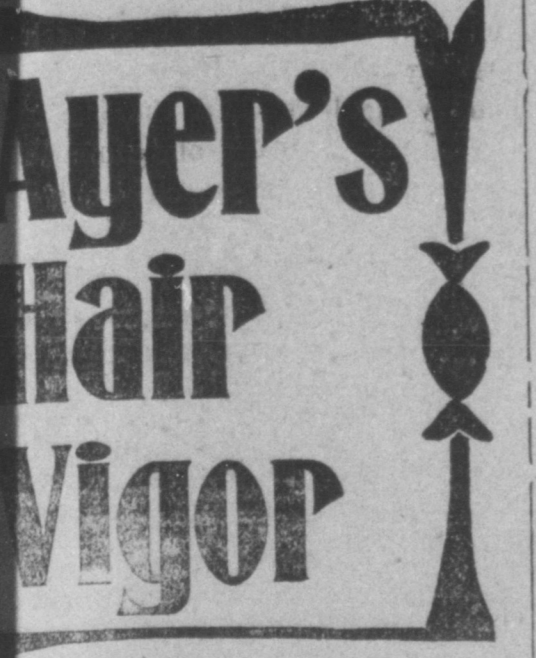


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INTERNATIONAL LE-SON.
First Quarter, Lesson 5, Feb. 4, 1900.

THE FIRST DISCIPLES OF JESUS.—John 1: 35-46.

Read John 1: 1-13.
Commit Verses 35-37.
GOLDEN TEXT.—They followed Jesus.—John 1: 27.

HISTORICAL SETTING.
Time.—Two days in February, A. D. 26, directly after the temptation in the wilderness. Eilersheim regards the two days as Saturday (the Jewish Sabbath) and Sunday.

Place.—Bethabara (or Bethany in R. V. and best texts, but not the one on the Mount of Olives) Probably two closely joined villages, one included in the other. The villages were probably at the ford of the Jordan nearly opposite Jericho, where one of the great roads crosses the river, or at a ford of a stream that enters the Jordan near the same place. But Couder and Eilersheim place Bethany farther up the Jordan, about twenty miles southeast of Nazareth.

Jesus.—Thirty years old. John the Baptist.—Thirty and one-half years old, having preached six or eight months in the wilderness.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE BEGINNING OF THE MINISTRY OF JESUS.
As we come to the beginning of the ministry of Jesus, it is well to take a glance over the life of Christ up to this time, and note the various preparations.

HIS FIRST TWO DISCIPLES: ANDREW AND JOHN.—Vs. 35-40. Everything was now ready for Jesus to begin his work. He must secure some persons to believe in him. The natural place to look for these first disciples would be among the followers of John, who had repented and confessed their change of life by baptism.

When Jesus returned from the wilderness of the temptation. John saw him, and pointed him out as the Messiah, whom he had baptized. Ag. r the next day after. John stood. Was standing. And two of his disciples. Andrew (v. 40), and doubtless the apostle John, who writes this account. And looking. With earnest gaze. Behold the Lamb of God! The day before he had added "which taketh away the sin of the world." John understood much more clearly than most of the Jews at his time the true method of the Messiah. He saw in Jesus the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, of one who should be led as a lamb to the slaughter. And they followed Jesus. Their repentance under John's preaching only made them feel more deeply the need of something more. Then Jesus turned. Aware of their purpose, and glad to make their coming easy. What seek ye? What do you wish from me? Rabbi. A Jewish title of honor for men of learning, usually teachers. Where dwellest thou? Referring to his temporary abode. They desired extended and private conversation. He saith unto them, Come and see. That was their true way of learning, by observation and experience. And abode with him that day. The remainder of the day; it was spent in religious conversation and learning the truth from Jesus. It was about the tenth hour, i. e., about 4 o'clock P. M., according to the Roman reckoning, which is the one we now use, counting from midnight and midday. One of the two... Andrew. He belonged to Bethsaida and was a disciple of John the Baptist. Of his subsequent history and labors nothing is certainly known. The greatest act, the most far-reaching of his life, was his bringing his brother Peter to Jesus. The other of the two was doubtless John.

PETER, AND PERHAPS JAMES, BECOME DISCIPLES OF JESUS.—Vs. 41, 42. He first findeth, or better as R. V., "He findeth first." The common version implies that the first thing he did after leaving Jesus was to find his brother, which is probably true. The R. V. implies that both began immediately to seek each other his brother, and that Andrew found his first. This implies that John also found his brother James. This view is in accord with the reticence of John about himself, is now generally accepted. James, the brother of John, therefore, in all probability, was included in this group of "first" disciples. In this case Jesus would now have four followers. We have found the Messias... the Christ. Messias is the Greek spelling of the Hebrew word Messiah, which is the same as the Greek Christ, both meaning "anointed," "the anointed one." The Messiah was the king, high priest, deliverer, for whom the Jews were eagerly looking. Jesus beheld him, as if looking into his very soul. Thou art Simon. That is your present name. Son of Jonas. The true reading is "John." Thou shalt be called Cephas. Cephas is

Aramaic. By interpretation, A stone. Better as in R. V., "Peter," which (Petros) is the Greek for "stone," or "rock." This was a prophecy of Peter's future life and career.

PHILIP BECOMES A FOLLOWER OF JESUS.—Vs. 43, 44. The day following. Sunday. Jesus would go forth into Galilee. In Galilee was his home and that of his followers. Here they could earn their living by their accustomed work. They could reach their friends and acquaintances. The Galileans were less prejudiced, more open to new ideas, less bound by customs; so that if he could gain and train a few disciples, he could more easily begin his work. And findeth Philip. The others had sought Jesus; Jesus himself finds Philip. Almost nothing is recorded of his labors, except that he brought Nathanael to Jesus. Was of Bethsaida. "Fish town," near the mouth of the upper Jordan. The city of Andrew and Peter. Hence probably they were acquaintances.

NATHANAEL (BARTHOLOMEW) BECOMES A DISCIPLE.—Vs. 45, 46. Philip findeth Nathanael, of Cana in Galilee (John 21: 2). He was probably on his way home, and an acquaintance. Almost nothing is known of his history. Like Philip, he was one whose deeds are written in heaven rather than on earth. We have found him, of whom Moses in the law. The Pentateuch, the five books of Moses, thus distinguished from the other books of the Old Testament. And the prophets, did write (Isa. 7: 14; 9: 6, 7; 52: 13-15; 53: 1-12; Ezra 34: 23-31; Dan 9: 24-27). The disciples of John must have been continually questioning as to where the Messiah was of whom John preached. Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. This is the language of Philip. Joseph was the reputed father of Jesus, and Philip supposed this was true. It was the common designation of the relation between Jesus and Joseph. Can... any good thing come out of Nazareth? Nathanael knew the reputation of Nazareth. Nathanael's surprise may have arisen from his expectation that the Messiah was to come from Bethlehem as foretold, and not from Nazareth. Come and see. That was the true answer to such an objection. Nathanael went and met Jesus, was convinced, and became a disciple.

These five or six followers of Jesus, at the very beginning of their Christian experience, went with Jesus to Galilee and at Cana witnessed his first miracle, saw the glory of Jesus, and were confirmed in their faith (John 2: 12). Thus we see the small beginnings of the church of Christ, the tiny rill that grew into a mighty river.

PRACTICAL HINTS & C.
Small Beginnings. We are looking at the head waters of Christianity, and are to follow their course as they increase to a great river, as of the water of life. We are looking at the grain of mustard seed of the parable, which we shall watch as it grows toward becoming a great tree. Many Gates to the City of God. We note first the contrast between this simple, natural, quiet coming to Christ and the sudden conversion of Paul. Then we note the four methods by which these first disciples were brought to Jesus. It makes little difference by which of the twelve gates we enter, or from which direction if we only enter; or by what method we come to Jesus, if we only reach him.

Some are brought to Jesus by the testimony of others, as the first two disciples, by the testimony of John the Baptist; Peter and Nathanael, by the testimony of fellow-disciples.

Some by Investigation. What seek ye? asked Jesus of the two disciples who followed him. The answer each person makes to this question both tests and determines his character and his destiny.

Some by Invitation of Others. A large proportion of those who go to Christ are led thither by the invitation of others.

The Use of Social Life. Note how the various relationships of life were used as a means of the increase of disciples,—teacher, family, friend, business, fellow citizens. It is for this purpose that we are thrown into these various relations. Each one means "opportunity." Each one sought out the person nearest to him.

Simon is to become Peter. There came not only to Peter, but to all these men, wonderful transformation of character by their association with Jesus. Jesus is still transforming men.

IT IS A LIVER PILL.—Many of the ailments that man has to contend with have their origin in a disordered liver, which is a delicate organ, peculiarly susceptible to the disturbances that come from irregular habits or lack of care in eating and drinking. This accounts for the great many liver regulators now pressed on the attention of sufferers. Of these there is none superior to Parmentier's Vegetable Pills. Their operation though gentle is effective, and the most delicate can use them.

Thoughtless Cruelty.

It was a beautiful, calm evening, the loveliest of the autumnal season, when, after the toils and cares of the day, I set out to refresh my body and mind by inhaling the gentle breeze. The sun was declining, the feathered tribes seemed to be responding to each other in pouring out their hymns of gratitude to their beneficent Creator, and the flocks were following the tinkling bell of their leaders to the fold.

Presently I saw a man at some little distance, who appeared to be agitated by passion, and was lifting and throwing with force stone after stone, at some object beneath him. This made me approach him and inquire what was the matter.

Oh, sir, said he, a great ugly toad; and down went another stone. And pray, said I, why do you kill that poor creature? has it done you any harm?

Why, said he, they don't do no good, do they? My friend, said I, supposing they do no good, is that any reason why you should put it to death? Only consider, if everything were to be destroyed which does no good, what would become of you and me? for verily I think we could give but a poor account why we should be spared; yet the Almighty, who sees our actions, and knows the wickedness of our hearts, does not destroy us; but these poor animals are more harmless than we, and not only do no hurt, but do a great deal of good, in feeding on and destroying quantities of snails, and other insects, which would destroy our vegetables; for my own part, I am glad to see, and preserve them in my garden, observing as I do how much benefit they do me.

Well, said the man, throwing away the stone, which he had ready for another fling, then let him live, but I didn't know they did any good.

Nay, my friend, I replied, your leaving the poor crippled animal to die a lingering death would now be more cruel than killing in outright; don't you see that you have so covered it with stones that it is impossible for it to get away, and it may have to suffer for many days? The most merciful thing now is to put it out of its misery; but let me entreat you never again to put to death or torment any of God's creatures, which in his wisdom he has made, unless you have good and sufficient reasons for doing so.

This incident so much excited my feeling, as to spoil the pleasure of my walk. It made me quite unhappy, to think how careless people are about the poor animals which God has put under their care and created for their good.

Let our young reader reflect, that we have no right to injure or take the life of any of God's creatures, unless for necessary food, or for our own preservation from injury; it is an act of brutal wickedness to torture even an insect.

In wisdom hath he made them all, and pronounced them good.—Children's Friend.

The Credit Man's Costly Error.

Sometimes a credit man goes all wrong, but not often. A country merchant came up from Indiana with a written list of the things he wanted. He said he was new to the business, but he meant to have a partner who was wise. After he had picked out goods amounting to eight thousand dollars he was introduced to the credit man, and he looked so uncouth and inefficient that the credit man wondered how good clerks had been wasting their time on him.

What terms do you want, Mr. —? He stopped, and the visitor supplied the name. Well, down in the country we always pay after harvest. But harvest is past. You don't mean next harvest—in 1900—do you?

Well, that's when my people will pay me. O, we couldn't do that. Ninety days is the very best I could give you. And even at that he wanted to know a great many things about his visitor's profits.

How much if I pay all in sixty days? The credit man quoted the terms. How much in thirty? A discount was mentioned. How much for cash? Spot cash? Money down? Yes—currency.

It was a wild question. The credit man knew he had no chance to get eight thousand dollars out of that man, and he quoted a beautiful discount.

Well, receipt the bill, was the countryman's rejoinder. And out from the folds of a three-dollar suit of clothes he dragged money enough to buy a yacht and run it all summer.

He didn't put on much style, but he figures he saved the expenses of his Chicago trip.—Chicago Evening Post.

It's A Pity to Find Them Here.

A tall, rough-looking man, holding a child by the hand, entered the bar-room of a much frequented saloon. Ordering a glass of beer, he sat down and joined in conversation with those around him; another and another glass was ordered, and soon a thought of his child, who stood near the doorway, vanished from his mind.

Halloo, youngster! cried the landlord, who had been too busy to notice the child before, whose son are ye, an' where do ye come from?

Im my daddy's son, whimpered the child, as his large blue eyes met the gaze of the stern stout landlord.

Oh—ah—ahem! stammered the landlord, as he recognized the man to be one of his best customers. Thou'rt a bonnie bairn to be sure; but after all it's a pity to find thee here, he said, apparently in deep thought, and scarcely knowing what he said.

Landlord! cried the father, as he threw down the glass he had held in his hand, them are the very words you said to my father when I first came in here with him thirty years ago.

Landlord! he cried again, bringing his hand heavily on the counter, my lad nor I shall never come in here again. I see it all now. My father died a drunkard; I too, shall do so unless I am quickly rescued. And this lad—what will he do? I am going home to ask God to keep me from this accursed drink. I shall ask Him to help me to train up my boy in the way He'd to go, and when he is old he will not depart from it. I thank you for them words of yours. Good-night!—The Inland.

Snake Worship in India.

In his Religious Life and Thought in India. Professor Monier Williams gives a strange account of the serpent temple in South Kanara, where hundreds of these reptiles live in holes and crevices which are made for them. He says that to propitiate the serpents, people who come to perform their vows roll and wriggle round the temple serpent fashion, and some will even roll their bodies up to it from the foot of the hill, a mile distant. They also take home with them portions of earth from the sacred serpent holes; this earth is believed to cleanse from leprosy if rubbed on the parts affected. We might well believe that superstition could go no further than this, but the writer adds that there are men who, for a small sum, will go through these wriggles and rollings by proxy for the richer persons who come to the shrine.

Although the Hindus fear snakes so intensely, they do not on that account take any measures to destroy them; on the contrary they believe that any one who kills a snake, even by accident, will be visited with terrible punishment, either in this life or in the next.

The professor tells a story of a man who bought a piece of ground and was sitting under a tree in the midst of his new property, when he heard a hissing sound over his head, and looking up saw a serpent in the branches. Instantly the conviction rushed upon him that he had neglected to propitiate the spirit of the man to whom the ground had formerly belonged, and that it had appeared to him embodied in the form of a snake and ready for vengeance. Far from trying to kill the intruder, he fled in terror, and actually never dared to return to the ground or take possession of it again!

Is Father on Deck?
A number of years ago Captain D commanded a vessel sailing from Liverpool to New York, and on one voyage he had all his family on board the ship.

One night, when all were quietly asleep, there arose a sudden squall of wind which came sweeping over the waters until it struck the vessel and instantly threw her on her side, tumbling and crashing everything that was movable, and awaking the passengers to a consciousness that they were in imminent peril.

Every one on board was alarmed and uneasy; and some sprang from their berths and began to dress that they might be ready for the worst.

Captain D had a little girl on board just eight years old, who, of course, awoke with the rest. What's the matter? said the frightened child.

They told her a squall had struck the ship. Yes; father's on deck. The little thing dropped herself on her pillow again without a fear, and in a few moments was sleeping sweetly in spite of winds or waves.—Exchange.

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