. *The two purposes which God has in mind when Christians suffer persecution are here mentioned. Can you state in your own words what these two purposes are?*

2. *Believers must not be amazed when persecution comes, since Christ plainly foretold it, Matt. 24, 9. Read also the general principle announced Paul, 2 Tim. 3, 12.*

Verse 15-19. There would be no comfort for a Christian to know that by wicked lives or because the church meddled as a busy-body in the affairs of the state, they had deserved their sufferings. And the thought is a natural one that if Christians must undergo such suffering, how much more dreadful will be the judgment of those who rejected Christ. To the Christians, however, persecution comes through the unsels of an allwise and loving Father,—shall they not, like Jesus, commit their souls in confidence to God's keeping?

3. *The choice of suffering shame with Christ or being judged with the world was placed even before the Old Testament believers. Read Hebrews 23-27.*

4. *In the persecutions which David experienced through the hatred of Saul, Christians of all ages have found a picture of their own sufferings. Read, for instance, Psalm 57. Also the persecution of Elijah by King Ahab may be studied in this connection. Read 1 Kings 19, 14.*

5. *Slander ("evil spoken of," Verse 14) has ever been a favorite method of the persecutors. Read the false accusations raised against Stephen and Saul, Acts 6, 9-13; 24, 5, 6.*

6. *How believers are made fellow-sufferers with Christ is made clear by comparing Matt. 27, 43 and Psalm 42, 3.*

From the earliest days, the enemies of the church used violence in order to extinguish the light of the Gospel. Christians were imprisoned and were frequently put to death, sometimes after undergoing the most awful tortures. Many thousands of Christians were thus slain by the Romans during the first three centuries (the Age of Persecution) and by the Roman Church during the Middle Ages. (Burning of Hus; persecution of the Waldenses.) Wherever the church has begun missions among the heathen, its missionaries were persecuted like the first Apostles of Christ. Read Acts 8, 3; 12, 2.

7. *Hymn No. 379: My soul be on thy guard. (Wisc. 138.)*

## II. PERSECUTION—ITS CAUSE AND ITS REWARD

Luke 12, 4-12

4. And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. 5. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which (who) after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him. 6. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings (less than a cent), and not one of them is forgotten before God? 7. But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows. 8. Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of

were being lifted, as on the cross, nearer to their Lord. It was not dishonor but glory so to suffer, and by their patient endurance, the Holy Spirit is glorified.

1. *The two purposes which God has in mind when Christians suffer persecution are here mentioned. Can you state in your own words what these two purposes are?*

2. *Believers must not be amazed when persecution comes, since Christ has plainly foretold it, Matt. 24, 9. Read also the general principle announced by Paul, 2 Tim. 3, 12.*

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God: 9. But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God. 10. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven. 11. And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers (authorities), take ye no thought (don't trouble yourselves) how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: 12. For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.

Verse 4. 7. Christianity may expose its confessors to danger of body and life. Yet Christians must not fear human enemies but fear God who on the last day will judge all men. Again, why fear? He has regard even for the commonest birds; not the loss of a single hair is so insignificant that he fails to note it. How foolish then, is fear, with God's loving Providence ruling even in the midst of His enemies.

Verse 8-12. Open confession of Christ is demanded of every follower. As we confess Him, so He will stand by us on the Last Day and acknowledge us as His disciples. Some may, indeed, out of weakness deny their faith, but will repent and thus find forgiveness. But to reject the truth with full knowledge is a different matter; such a one hardens his heart until he no longer desires forgiveness. As for the disciples, even if the wisdom and power of the world is lined up against them, they should not despair because God's Spirit Himself will guide their tongue in the defense of the truth.

The cause of persecution is here made plain. It is hatred of the truth. When Christians confess their faith, the unbeliever's conscience tells him that the Christians are right, and while some are converted many harden their hearts and now persecute the believer.

8. *Cain was the first persecutor. What was the cause of his hatred of Abel? Read 1 John 3, 12. Hatred of the church is really hatred of God and Christ. Read John 15, 20. 24.*

9. *Indeed, persecution of the church is persecution of Christ Himself! Acts 9, 4. 5.*

10. *The object of persecution is to silence the Word of God. Acts 4, 16-20. 29.*

11. *How do you interpret the saying of Paul, when he was a prisoner in Rome, 2 Tim. 2, 9?*

It is a mistake to say, because we are not today imprisoned or robbed of our possessions for the sake of the Gospel, that there is no persecution in our time. That which is much harder to bear than bodily pain is ridicule and contempt. Consider how those are scorned who refuse to accept the teaching of evolution,—or who accept the Bible as an infallible book! And there are those who find many hindrances to advancement because they avoid the pleasures of the world and its associations.

12. *What provision does our church make to strengthen its younger people who study at colleges and universities?*

13. *How are those persecuted who refuse to join lodges?*

14. *In a special sense the ministers are the object of hatred and persecution. Read 2 Cor. 6, 4. 5.*

15. *Explain the saying: "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." Read Acts 8, 3. 4. Can you apply this to the beginning of our Lutheran Church in America?*

Above all, the splendid reward of grace which is held out to all those who undergo for the sake of Christ shame, contempt, loss, and bodily persecution is stressed in this lesson, Verse 8. For all those who fight a good fight there is laid up a crown of righteousness which the Lord Himself shall give them "at that day."

*16. Because of the honor which we have when we suffer with Christ and because of the final heavenly reward, Christians are able to accept persecution not only with patience but with rejoicing, Matt. 5, 11, 12.*

### CLOSING DEVOTION

Hymn No. 408: Let me be Thine forever (Wisc. 123)

Prayer. Benediction

### DAILY BIBLE READING:

Sunday: 2 Kings 11, 1-21

Monday: 2 Kings 12, 1-21

Tuesday: 2 Kings 13, 1-25

Wednesday: 2 Kings 14, 1-16

Thursday: 2 Kings 14, 17-25

Friday: 2 Kings 15, 1-22

Saturday: 2 Kings 15, 23-38

## ELEVENTH LESSON

### FELLOWSHIP

### OPENING DEVOTION

Hymn No. 462: Blest be the tie (Wisc. 47)

Scripture Reading: Acts 2, 42-47. Prayer

### I. CHRIST'S PRAYER FOR UNITY

John 17, 17-22

17. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

18. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. 19. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

20. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; 21. That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. 22. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.

In our last lesson we discussed persecution. The words preceding our lesson text today refer to the same subject: "The world hath hated them (the believers in Christ) because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." And this is because "I have given them Thy Word." The interests and aims of the Christians lie in opposite

direction to the aims and objects of the world. This entire so-called Highpriestly prayer of Christ is a petition that the Church of God might remain distinct from the unbelieving world and that all Christians might be bound up in close fellowship through faith in the same divine Redeemer.

Verse 17. To sanctify means to set apart, to make separate. When faith is worked in the heart, the person is inwardly separated from the world; thus things which he once loved and admired he now hates, and what formerly he ridiculed and despised,—the Bible, church, worship, prayer, the ministry, missionary work,—he now cherishes and supports. He has separated himself from the unbelief, pride, and sinful occupations of the world.

*1. How is separation from the world understood by Roman Catholics? Does this agree with Verse 15?*

Verse 18, 19. Being set apart for service through the power of the Gospel, the believers are now witnesses for the Truth. By this means the church is to be built. Even as Jesus consecrated Himself to the redemption of men by giving Himself as a sacrifice for the world, so the Christian, by accepting this redemption in sincere faith, is separated from the unbelieving world and is now able to fight evil and carry out the commands of his Master.

Verse 20-22. We have seen how the fellowship of the Christians is established. By the blood of Christ they have been redeemed and through His word (preaching and the sacraments) they have been separated from the evil life and associations of the world. Jesus had only been speaking of His disciples, but in these verses he applies the same prayer to all those who would be gathered by the missionary work of the Apostles and their successors. Now among all these a union is established, a spiritual fellowship. They belong to various Christian denominations, speak different languages, and never meet each other, yet if they have true faith in their hearts they are united in a common fellowship. That this is not an outward union is plain from the fact that Jesus says "As Thou Father, Art in Me and I in Thee." The fellowship between Christians is a real, close one, like that between Jesus and His heavenly Father. Those who are so united are fitted for extending the Kingdom of Christ. Through their work all the elect among mankind are finally gathered into the Church. The spiritual nature of this fellowship is again pointed out in Verse 22.

*2. State in one word what it is that unites the believers in a spiritual fellowship.*

*3. Why is the fellowship of Christian believers called the "universal church?" Why "invisible church?"*

*4. Which denomination bases its fellowship upon an outward union under a visible head?*

*5. What is meant by the Lutheran principle of: "No union without unity?"*

Unionism: Unionism is religious union and fellowship between those who are not united in doctrine. It is the common practice among churches of today to unite in joint services (union services), and in many kinds of church work (Sunday-school, revivals, missions) because they agree in what they call the "great essentials." The Bible does not say, however, that we should agree only in the more important doctrines. In our text Jesus says: "Thy Word is Truth." We can compel no man

to accept the entire Bible as truth, but we can and must refuse to have fellowship with those who reject any teaching of the Bible.

6. *How does Romans 16, 17 apply in this connection?*

7. *What shall we answer those who say that our teaching regarding Christian fellowship is "narrow?" (Read Matt. 7, 14.)*

## II. TRUE BROTHERHOOD

Gal. 3, 26-29

26. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond (slave) nor free (freeman), there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. 29. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Now that the Gospel is preached to men and faith enkindled in their hearts, they have entered into a new and wonderful relationship to God. They have become children of God. When they were baptized unto Christ and thereby made partakers of His redemption, they became children of God. In Baptism we accepted Christ and His righteousness, were clothed with His innocence. All that separated us from God was taken away, and thus we are now His children. Whether a person is a Jew or a non-Jew, whatever his race or his station in life, he is united in the most intimate fellowship with all other Christians. All are one in Christ and all will inherit eternal life as members of God's holy people.

8. *We observe that there are no degrees of fellowship in the Christian church. Whether young or old, male or female, clergymen or laymen, or whatever office one may hold in the church, all have the same rights of fellowship. This is meant by "universal priesthood of believers." Can you mention some of those things in which all Christians have equal rights?*

9. *In the Old Testament the sons of Abraham or Jewish people had an outward fellowship consisting in appointed ordinances and forms of worship. Read the comparison between the Old Testament and New Testament fellowship, Hebrews 9, 11-14.*

10. *How was Baptism, the New Testament seal of fellowship, foreshadowed in Old Testament history? Read 1 Cor. 10, 1-4.*

Those who say that all men are God's children and that we should recognize every one as a Christian brother, are greatly mistaken. Jesus plainly teaches that there are some whose father is not God but the devil. Only those are brethren who are united in fellowship through confession of Christian faith, as we confess it in Baptism. But who are those whom Christ calls children of the devil? Read John 8, 44. Matt. 13, 38. 42.

11. *Hymn No. 467: Hark the Church proclaims (Wisc. 81).*

## III. HOLY COMMUNION

1 Cor. 10, 16-17

16. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 17. For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

Verse 16, 17. This text breathes the certainty of Christian fellowship. There is fellowship with Christ, in Whom we have part by the



drinking of the wine and eating of the bread. There is fellowship with the other communicants, with whom we participate by eating of the same bread and drinking of the same cup, the blessed "fruit of the vine." In other words, those who receive the sacraments are in holy communion, and so this term has been applied to the Sacrament of the Altar itself. Hypocrites and unbelievers indeed partake of the body and blood of Christ when they commune, but theirs is not the Holy Communion. Their unbelief cuts them off from the Christian Church and they receive the body of Christ unto their damnation.

*12. Open Communion and Closed Communion: Open communion is a celebration of the sacrament in which all without distinction are invited to partake. Closed communion is that practiced in our church, in which only those partake who confess with us the same faith. Since the sacrament establishes and is a token of union, and since the union for which Christ prayed is a spiritual fellowship, it follows that we can commune only with those with whom we are really united in such fellowship. Truth unites, error divides; by keeping all that Christ commanded His church and by avoiding fellowship with the false teachers we have fellowship with Christ and with those who confess this same faith. To these we are limited in communion, worship, joint prayer and joint church work. Read John 4, 24.*

### CLOSING DEVOTION

Hymn No. 466: The Church's one foundation (Wisc. 189)

Prayer. Benediction

### DAILY BIBLE READING:

Sunday: 2 Kings 16, 1-20

Monday: 2 Kings 17, 1-23

Tuesday: 2 Kings 17, 24-41

Wednesday: 2 Kings 18, 1-16

Thursday: 2 Kings 18, 17-37

Friday: 2 Kings 19, 1-14

Saturday: 2 Kings 19, 15-37

## TWELFTH LESSON

### LOVE

### OPENING DEVOTION

Hymn No. 362: O God of mercy God of might (Wisc. 219)

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 13. Prayer

### I. FORGIVE—GIVE

Luke 6, 27-38

27. But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, 28. Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use (abuse) you. 29. And unto him that smiteth (strikes) thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh

away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also. 30. Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again (back). 31. And as ye would (like) that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

32. For if ye love them which love you, what thank (credit) have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. 33. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank (merit) have ye? for sinners also do even the same. 34. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive (get something), what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. 35. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again (no return); and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.

36. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. 37. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: 38. Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom (lap): For with the same measure that ye mete withal (deal out to others), it shall be measured to you again.

Verse 27-31. The words were addressed by Jesus to His disciples, but the multitude surrounded Him and had opportunity to hear His saving doctrine. To all who hear He announces the law of love. No urging is needed that we love our friends, that we do good to those who show us favors, that we pray for those who pray for us. As Jesus says in the following verses, even the heathen do that. True love is unselfish. This is meant by the examples given in the text. They are all to be understood in the light of the Golden Rule: As we wish that people would act towards us, so we are to act towards them.

*1. Read Matt. 7, 12.*

Verse 32-35. By sinners are meant those who make no claims at all to be Christians. They also do works that might outwardly appear like works of love but as a matter of fact they are prompted by selfishness. Kindness, charity, are looked upon as "good policy," "good business." To be children of God we should exhibit that charitable love which, like God, is good to the evil and kind to the ungrateful.

*2. Are "charity balls" true charity? Can you give other examples of a hypocritical use of the word charity by people outside of the Church?*

*3. Which verses of the opening lesson (1 Cor. 13) would apply here?*

Verse 36-38. Not simply a kind disposition but active mercy and compassion is expected of Christians. This will be evident from our remarks about our fellowmen. Those who judge harshly, who condemn their neighbor unmercifully, are not followers of Christ. We must practice forgiveness, if we wish to receive forgiveness. Where mercy is not found in the heart, there is no faith. No one who believes that God has, without our own merit, forgiven us our transgressions, can be harsh to his neighbor. A good measure, pressed down, flowing over the top, will be our portion if we practice kindness, and thus imitate our heavenly Father.

*4. By means of which parable does Jesus bring home the lesson that only the merciful will receive mercy? Read Matt. 18, 21-35. Which supernatural gifts does Paul compare with Christian love in our opening lesson? Why does he call love more excellent?*

5. Paul calls love greater than faith and hope: *These will cease when we have obtained that which we during this life believed and hoped for, but our love of God and of the brethren will be unchanged in heaven, only purified; it will endure forever.*

6. Why is charity or Christian love called a fruit of the Spirit, Galatians 5, 22?

7. The quality of love, as shown by Christians towards each other and even towards the enemies who persecuted them, was something entirely new to the world. The heathen had never seen anything like it. Many thousands were converted by the power of the example of Christian love. Even the best among the heathen had never conceived of such a virtue as the love that shone in the lives of Christians. Hence we understand why Jesus calls the commandment of love a new commandment. Read John 13, 34, 35; 1 John 3, 23, 24.

8. Hymn No. 339: *May we Thy precepts Lord (Wisc. 128).*

## II. LOVE—ITS GRACIOUS REWARD

Matt. 25, 34-40

34. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35. For I was an hungred (hungry) and ye gave me meat (fed me): I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36. Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

37. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38. When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39. Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

40. And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

The passage is taken from Christ's description of the Last Judgment. The former lowly and despised Galilean is now King of kings. Before Him are gathered all nations. Each individual is to receive Judgment, from which there is no appeal.

On His left there are those who once gloried in deeds of charity accorded great in the sight of men, but which lacked the true quality of unselfish kindness, because the true source was missing,—faith in Christ. But we are concerned in these verses with those set on Christ's right hand. Heaven is their eternal possession as a reward for their faith. As evidence of the justice of His Judgment, so that all the world may recognize it, the Judge then sets forth the character of those gathered on His right. He mentions all kinds of ordinary, every-day deeds of kindness. To feed a hungry beggar. To show kindness to homeless strangers, to the sick and those in prison. It is impossible to perform even the least of these acts in His spirit unless we have faith in Him. Humbly, the believer will never admit that he has done any great service to others. But Jesus instructs us that such works, done without any expectancy of reward, are the truest services we can render to our Lord. We cannot like Mary anoint His body for His death, nor lay Him into our tomb as Joseph did. He is risen and is in glory, hence does not need our ministrations. But what we do to the least of His disciples, we do to Him, and that in itself is reward enough.

9. Christian fellowship includes that we sympathize with the troubles of our fellow Christians. Through Baptism, as we have heard, we have become one body and as such are members interested in each other. Read 1 Cor. 12, 12. 13. 26.

10. Love as the evidence of Christian fellowship is beautifully described, Rom. 12, 9-16.

11. How did Joseph exemplify the spirit of forgiving love? Genesis 50, 15-21.

12. How did Jesus teach His disciples a lesson in loving service? (John 13.)

13. What special occasions have arisen in recent world history for the exercise of Christian love?

14. In what manner have our young people made use of these opportunities?

15. What institutions receive their support with the same object in view?

16. What special occasions have we in daily life (congregation, church society, family), to exercise charity? (It has been made clear that "charity" does not only mean doing good to the poor or afflicted, but love to the brother and to fellowmen.)

17. What is the highest motive for love to our neighbor? (1 John 4, 10. 11.)

### CLOSING DEVOTION

Hymn No. 358: Lord of glory Thou hast bought us (Wisc. 129)

Prayer. Benediction

### DAILY BIBLE READING:

Sunday: 2 Kings 20, 1-21

Monday: 2 Kings 21, 1-26

Tuesday: 2 Kings 22, 1-20

Wednesday: 2 Kings 23, 1-15

Thursday: 2 Kings 23, 16-37

Friday: 2 Kings 24, 1-20

Saturday: 2 Kings 25, 1-30

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## OPENING PRAYERS

Almighty God, Who hast given us commandment to pray for the gift of the Holy Ghost: Most heartily we beseech Thee, through Jesus Christ our Advocate, to grant us Thy Holy Spirit, that He may quicken our hearts by Thy saving Word, and lead us into all truth, that He may guide, instruct, enlighten, govern, comfort, and sanctify us unto everlasting life; through the same, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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Send, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, Thy Holy Spirit into our hearts, that He may rule and direct us according to Thy will, comfort us in all temptations and afflictions, defend us from all error, and lead us into all truth; that we, being steadfast in the faith, may increase in love and in all good works, and in the end obtain everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

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O Lord God, heavenly Father, we beseech Thee, let Thy Holy Spirit dwell in us, that He may enlighten and lead us into all truth, and evermore defend us from all adversities; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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Almighty and Everlasting God, Who makest us both to will and to do those things which are good, and acceptable unto Thy Divine Majesty: Let Thy Fatherly hand, we beseech Thee, ever be over us. Let Thy Holy Spirit ever be with us. And so lead us in the knowledge and obedience of Thy Word, that in the end we may obtain everlasting life; through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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Almighty and Eternal God, Thou hast taught us in true faith to know and to acknowledge Thee, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one eternal God, gracious and merciful, Who hast created, redeemed, and sanctified us according to Thy wonderful and infinite love and grace: We supplicate Thee, ever to keep us steadfast in such faith. Grant us grace, that we may ever laud, praise, magnify, and glorify Thy holy Name; who livest and reignest from everlasting to everlasting. Amen.

## CLOSING PRAYERS

Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, unto Thy Church Thy Holy Spirit, and the wisdom which cometh down from above, that Thy Word, as becometh it, may not be bound, but have free course and be preached to the joy and edifying of Christ's holy people, that in steadfast faith we may serve Thee, and in the confession of Thy Name abide unto the end; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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O God, our Protector; Behold, and look upon the face of Thine Anointed, Who hath given Himself for the redemption of all, and grant that from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, Thy Name may be great among the Gentiles, and that in every place, sacrifice and a pure offering may be made unto Thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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Almighty God, unto Whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from Whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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O God, Who resistest the proud, and givest grace to the humble; Grant unto us true humility, after the likeness in which Thine Only Son hath revealed it in Himself, that we may never be lifted up and provoke Thy wrath, but in all lowliness be made partakers of the gifts of Thy grace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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