



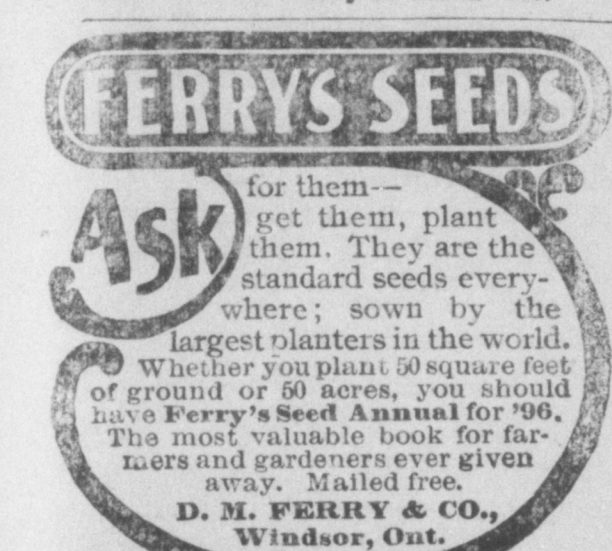
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INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Second Quarter-Lesson V.—May 3.

FAITH.—Luke 17:5-19.

Read Luke 17:1-37. Commit verses 17-19.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Lord, increase our faith.—Luke 17:5.

LORD, INCREASE OUR FAITH.—V. 5. And the apostles said, Those who had been longest with Jesus, and had the strongest faith in him, were the ones who most desired more faith. He that knows something is anxious to know more. He that uses his little faith feels the need of more. Hence the prayer, Lord, increase our faith.

The Need of More Faith. Gather from other parts of this chapter the possible reason of this prayer.

First.—Vs. 1, 2. The danger lest through them should come offences, stumbling blocks, as did come to pass with Judas, and nearly with Peter and others.

Second.—Vs. 3, 4. The hard task of forgiving any one who had injured them, seven times in a single day, day by day. The same promise to faith in verse 6 is given in Mark 11:23, in connection with the duty of forgiveness.

Third.—Vs. 20-22. Because they were working for a kingdom whose coming they could not see. There were none of the expected signs of the kingdom. Jesus was healing a few sick, and teaching moral truths, instead of leading the Jewish nation to victorious revolt.

Fourth.—Vs. 25-37. They knew that dark days were coming, that their Master was to be rejected and slain (9:22), that they might lose their lives for the Master's sake (9:24-26); that they were to go out as lambs among wolves (10:3), and be brought before synagogues and magistrates (12:11), that their holy city should be destroyed (13:34, 35). They had a great work to do, the nature of which they did not and could not then understand. Amid such clouds and darkness there was need of great faith.

How Faith Could Be Increased. First. Jesus increased faith by his own direct personal power over their souls. A trusted leader's faith ever increases faith.

Second. Faith is increased by using the little faith as a means of gaining more.

Third. Faith is increased by being tested and tried. Fourth. Faith is increased by the actual fulfilment of the promises. Faith renews its strength every time it touches the solid ground of fact. God's promises have sustained others; therefore they will sustain us. Every triumph of Christianity in the past is a proof of its final victory.

Fifth. Faith is increased by the promises of the Almighty God, as sure as of the power and reality of faith, as we see in Jesus' answer to his apostles' prayer (v. 6).

THE POWER OF FAITH.—V. 6. And the Lord said, What he said was an answer to their request. If ye had, implying that they have faith, but do not fully act it out. Faith as a grain of mustard seed, the smallest of garden seeds; even a very little faith, but real and living. Ye might say unto this sycamine tree, apparently pointing to one near by. The sycamine tree is a species of mulberry, which sends its roots deep into the soil. Be thou plucked up by the root, what power less than divine can pluck up that tree? Be thou planted in the sea, lifted over the valleys and hills to the distant sea. And it should, it would, obey you. It is within the ability of faith to wield this power.

The Promise is not Literal, but Metaphorical. Jesus used such metaphors as we are continually using in our daily life. If I should talk to our boys about the Hill of Difficulty in their way, or slaying dragons or Apollyons in their young manhood, not the dullest would imagine that I spoke of literal hills or dragons. The apostles understood Jesus' metaphor. No one attempted to root up a sycamine tree, or remove Olivet or Hermon into the sea. There were real though not literal trees and mountains for them to remove. They were to root up sin from human hearts, and worldliness, and prejudice, and hatred, and selfishness. The uprooting the largest sycamine in the world would be child's play to this. The mighty Roman Empire was to be subdued to Christ. The Jewish prejudices and pride were to be overcome. The crimes, and customs, and the idolatry interwoven with all the usages and passions of society were to be overthrown. A new kingdom was to be set up. The whole world was to be renovated and lifted up into a new morality, a new life. What were Tabor, or Hermon, or the Himalayas to these?

THE PROMISE FULFILLED. That this promise has been really and literally fulfilled. The disciples by faith actually did remove the mountains that stood in their way. It was done on the day of Pentecost. Within three centuries the Roman

Empire was christianized. Moral changes were wrought that to all human power were impossible. The whole history of the church and the present condition of Christendom are the fulfilment of this promise.

The faith that has removed mountains is a faith that takes hold of the power of God, that waits patiently, obediently, in active work for the promised results; that so trusts its leader and master as never to be discouraged by defeat or disaster, nor by hope long delayed.

True faith does not put upon God's promises limits as to methods and times. We pray for better fruit, and when God does not plant new trees in our garden or rain down golden apples like manna from heaven we think the prayer has failed. We pray that rummelling may cease; and look for God's lightning to smite the rummellers dead and burn up the building in which rum is sold—but look in vain. But God is working through his people, and the good time is ripening, and its golden fruit is coming to perfection.

Illustrations. Here is a huge steamship. No man can move it one hair's breadth, any more than he could a sycamine tree. Yet that same man can move a lever and set the huge mass sailing across the seas. God says to a man, do the work of a thousand men. But that is harder than to remove mountains. Yet Christian civilization has invented machinery by which any man can do it. So of the telegraph, telephone, railroads. The faith on this low plane, that has worked patiently, steadily with God's physical powers, and wrought seeming impossibilities is a perpetual illustration of the power of spiritual faith taking hold of God.

THE HUMILITY OF FAITH.—Vs. 7-10. By and by, old English for immediately. Doth he thank, as expressing special gratitude for favors granted. I trow not, I think not. Unprofitable servants, not useless, but having rendered no service beyond what was due. That which was our duty. We have simply done that without doing which we should have been unfaithful. God loves to show his regard for all faithful service. The cup of cold water given in his name does not fail of reward. He says, "Come ye blessed, receive the kingdom, for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat;" and he says, "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching," &c.

FAITH AND LIFE, PRESENT AND EVERLASTING.—Between verses 10-11 belongs John II, the raising of Lazarus from the dead. The faith of his disciples here received a new impetus from seeing the power of Christ over death, a witness to eternal life beyond the grave.

FAITH AND EARTHLY BLESSINGS.—V. 11-19. As he went to Jerusalem. Several weeks after the first part of this lesson. Jesus had continued his journey to Bethany and Jerusalem, raised Lazarus from the dead in January, and then on account of the intense hostility of the Jews, retired to the mountains north of Jerusalem, where he remained till it was time for him to go back to Jerusalem. He was now on his way thither, going through the midst, in the middle way between Samaria and Galilee, eastward toward the Jordan. Ten men that were lepers, nine Jews and one Samaritan. Afar off, being forbidden by law to approach others. Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. They had some kind and degree of faith in him. Go show yourselves unto the priests. When the leper was cured, before he could be restored to society he was requested to show himself to the priest, to make an offering, and to be officially pronounced clean. As they went, they were cleansed. After they had shown their faith by obedience, it was done unto them according to their faith. And one of them turned back, not in disobedience to Jesus, for he would quickly obey, but in obedience to the higher duty of gratitude and love. Fell down on his face, the customary token of reverence and honor. And he was a Samaritan. This man felt all the more the goodness of Jesus in healing him. Where are the nine? All had stood the test of faith but the others failed in the test of love. Thy faith hath made thee whole. The Samaritan found a higher spiritual healing, and was whole in soul as well as body.

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THE NEW WOMAN.

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The Advanced Woman as she Ought to be.

REASONS WHY SHE SHOULD BE GIVEN THE FRANCHISE—POWER SHE MIGHT EXERCISE IN THE BODY POLITIC.

Dr. Carlos Martyn, the lecturer on "Christian Citizenship," gave a graphic portrayal of one phase of the question, in his lecture of the much-discussed subject of the New Woman. Temperance Temple was filled with interested listeners of both sexes, and frequent applause interrupted the speaker as he scored one good point after another in his sensible and fair discussion of a question which is usually the target for the most inflammable utterances of the cranks who rush to extremes both for and against woman's suffrage.

Dr. Martyn's idea of the new woman is not a slangy edition of young America, who imitates the clothes and vices of her brother, but a woman at home with the new feelings; aglow with the new hopes; sober with the new responsibilities; broadened with the new experiences and healthy with the new activities of this last decade of the nineteenth century. This is the real new woman; the old woman is a new and enlarged environment.

The radical ideas of the lecturer even extend to approval of the much maligned bloomers, as a much more sensible dress for out-door locomotion than the ordinary gown, which fashion decrees, and which too often cramps and restricts the body as a Chinese woman's feet are cramped in accordance with the Oriental idea of elegance.

In former times, when women were regarded as live bric-a-brac, and their lives were bounded by the four walls of the house; when they were taught that it was lady-like to be a stationary article for men to write love letters to, the classic draperies and clinging skirts were suited to the ideas of the age. But now, with the adoption by modern women of out-door habits and occupations, the clinging garments become a nuisance to be abated. The physiological value of woman's widened horizon is marked. Woman is no longer a hot house plant or a chronic invalid, as in the days when she was mirrored in the bygone novels as fainting decorously with or without occasion, merely because it was the natural expression of the old, indoor, artificial mode of life.

The new woman glories in her strength and health, and delights in fresh air and exercise. She has discarded the grapevine theory of womanhood, and feels competent to stand on her own feet, and prefer the head on her own shoulders to the time honored idea that the head of the woman is the man. The old woman wanted nothing but a husband, after that, everything; the new woman wants everything, a husband included, and gets it.

Until recently, woman played fox to man's lion. The word virgin might be derived from the Latin vir, a man, and the old English word gin, a trap, meaning literally a man's trap. Nowadays, women without despising matrimony, are serenely conscious of their ability, if need be, to exist without it.

Let the old-fashioned folk who look with terror upon the apparition of the new woman, possess their souls in patience. It will be found that the new woman, is only the new environment, with enlarged ideas and ampler freedom of action. The home will survive. Sweetheartship, marriage, and motherhood, all will survive, for these things are grounded in the nature of woman, and no outward changes can revolutionize the feminine function or the feminine disposition. Nature will keep the new woman well within her orbit, whatever the first outward appearances.

(To be continued.)

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Express from Sussex..... 8.30
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