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The Sabbath School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Third Quarter Lesson 8, Aug. 19, 1900

THE MAN BORN BLIND.—John 9 : 1-17.

Read Luke 9 : 57 62 ; John 7 : 2-9: 41.

Commit Verses 4-7.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.*—John 9 : 25.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time.—A Sabbath (v. 14) in October, A. D. 29 ; probably at the Feast of the Tabernacles, referred to in 7 : 2.

Place.—Jerusalem, near one of the gates of the temple or of the city.

Jesus.—Nearly 33 years old ; about six months before his crucifixion.

A BLIND BEGGAR BY THE WAYSIDE.—V. 1. Jesus had come from Galilee to Jerusalem to attend the Feast of the Tabernacles, the Jewish Thanksgiving day. *And as Jesus passed by* (on his way about the city) *he saw a man which was* (not only blind, as was the case in the other five instances when Jesus cured the blind, but he was) *blind from his birth.* Blindness was very common. Palestine ranks next to Egypt, where one in every hundred is blind. The reason lies in the sand dust and the intense glare of a cloudless sun. Congenital blindness is as rare in the East as in the West, and hence was certain to attract attention.

Congenital blindness, incurable by any means then known, is still incurable by the best science of to day except in certain rare cases, congenital cataract being the only curable form.

Picture of the Blind Beggar. (1) Blind. A sad affliction, especially in that age, with nither hospitals nor science. (2) Hopeless. No possible cure for him. (3) Helplessness. There was almost nothing a blind man could do to support himself. (4) He was poor, a beggar

A Type. This man was a type of the spiritually blind ; blind to God, blind to his own best good, to the great spiritual realities of heaven and hell, to true holiness, to the possibilities in his soul, to the joys and glories of a religious life, to the highest motives, to eternal life. Great as is the misfortune of physical blindness, that of spiritual blindness is vastly greater.

A DISCUSSION AS TO THE REASONS FOR HIS BLINDNESS.—Vs. 2, 3. As the disciples looked upon the blind man, their first thought was of the mystery that such trouble should exist at all. They could think of but one cause,—that it must have its origin in sin ; but whose sin? *Who did sin....that he was born blind?* How could it be his own sin, since he was born with this misfortune? How could it be his parents' sin, for how could God be just and punish the man for the sin of others?

The Wrong of this View. The belief that every affliction is the direct punishment for some special sin, and that we can judge of the moral and spiritual condition of any person by the calamities that befall him, or by the outward success and blessings that crown his days, tends to several great evils : (1) self complacency and spiritual pride : (2) uncharitable judgment of others, and (3) hopelessness and despair on the part of the afflicted.

Job's friends accused him of sin because they were sure that all suffering was the punishment of sin. But the book shows that suffering was sometimes a test, a discipline, a mystery, with deliverance and victory at the end.

Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents. Not that they were perfect, and had never done wrong, but the affliction had not come as the result or punishment of any particular sin. Sufferings do come upon children from the sins of parents, as stated in the second commandment; but it is not a punishment of the sufferer. Everybody in the world to day is suffering more or less from the sins of others, but the suffering is not a punishment for those sins. *But* (the blindness came) *that the works of God should be made manifest in him.* Manifest to him and through him to the world. The blindness was no wrong to the man, for it gave him a knowledge of Jesus, a hope of heaven, new experiences which could not have been his in any other way.

Practical. God can make good grow out of trouble, so that the trouble will scarcely be realized because God's goodness shines from it. The battle is forgotten in the victory, the loss in the gain, the temporal in the spiritual. From a pillow of stones many a one has seen the heavens opened.

THE MYSTERY FOR THIS BLIND MAN WAS SOLVED BY THE FACT THAT JESUS WAS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.—Vs. 4. 5. *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day ; i. e.,* while the fitting opportunity lasts. The work of Jesus lay before him in the person of the blind man. The pains, sorrows, and wants of men are opportunities to us as they were to him. *The night cometh, when no man can work.* The day of opportunity passes, never to return. Planting must be done in seed time; the harvest gathered when the grain is ripe. Even Christ must do his work of redemption, and of teaching, at the time appointed, or it never could be done. He might do other works afterwards, but not those. *As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.* In two ways Jesus is light to men :—(1) He lets the light shine upon them ; (2) He opens blind eyes to see the light.

JESUS PROVES THAT HE IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD BY HEALING THE BLIND MAN.—Vs. 6, 7. Having stated the great truth that he was the light of the world, Jesus illustrates and proves it by opening the eyes of the blind man. *He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and....anointed the eyes.* The use of saliva was a popular remedy for the eyes, but was not a cure for blindness. The reason for the whole action seems to have been to aid the man's faith by a use of simple means. He knew very little of Jesus (vs. 35-38), and needed something to give him confidence. (1) The means were very simple, so that any one could use them. (2) They connected Jesus with the cure. (3) They gave the man something to do, which both tested his faith and developed. (4) There was little danger that such simple means would lead the man to trust in the means rather than in Jesus. *And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, i. e.,* wash off the clay that has been put upon your eyes. One of the best things for an inquirer is to give him something to do. The pool of Siloam was a large pool on the southeast of Jerusalem, near the Fountain Gate. Thence had been brought the water in the golden pitcher at the Feast of Tabernacles. *Which is by interpretation, Sent.* Or sending, *i. e.,* outlet of waters. The result was that he *came seeing.* A new world was created for him. More than this, his spiritual eyes were opened, and he saw Jesus and the goodness of God and eternal life and heaven

What Christianity has Enabled Blind Men to do. It is wonderful how great things are done for the blind under the gospel The American Cyclopedia gives a long list, not only of the institutions for the blind, where they are taught to read and to work and earn their living, but of blind men who have become celebrated for philosophy, poetry, military exploits, music, botany, sculpture, law, divinity, as professors of mathematics, travelers, pianists, painters, and road surveyors.

TESTIMONY OF ACQUAINTANCES TO THE REALITY OF THE CURE.—Vs. 8 11. *The neighbours,* etc. These would be the ones to recognize the man in his changed condition. *That he was blind.* He abandoned begging. *Is not this he that sat and begged?....I am he.* This settled the question of fact, but still they could not conceive how the change could take place, and therefore asked, *How were thine eyes opened? ....a man,* etc.

Practical. 1. If we are truly changed by grace, our friends and neighbors will remark the difference in us.

DISCUSSION AND OPPOSITION CONFIRM THE TRUTH.—Vs. 12-17. *They brought to the Pharisees,* as the religious leaders, who could answer whether there really was a cure, and whether Jesus was a prophet. *And it was the Sabbath day.* This fact gave the Pharisees an opportunity to turn the investigation away from the main point. *Because he keepeth not the Sabbath.* He broke not the Sabbath, but their interpretation of the Sabbath law and the regulations they had made. *There was a division.* There were arguments.

The results were (1) that the fact was established beyond a doubt. (2) The necessary inference was that Jesus was from God, and therefore the Messiah he claimed to be. (3) But the man himself was excommunicated. (4) But he met Jesus later, and received spiritual as well as physical sight. (5) The discussion spread widely the knowledge of the claims of Jesus, of his power to heal, and the blessings he would confer on all who believed on him.

How God Called Frank.

Frank, a boy from the city, had been picking raspberries in the woods. As he was on his way home a violent storm arose. It began raining and lightning and to thunder fearfully. Frank was very much frightened, and crept into a hole in an oak tree not far from the roadside. He did not know that lightning is very apt to strike a hollow tree. But all at once he heard a voice that called : Frank ! Frank ! come quickly !

Frank jumped instantly from the tree; but he had gone scarcely a hundred feet when the lightning struck the tree. The ground quaked beneath the terrified boy, and it seemed as if he was standing in the midst of fire. But he was not hurt at all, and exclaimed, with raised hand: That voice came from heaven! Thou, O dear Lord, hast saved me !

But once more the voice was heard : Frank ! Frank ! do you not hear?

He looked around, and saw a peasant woman who was calling. Frank ran to her and said : Here I am. What do you want of me?

I do not mean you, but my own little Frank, the woman replied. He was watching the geese by the brook. See? there he comes at last out from the bushes.

Frank, the boy from the city, related how he had taken her voice as a voice from heaven. Then the peasant folded her arms devoutly, and said: O my child, do not thank God any the less that the voice came from the mouth of a poor peasant woman. It was He who willed that I should call your name, although I knew nothing about you.

Yes, yes, said Frank; God served Himself by your voice, but my escape came from heaven.

Always remember that safety depends not on accident or chance, but on your Heavenly Father.—From the German.

A Position of Trust.

BY MARY S. DANIEL.

Aunt Jean, said Hilda, slowly, it does seem to me that my trials are harder than those that most other girls have. I can't help wondering sometimes why it is—just a little bit, you know.

There was a suspicion of tears in the brown eyes, and a pathetic tone in the low voice. Yet it would be unfair to Hilda to say that she spoke complainingly. This was really the nearest she ever came to murmuring.

Aunt Jean did not chide her. She knew Hilda's life, and knew that, surrounded as she was with many things that made it appear enviable, the girl had indeed burdens and responsibilities such as come to few young people. And she had seen how bravely and unflinchingly she bore them. It was surely no wonder if the child had these moments of questioning now and then.

There was a minute's silence, then Aunt Jean looked over toward the other end of the library, where the little boys were getting their lessons.

Ned's lessons are more difficult than Harold's, she said thoughtfully, and he says his problems in arithmetic are ever so much harder since he was put into the class of fractions. But he was about the happiest boy in town when his teacher promoted him without waiting for the regular time. Bless his heart, how he is working these days !

Hilda's lips curved into a smile of comprehension, but she did not speak. She and Aunt Jean knew when not to interrupt each other.

And Rob was even more pleased, great fellow that he is, when he was advanced in the office the other day, though his duties are much more exacting and his responsibility is more than doubled. It was a great mark of confidence on the part of the firm—confidence in both his character and his ability. It was really that that made us all so proud wasn't it? We were glad to see that they knew him and recognized what a sterling fellow he is. But we were not surprised. Our Rob always in a low place, with only easy things to do! He wasn't made for that, was he, dear?

Hilda laughed softly now.

I think I see what you mean, auntie. It is that God puts us in the places for which he knows we are fitted, and that if he gives us hard tasks, it is because he can trust us with them.

It doesn't seem as if I could be worthy, she added, slowly, but I am trying—indeed, I am trying to be faithful over little things, auntie, and it will be a help, when it seems as if I had more than I can bear, to think of it in that way—as a kind of promotion to a position of trust.—Classmate.

Two Singers.

A beautiful little incident is told concerning Jenny Lind and Grisi when they were rivals for popular favor in London. Both were invited to sing the same night at the court concert before the Queen Jenny Lind, being the younger, sang first, and was so disturbed by the fierce, scornful look of Grisi, that she was at the point of failure, when, suddenly, an inspiration came to her. The accompanist was striking his final chords. She asked him to rise, and took the vacant seat. Her fingers wandered over the keys in a loving prelude, and then she sang a little prayer which she had loved as a child. She hadn't sung it for years. As she sang she was no longer in the presence of royalty, but singing to loving friends in her fatherland

Softly at first the plaintive notes floated on the air, swelling louder and richer every moment. The singer seemed to throw her whole soul into that weird, thrilling, plaintive prayer. Gradually the song died away and ended in a sob. There was silence—the silence of wonder. The audience sat spellbound. Jenny Lind lifted her sweet eyes to look into the scornful face that had so disconcerted her. There was no fierce expression now; instead a teardrop glistened on the long, black lashes, and after a moment, with the impulsiveness of a child of the tropics, Grisi crossed to Jenny Lind's side, placed her arm about her waist and kissed her, utterly regardless of the audience.

What Came of a Log-Cabin Sunday-School.

BY ADDISON P FOSTER, D D.

Thirty years ago, a little log cabin Sunday-school was started in the Old Camp Ground in Green Mountain Settlement, North Carolina, by the Rev. G. S Jones, a missionary of the American Sunday school Union. The cabin has long since disappeared, nothing remaining of it except the door-step,—a locust block, now used as a place from which numbers of young people mount their horses or climb into straw bedded wagons. But last year the thirtieth anniversary of the log-cabin Sunday school was celebrated. About forty adults, with their children, grandchildren, and friends, met for the occasion. A special feature of the anniversary was the dedication of the second chapel on the old ground.

The results of that thirty years' work of that log-cabin school are something remarkable. As the missionary writes : Three of the pioneer pupils have become preachers of the gospel, a grandson of the first superintendent is now a successful young lawyer, four of the girls have married ministers, and fourteen of the boys are well-to do merchants and mill owners, while it is said by some of these steady farmers that no section in all this mountain country can boast of a better class of wives and mothers, a majority of whom were members in childhood of this Old Camp Ground Union Sunday-school. In addition to this, an academy building is soon to be erected near the chapel.—S. S. Times.

A Ship Matrimonially Inclined.

At a social gathering of jolly tars, says The Christian Endeavor World Captain K——pronounced a conundrum that called forth a number of clever and witty answers. He asks, Can any of you tell me when a ship may be said to be in love?

I can, called out Jenkins. It's when she wants to be manned.

Just missed it, quoth the captain Try again. Who'll be the next?

I will responded Joe. It's when she wants a mate.

Not correct, replied the captain. The question is still open.

When she's tender to a man-of-war, suggested Lieutenant Jones regarding his boot as he spoke.

Everything but correct, responded the captain.

When she's struck by a heavy swell, suggested Cornie.

No, no, said the captain ; come, hurry up.

When she makes much of a fast sailor, cried Simkins.

Here there was a great groan, and Simkins narrowly escaped being thrown out of the window.

When peace was restored, the captain said : You might have answered, When she hugs the wind, or, When she runs down after a smack, or, When she's after a consort. But none of them would have been right. The real answer is, When she's attached to a buoy!

If our hands would touch humanity, our hearts must touch heaven.

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