

# THE BIBLE STUDENT

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

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By

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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

Concluded (Chapters 9—16)



THE WALTHER LEAGUE OF THE EV. LUTHERAN  
SYNODICAL CONFERENCE,

6438 Eggleston Avenue, - Chicago, Illinois

## 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 (portions printed in heavy type) is 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 questions 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. Where the

hymns are missing in the Wisconsin Synod hymn-book others are supplied. The first line of every hymn being given, other hymnals may be used. **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 to individuals (or to groups), there will be a saving of time for the class meeting.

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## PREFACE

The Gospel according to Mark is the subject of study in number two and three of the first volume of the Bible Student. The study manuals generally devote an entire year (50 or 52 lessons) to the study of one of the Gospels. In order to make possible the treatment of Mark in 24 lessons, the editor has employed as much condensation of the comment and other lesson material as was consistent with the plan and purpose of the Bible Student. It will be noted that a large amount of explanatory matter is embodied (in parentheses) with the text of the Gospel. The comment itself has been limited to points necessary for the study of the text. Frequently the lessons which Christian readers are to draw from the various incidents in the life of Christ, as related by Mark, are merely indicated by a brief sentence. The Questions and Applications are added to lead into a richer comprehension of the text and of its teachings.

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 portions from Mark, 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.

If one or several of the above suggestions are carried out, there will be no trouble in finishing Mark in twenty-four lessons. 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 the incidents of the Gospel narrative 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 Mark. All that the editor's comment on the lessons 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 an aid to it. If it will open anew the eyes of our Bible student to the unsearchable riches of Christ and His salvation, as taught in miracle, parable, and life, the purpose which this Bible Study Quarterly is designed to serve has been served.

And may God bless you!

THE EDITOR.

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## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

## THIRTEENTH LESSON

Mark 9, 2-32

## OPENING DEVOTION

Hymn: Thee we adore, eternal Lord (No. 66)

or To God be glory, peace on earth (No. 74)

Scripture Reading: Psalm 62. Prayer

## 44. THE TRANSFIGURATION

Mark 9, 2-8

2. And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into a high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them. 3. And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller (bleacher) on earth can whiten them. 4. And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus. 5. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles (booths); one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. 6. For he wist (knew) not what to say; for they were sore afraid. 7. And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. 8. And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.

1. *Read the parallel account Luke 9, 28-36.*

The mount of Transfiguration was most probably Mt. Hermon, which is near Caesarea Philippi and the only elevation to which the term "an exceeding high mountain" would apply, Mt. Hermon being 9,000 feet above sea-level. The Transfiguration revealed Christ in His divine glory as Son of God. The spectacle of the face of Christ shining like the sun at noonday, must have been inexpressibly glorious. It is possible that the event took place at night, see Luke 9, 37. Moses and Elijah appeared, the former representing the Law, and the latter the Prophets, since Christ is the end of the law (Romans 10, 4) and the object of all prophecy. For more than nine hundred years Elijah had been in heaven, and for more than fourteen hundred years Moses had been away from this world; and now both reappear, still living, speaking, recognized in some way not stated in the Gospels, by the disciples. There are many texts in Scripture which say that men live after they are dead, but here is an illustration of the truth. Here are two men, long centuries after they have left the earth, still living and serving their Lord.

One of the Gospels gives us the subject of the talk — it was about Christ's death on Calvary, His exodus from this world. These men were sent from heaven to comfort and strengthen Jesus for the journey to His cross. He would have bitter sorrows and great sufferings, and they

came to cheer Him. We are not told that He was afraid or that He was in danger of growing faint-hearted before He reached His cross. But before entering on His great Passion, our Lord was to receive one more pledge of the Father's love. So the heavenly messengers were sent to earth to talk with Jesus about His death, and what it would mean to the world, that He might be strengthened for it.

During the brief visit of these princes of the Old Testament, Peter offered to build temporary houses for their accommodation; but he spoke in the fright and excitement of the moment. Then came a bright cloud, the visible glory which manifested the presence of God, even as He appeared in the pillar of cloud and fire in the wilderness, in the cloud that filled Solomon's temple and visibly rested upon the Ark of the Covenant. (Ex. 40, 35; 1 Kings 8, 10.) From it spoke the Father Himself testifying to Christ's divine Sonship. The disciples had been greatly shocked by what Jesus had told them six days before — that He must suffer and be killed. Now from heaven the Father speaks, assuring them that Jesus is indeed the Messiah, and that they should listen to His voice, and to His voice only. Even if they could not understand, even if the things He said seemed to destroy all their hopes, they must be content to hear.

2. *Retell the story.*

3. *Read Peter's words, 2 Pet. 1, 16-18, in reference to this event.*

4. *Read the reference of John, in his Gospel, ch. 1 v. 14. In what respect did the Lord's revelation of His glory to Moses agree with that recorded here? Compare Exod. 33, 18, 19; 34, 5-7 with John 1, 14. ("Grace," "Truth".)*

#### 45. THE QUESTION ABOUT ELIJAH

Mark 9, 9-13

9. And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead. 10. And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.

11. And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come? 12. And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and (told them) how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought. 13. But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, (pleased) as it is written of him.

Verse 11 means: Since Jesus had forbidden the incident to be spoken of, why did the scribes seem to attach so much importance to the appearance of Elijah? Could the apostles not answer a leading objection to acceptance of Christ by saying that Elijah had come and that they had seen him? In His answer the Lord declares that Elijah indeed was to come first, as a prophet of restoration, converting the nation to God. But he was rejected by his people, and by killing John, Herod simply did what the scribes would have been glad to do. (Luke 7, 30.)

#### 46. AN EPILEPTIC HEALED

Mark 9, 14-29

14. And when he came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning (arguing) with them. 15. And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and run-

ning to him saluted (greeted) him. 16. And he asked the scribes, What question ye (What are you discussing) with them? 17. And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; 18. And wheresoever he taketh him, he tear-eth him; and foameth, and gnashed with his teeth, and pineth (wasteth) away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not. 19. He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer (have I to bear with) you? bring him unto me. 20. And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare (convulsed) him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed (rolled about) foaming.

21. And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, of a child (From childhood). 22. And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.

23. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. 24. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

25. When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge (command) thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. 26. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead.

27. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose. 28. And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? 29. And he said unto them, This kind (of evil spirit) can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

The scribes had taken advantage of Christ's absence to undermine His influence with the common people and their designs had been assisted by the failure of His disciples to heal a man afflicted with dumbness and convulsions, probably an epileptic possessed by an evil spirit. The cure of this man is described most vividly, so that we can imagine ourselves by-standers of the miracle as it occurred.

5. *Retell the story.*

6. *Question: Can you describe some of the symptoms found in various persons possessed of an evil spirit, as described in our Gospel?*

7. *Question: Why must we believe that the persons so described were really possessed of a devil, and were not simply epileptics or maniacs?*

Verse 23 may be read thus: "If thou canst"—I Believe. All things are possible to him that believeth." The father had said: "If thou canst" (preceding verse). Jesus replies: "You say: If I can! All you need is faith!"

8. *Explain verse 24.*

In order to understand verse 29, read the parallel account in Matthew (Matth. 17, 19-21) and 1 Pet. 5, 8-9. Devout prayer and a temperate, Christian life must be cultivated to overcome the assaults of Satan.

*Hymn: Christ, whose glory fills the skies (No. 100)  
or Jesus the very thought of Thee (No. 98).*



## 47. PREDICTION OF THE PASSION

Mark 9, 30-32

30. And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not (did not want) that any man should know it. 31. For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day. 32. But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.

The disciples thought only of the Passion of Christ, not of His resurrection, the allusion to which they did not in the least understand. Matthew records that this saying of Christ left the disciples in a state of deep dejection. They were now afraid that their worst fears would be realized.

## CLOSING DEVOTION

Hymn: To Thee, Lord Jesus, thanks we give (No. 193)  
or Jesus, grant that balm and healing (No. 194)

Closing Prayer. Benediction

## A WEEK'S BIBLE READING:

Sunday: Genesis 1, 1-25

Monday: Genesis 1, 26. Chap. 2, 3

Tuesday: Genesis 2, 4-17

Wednesday: Genesis 2, 18-25

Thursday: Genesis 3, 1-13

Friday: Genesis 3, 14-24

Saturday: Genesis 4, 1-8

## FOURTEENTH LESSON

Mark 9, 33—Chap. 10, 16

## OPENING DEVOTION

Hymn: Jesus, still lead on (No. 331)

Psalm 27. Prayer

## 48. THE CHILD IN THE MIDST

Mark 9, 33-37

33. And he came to Capernaum; and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed (argued) among yourselves by the way (while walking)? 34. But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest. 35. And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all. 36. And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, 37. Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me; and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

1. Read the parallel account in *Matth. 18, 1-5.*

The transfiguration had revived the hopes of the three leading apostles that the kingdom of Christ was about to be established as an earthly kingdom and it is probable that the disciples were divided into parties, advocating the fitness of Peter, James, or John to the position of Secretary of State or Prime Minister. The record of Matthew brings out the sharpness of Christ's rebuke. "Unless you are converted," He says. The disciples were disputing their rank and position in the kingdom; Jesus asserts that they had turned their backs on it altogether. Only by embracing humility, like a child, can anyone hope even to enter it. He adds the promise of reward for receiving "one such child." The disciples wanted to rule. Jesus gives them an example of service instead.

#### 49. ONE NOT CALLED WHO CASTS OUT DEVILS

Mark 9, 38-40

38. And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us; and we forbade him, because he followeth not us. 39. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly (would be apt to) speak evil of me. 40. For he that is not against us is on our part. 41. For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.

The man referred to was a private Christian who had not been called to the apostolic office. Hence he had received no definite commission from Christ to work miracles, as the apostles had. Nevertheless, he was casting out devils in Christ's name. The disciples forbade him but Jesus says that they ought to have welcomed his help, and that he, too, though not laboring in the ministry of the Word, was His true disciple and would not lose his reward.

*Hymn: Lord, lead the way my Savior went (No. 359).*

#### 50. ON OFFENCES

Mark 9, 42-50

42. And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

43. And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 44. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

45. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt (lame) into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 46. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

47. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: 48. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

49. For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. 50. Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltiness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

This is a very important and earnest discourse on offences. To offend in the Bible means to cause some one to sin. "These little ones" is a tender name for the disciples. Whoever causes a Christian to sin deserves to be drowned in the manner described. Drowning was a Roman punishment, reserved for crimes of peculiar atrociousness. The references to hand, foot, and eye are readily understood. Those who are seriously tempted should deprive themselves even of lawful pleasures which will lead to sinning. Certain amusements and certain kinds of reading, in themselves harmless, are to some occasions of sinning; such persons ought to avoid them altogether. Some will find friendships which they value so dangerous that they ought to give them up. This giving up of what is pleasant and possibly lawful, because it imperils our soul, is what our Lord means by plucking out the right eye and cutting off the right hand. All this applies with special emphasis to pleasures and occupations that are in themselves sinful. The risk that we run is to be cast into hell-fire,—and no one who reads this passage can deny that Jesus taught the reality of hell. "Worm," usually understood as signifying a gnawing remorse.

Verses 49 and 50 are difficult. We understand them to mean that every believer shall be "salted," that is, purified and prepared for heaven, by the "fire" of discipline, that is, by the struggles with his flesh, and the lust thereof, and with other afflictions and temptations. And "every sacrifice," that is, every person who presents himself, his soul and body, to be a reasonable, holy and living sacrifice to God, shall be "salted," that is, purified and prepared for heaven, by the salt of divine grace. This salt of divine grace is good, but if the grace given to you dies, owing to your neglect to use it, how will you revive it?

2. *Application.* Learn how terrible it is to become a cause that others fall and sin. Mention some sinful amusements that are a common cause of "stumbling" to Christians. What shall we say of books and newspaper articles that cause people to doubt the Bible? By "little ones" any disciple of Christ is meant; yet to cause little Christian children to sin, is an offence so terrible that the words of Christ apply with double force.

## 51. THE QUESTION OF DIVORCE

Mark 10, 1-12

1. And he arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judea by the farther side of Jordan: and the people resort unto him again; and, as he was wont, he taught them again.

2. And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away (divorce) his wife? tempting him. 3. And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? 4. And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement (to write out a separation notice) and to put her away. 5. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. 6. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. 7. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; 8. And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. 9. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.

10. And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter. 11. And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. 12. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

### 3. Read the parallel account *Matth. 19, 3-9.*

The time was now late summer of 28 A. D. Golgotha was less than six months distant. Jesus now left Galilee and entered what is generally called the Perea ministry, the scene of which was partly Perea beyond Jordan and partly Jerusalem and Judea. While Jesus was teaching the people the Pharisees try to entrap Him by a question about divorce. Undoubtedly they hoped to lead Him into some contradiction to the law of Moses which might form the basis of an accusation before the Great Council. The Jewish law permitted the husband to give his wife a bill of divorcement and this was a concession to the hardness of their hearts, their unwillingness to accept God's will in the matter of marriage, which is that those joined together in lawful wedlock should not be separated until death. In the more complete relation by Matthew, the Lord permits divorce for the reason of unfaithfulness, *Matthew 19, 9.*

## 52. THE BLESSING OF LITTLE CHILDREN

*Mark 10, 13-16*

13. And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. 14. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. 15. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. 16. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

The story has an important bearing on infant baptism. We find here the leading principles for this practise, since we observe, 1. That children, however young are capable of receiving divine grace (Christ blessed them at the request of the mothers); 2. Christ commands infants to be brought to Him, and we know of no way of bringing them except by baptism; 3. The kingdom of God is also for children, they need to enter into the covenant with God, and the only covenanted admission into that kingdom is by baptism, *John 3, 5.*

4. *Question: In which words does Jesus teach that implicit trust is necessary for entering his kingdom?*

## CLOSING DEVOTION

Hymn: I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus (No. 370)

Closing Prayer. Benediction

## A WEEK'S BIBLE READING

Sunday: Genesis 4, 9-26

Monday: Genesis 5, 1-32

Tuesday: Genesis 6, 1-8

Wednesday: Genesis 6, 9-22

Thursday: Genesis 7, 1-10

Friday: Genesis 7, 11-24

Saturday: Genesis 8, 1-14

## FIFTEENTH LESSON

Mark 10, 17-52

## OPENING DEVOTION

Hymn: Holy Ghost! with light divine (No. 259)

Psalm 112. Prayer

## 53. THE RICH YOUNG MAN

Mark 10, 17-22

17. And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? 18. And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God. 19. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honor thy father and mother. 20. And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. 21. Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatever thou hast, give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. 22. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved (sadly): for he had great possessions.

Luke calls the rich young man a ruler, either a member of the Great Council, or ruler of a synagogue. The incident is a striking example of the seductive power of wealth. The young man was so good, so near the kingdom of God, that Jesus "looked upon him and loved him"; and yet he failed, because though he loved the Kingdom much, he loved money more. By his answer (v. 20) he shows how little he knows his own heart; he was only repeating the boasting of his Pharisaical teachers.

The young man called Jesus good in the sense in which he would have called any eminent teacher good, whereupon our Lord pointedly remarks that only God is good. Is it not clear that Jesus claimed not only to be the Messiah, but God Himself? He would say: "If you call Me good in the same sense in which God is good I am willing to accept it, but if you call Me good only in a human sense, I reject it as insufficient." In spite of the fact that Christ was thus pointing the young man to the glories of the Kingdom in which God Himself rules, he was unwilling to give up the service of mammon, unwilling to know loss and trouble, and follow Christ, — "for he had great possessions."

1. Application: 1. It is easy enough to imagine oneself quite perfect while one puts a low, easy interpretation on the divine Law. But when one has seen the Law in all its lofty purity, in its demands of absolute perfection, he soon sees that He needs a Savior. But some find their hearts too much wedded to this world, to take upon themselves the cross of Jesus, suffering loss for His sake.

2. Application: 2. Many men are good and moral in their lives, and yet not Christians. They never take the final step that takes them through the Door to eternal life. Almost a Christian is not a Christian. Almost converted, is still lost. Love of a single sin has kept many out of the Kingdom of God.

3. *Application:* 3. Jesus saw this young man's lack. The test which He gave him was to give up that which stood between him and eternal life. He would not have been saved by giving his riches to the poor. But he would, not be a Christian until his idol was broken to pieces. So the only hope was to get him to give up his money and to yield up his heart to Christ. No men need more to be prayed for than those who are becoming prosperous, growing rich.

4. *Question:* Does this lesson mean that Christians must have no temporal possessions? Read what Paul says in one of his admonitions to the rich, 1 Tim. 6, 17-19.

## 54. THE PERILS OF RICHES

Mark 10, 23-27

23. And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

24. And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! 25. 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.

26. And they were astonished (exceeding) out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? 27. And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.

Some have said that the "eye of a needle" is a term applied to a small gate for foot-passengers, set at the side of the large city gates through which a camel would naturally pass. What Jesus means, is very clear. It is impossible, without the grace of God, for a rich man to enter heaven,—and the disciples, by their reply, show that they perceived the necessary conclusion which follows from our Lord's words, that our salvation depends entirely upon God's grace, and not in any sense upon the ability of man.

5. *Retell the story.*

## 55. THE REWARD OF DISCIPLESHIP — AND A WARNING

Mark 10, 28-31

28. Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. 29. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, 30. But he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. 31. But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.

6. *Read the parallel account Matthew 19, 27-30.*

For their temporal losses, the disciples will have a hundredfold return in spiritual blessings, including fellowship with the saints and angels, nor shall they lack anything that they need for this body and life. In the midst of a shower of blessings occurs a startling saying: "With persecutions!" Yet persecutions are often to a Christian the greatest blessing of all.

7. *Read Matth. 6, 33. "All these things" refers to the things which we need for the support of body and life.*

Thus the last shall be the first: The Galilean fishermen, unlearned, despised, should become the world's teachers of divine Truth, while their superiors in learning and authority, like the scribes and that rich young ruler, would be last, would have no place in the Kingdom of Christ. But the saying also contained a note of warning to the disciples, a warning not heeded by one of them — who went and betrayed His Lord.

## 56. THE PASSION PREDICTED

Mark 10, 32-34

32. And they were in (on) the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jews went before them: and they were amazed (dismayed); and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him, 33. Saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn (sentence) him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles: 34. And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him; and the third day he shall rise again.

This prophecy is remarkable for its detailed character. It mentions Christ's deliverance to the Romans, His mocking, scourging, and crucifixion, and His resurrection on the third day. Luke adds emphatically: "And they understood none of these things; and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken."

## 57. HUMILITY AND DISCIPLESHIP

Mark 10, 35-45

35. And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire. 36. And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do (What do you want me to do) for you? 37. They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory. 38. But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? 39. And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized. 40. But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared.

41. And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John. 42. But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. 43. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: 44. And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. 45. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered (served) unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

The incident is a painful one, coming as it does immediately after the warning in the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, directed against the spirit that looks for reward of merit, and coming so soon after the prediction of the Passion. Two of the disciples now came to Jesus claiming the most prominent of the twelve thrones promised to the

apostles (Matthew 19, 28). The right hand was the first place of honor, the left the second. The answer of our Lord teaches that only through much tribulation, by sharing the bitter cup of suffering with their Savior could they receive part of the future glory and dominion of their Master. That is the way to glory, though by suffering, heaven is by no means merited as a reward. The Father had from eternity prepared for them a share in the glory of Messiah's eternal reign, but while they were yet on earth theirs was the duty to exercise humility in the service of the brethren and of humanity. The last words are important as showing the importance which Jesus attached to His own death. It was to be a redemption price which, since men cannot pay for themselves, He pays for them, and releases them from the bondage of sin and death. "Many," as in the institution of the Lord's Supper, refers to all mankind, laying stress upon their multitude. That "many" refers to the entire human race is clear from Romans 5, 19.

8. *Question: In which church does the priesthood strive to exercise lordship?*

*Hymn: Jesus, I my cross have taken (No. 335, 1-2).*

## 58. BLIND BARTIMEUS

Mark 10, 46-52

46. And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimeus, the son of Timeus, sat by the highwayside begging. 47. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me. 48. And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. 49. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee. 50. And he, casting away his garment (cloak), rose, and came to Jesus. 51. And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. 52. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

9. *Read a similar narrative in Luke 18, 35-43.*

Mark and Luke mention only one blind man while Matthew mentions two; Luke says that the man was healed as Jesus was entering Jericho, not as He was leaving it. This is not a discrepancy. A very simple solution of the difficulty is that Mark and Luke refer to two different men, Luke's blind man being healed when Christ entered into Jericho and not when He was leaving it. Matthew gives the story of the two miracles in one, since the incidents were in all particulars the same. One miracle, then, was performed when Jesus entered Jericho, and the other, when He left it. In both cases the crowd which followed Jesus told the blind men to silence their cries. This was done out of respect to Jesus, lest He should be disturbed. The story is another lesson in persistence in prayer, and its answer. By "the way" at the end of the chapter, some see the term way applied to the Christian doctrine, as in Acts 9, 2; 22, 4. The expression would then mean that the blind man followed Jesus in the way of salvation, in Christian belief, recognizing in Him the promised Son of David.



## CLOSING DEVOTION

Hymn: Savior! I follow on, Guided by Thee (No. 337)

Closing Prayer. Benediction

## A WEEK'S BIBLE READING:

Sunday: Genesis 8, 15-22

Monday: Genesis 9, 1-7

Tuesday: Genesis 9, 8-29

Wednesday: Genesis 10, 1-32

Thursday: Genesis 11, 1-9

Friday: Genesis 11, 10-32

Saturday: Genesis 12, 1-9

## SIXTEENTH LESSON

Mark 11, 1—Chap. 12, 12

## OPENING DEVOTION

Hymn: O Lord, how shall I meet Thee (No. 136)

Psalm 24. Prayer

## 59. THE ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM

Mark 11, 1-11

1. And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples. 2. And saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring him (untether it and bring it here). 3. And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither.

4. And they went their way, and found the colt tied to the door without a place where two ways met; and they loose him. 5. And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt? 6. And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go.

7. And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him. 8. And many spread their garments in the way; and others cut down branches off the trees, and strewed them in the way. 9. And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: 10. Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.

11. And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went unto Bethany with the twelve.

1. More than a third of the entire Gospel narrative is occupied with the last week of Christ's life, commonly called Holy Week. By comparing the four Gospels we find that the events of Holy Week occurred as follows:

Saturday preceding Good Friday: Arrival at Bethany.

Palm Sunday: Triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Healings. Return to Bethany.

Monday: Another day spent in Jerusalem. Blasting of the fig tree. Cleansing of the temple. Return to Bethany.

Tuesday: Discussion and argument with Pharisees and Sadducees. The widow's mite. Great prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem and Judgment Day.

Wednesday: Spent in retirement at Bethany. In the evening probably the anointing.

Thursday: In the afternoon preparations for the Last Supper. In the evening the foot washing, institution of the Lord's Supper, and the discourses recorded John 13-17. Gethsemane.

Good Friday: About midnight Jesus was arrested. Trial before Annas. Jesus tried before the Great Council, about 4 A. M. Sent to Pilate, about 6 A. M. Crucified, 9 A. M. Darkness, 12 to 3 P. M. Death of Jesus, 3 P. M. Burial.

Easter Day: The resurrection. Visit of the women to the sepulcher. Visit of Peter and John. Appearance to Mary Magdalene. In the afternoon appearances to two disciples and to Peter. In the evening appearance to the apostles, except Thomas.

Jesus deliberately comes up to Jerusalem to encounter death. All evangelists lay stress upon Jesus' willingness to die, as the designed aim and end of His ministry. But lest His death appear as disproving His claim to be the Messiah, He deemed it proper to make the claim openly and accordingly made arrangements for an entry into Jerusalem such as the Messiah was expected to make. This entry into Jerusalem is the one gleam of light in the dark days that closed the Savior's ministry. The extraordinary enthusiasm with which He was received was partly owing to the raising of Lazarus, which had made a deep impression on the people. And so, He first came to Bethphage, perhaps a village of this name but sometimes used for the entire district around the walls of Jerusalem. The mount of Olives was a range of hills facing Jerusalem on the east. From there He sent out His disciples to provide Him an animal for His entry, in order that He might once more testify to the nation and to mankind that He was actually the Messiah promised by the Old Testament prophets. By riding upon the colt, Jesus deliberately fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah 9, 9, and so claimed to be the Messiah. That His followers spread their garments before Him was an extraordinary token of respect, such as was paid kings and great conquerors. "Hosanna to the Son of David" means "glory and honor to the Son of David."

## 60. THE CURSING OF THE FIG TREE

Mark 11, 12-14

12. And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry: 13. And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply (perhaps) he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. 14. And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it.

This is the only miracle of wrath worked by Jesus. Yet it is a revelation of God's mercy, for whereas the countless miracles of mercy were all wrought upon men, this miracle was wrought upon a tree, which is unconscious of suffering. The one fig tree, standing apart from all other trees, is the Jewish nation. It alone had leaves while the other trees were bare. This signifies that whereas Israel made great professions of righteousness, the heathen nations made none. But if leaves appear on a fig tree, ripe fruit may be expected. Hence the fault of the fig tree was not that it had no fruit (it was not to be expected in April) but that it pretended to have fruit and had none. The curse of perpetual barrenness pronounced by Jesus upon the fig tree, that is, upon Israel, has been fulfilled. There is no race among whom missionary work finds such few converts as among the Jews. The great majority have hardened their hearts against the Gospel.

## 61. CLEANSING THE TEMPLE

Mark 11, 15-19

15. And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves; 16. And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple. 17. And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.

18. And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine. 19. And when even was come, he went out of the city.

2. *Read a very similar incident John 2, 13-17.*

This cleansing of the temple is not the same as that described in John 2, 13. Both events are definitely dated by the evangelists. That described by John (2, 13) took place several years earlier, on the occasion of Christ's first visit to Jerusalem. The first was evidently a cleansing of Reformation, the second a cleansing of Judgment. The money-changers sat in the temple to receive the tribute which every male Israelite had to pay to the temple, and to change foreign money into Jewish currency. Animals for sacrifice had to be bought with Jewish money. The money-changers got a commission, but the bulk of their profits went to Annas, the high priest. Jesus cast out these money-grubbers and also prohibited the people from making a thoroughfare of the temple, carrying with them baskets, kettles, etc. From "all nations" (v. 17) it is clear that the Savior even as He was entering upon His great Passion knew that He was working out a redemption for all the world, whether Jew or Gentile.

## 62. FAITH AND PRAYER

Mark 11, 20-26

20. And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. 21. And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away. 22. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. 23. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he

shall have whatsoever he saith. 24. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. 25. And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. 26. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

This passage can only be understood when we note that our Lord's discussion of prayer begins with the words: "Have faith in God." This is the necessary condition of prayer. If we have faith, our prayers will be acceptable unto God and He will perform what seems to us incredible, yes, impossible, in reply to the cries of His children. He will perform miracles to preserve those who pray with undoubting faith.

### 3. *Read Acts 12, 5-11.*

This applies both to our spiritual and physical wants. If we pray for forgiveness, forgiveness is ours. But it must be a prayer of faith, the prayer of a Christian, and a Christian has no grudge against anyone who has offended or insulted him. (Consider the Fifth Petition.) As to our temporal needs, a Christian will not make any demands upon God, but will trust in the love and wisdom of God, hence will always say: "It is Thy will!"

*Hymn: How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord (No. 375, 1-3) \ or Jesus, my Truth, my Way (No. 373).*

## 63. CHRIST'S AUTHORITY

Mark 11, 27-33

27. And they come again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders, 28. And say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things? 29. And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. 30. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me. 31. And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him? 32. But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed. 33. And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

"By what authority," they asked. Jesus had not received ordination as a rabbi, hence had no authority to teach as a rabbi. What was His authority for teaching, for cleansing the temple, for His triumphal entry into the city, for His ministry in general? The question with which Jesus replied drew from them an evasive answer, unwilling to make a straight reply, they proved that they had been caught in their own words. By His last words to the elders, Jesus very clearly claimed the authority of a prophet, or an even higher authority.

## 64. THE PARABLE OF THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN

Mark 12, 1-12

1. And he began to speak unto them by parables. A certain man planted a vineyard, and set a hedge about it, and digged a place for the winefat (a trough for the winepress), and built a tower, and let it out

to husbandmen, and went into a far country. 2. And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard. And they caught him, and beat him, and sent him away empty. 4. And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled. 5. And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some. 6. Having yet therefore one son, his well beloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence (respect) my son. 7. But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours. 8. And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard. 9. What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others. 10. And have ye not read this Scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner: 11. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

12. And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people; for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and they left him, and went their way.

The householder is God. The vineyard is the people of the Jews planted by God in the land of promise. The hedge is the law, by which they were to remain separate from all nations. The tower is a watch-tower for the keepers who were set to guard the vineyard when the grapes were nearly ripe. It has no special significance in the parable. "They will reverence my son." An old church-father says: "This he said, not as if they would do so, for he knew they would not; but pointing out what they ought to do." In the following there is an allusion to the destruction of Jerusalem 70 A. D. and to the end of the Jewish nation. "The other husbandmen" are the ministers of the Christian Church who succeeded to the charge which the scribes and Pharisees had neglected. "The stone," of course, is Christ. "The builders" are the Jews. "The head of the corner" is the most important position in a building; Christ is the foundation upon which the Kingdom of God was to be built despite His rejection by the Jews.

4. Read *Ps. 118, 22, 23.*

### CLOSING DEVOTION

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

Closing Prayer. Benediction

### A WEEK'S BIBLE READING:

Sunday: Genesis 12, 10-20

Monday: Genesis 13, 1-18

Tuesday: Genesis 14, 1-12

Wednesday: Genesis 14, 13-24

Thursday: Genesis 15, 1-21

Friday: Genesis 16, 1-16

Saturday: Genesis 17, 1-14

## SEVENTEENTH LESSON

Mark 12, 13-37

## OPENING DEVOTION

Hymn: Swell the anthem, raise the song (No. 299)

or O Bless, Thou heav'nly Potentate (No. 300)

Psalm 112. Prayer

## 65. THE TRIBUTE MONEY

Mark 12, 13-17

13. And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in his words. 14. And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man; for thou regardest not the person of men (dost not seek human favor), but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not? 15. Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny (shilling), that I may see it. 16. And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Caesar's. 17. And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him.

The Great Council (Sanhedrin) of the Jews did not have the power of life and death; that was reserved for the Roman Governor, in this case, Pontius Pilate. The councilors now try to entrap Jesus into an answer which might be made the basis for an accusation of rebellion and treason. The Pharisees in this undertaking united themselves with the Herodians who were friendly to the Roman Government. They asked whether it is right to pay taxes to the Roman Emperor. The hypocrisy of the question appears in this that the Pharisees at heart sympathized with the revolutionary party which wanted to start a rebellion against Roman rule; yet they are plotting to put Jesus to death on a charge of supporting that policy! The coin which they showed Jesus bore the image of Emperor Tiberius.

1. Retell the story.

2. Application. Christ's answer teaches, 1. That loyalty to civil power is a duty binding on conscience. Christ says not only "give," but "render," signifying that submission is due. 2. Yet there are limits to the obedience due to government. When the emperor asks not for tribute but for worship, as actually happened at this time, he is to be resisted; if a state prescribes the religious worship of its subjects, obedience is not due. 3. Hence church and state are not one thing, but two, each with its peculiar powers, divinely given. All attempts to mix them, or to give one control over the other, are wrong. 4. Religious persecution is forbidden. The state has no right to enforce any particular religion, and the church has no right to use the power of the government to enforce its own laws and teachings.

3. Question 1: How do Protestant churches in our country mix church and state?

4. Question 2: Can you imagine a case in which you would have to refuse obedience to government?

## 66. THE SADDUCEES AND THE RESURRECTION

Mark 12, 18-27

18. Then come unto him the Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying, 19. Master, Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave his wife behind him, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed (offspring) unto his brother. 20. Now there were seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed (offspring). 21. And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed (offspring): and the third likewise. 22. And the seven had her, and left no seed (offspring): last of all the woman died also. 23. In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife.

24. And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God? 25. For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven. 26. And as touching the dead, that they rise; have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? 27. He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.

This was a less dangerous interview than the preceding. The Sadducees tried to bring Jesus into contempt among the people, by making him look ridiculous. They ask Him a question which they thought He could not answer. The reference is to Deut. 25, 5. They ask: If this woman was, in succession, the wife of seven men, whose wife will she be in the hereafter? The answer of Jesus to this implied denial of a resurrection is truly wonderful. His argument is: God calls Himself (Exodus 3, 6) the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; but God is not a God of the dead, but of the living, hence the dead have an immortal life, and though now in the grave will rise again. Hence the Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, and who tried to ridicule the doctrine by the question which they put, show their ignorance of the Scripture and of the power of God. Christ's answer also contains information regarding the life hereafter. The loved ones will meet in heaven, not in the former relations of blood, but in the closer union of the saints with their Redeemer.

5. *Question: Why is Christ's reference to the Old Testament passage to be regarded as proof of the verbal inspiration of the Bible?*

## 67. THE GREAT COMMANDMENT

Mark 12, 28-34

28. And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all

29. And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: 30. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment 31. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

32. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: 33. And to

love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

34. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly (intelligently), he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst (ventured to) ask him any question.

Since Christ commends the scribe as being not far from His Kingdom, it is probable that this question was not a tempting but an honest appeal for information from one who had heard the last answer with admiration. The First Commandment, as stated by Christ, is based on Deut. 6, 5, the Second, on Lev. 18, 18. Love is the summary of the divine Law. See also Rom. 13, 10. The scribe, by his reply, proved that he had grasped the spiritual meaning of the law; he recognized that the entire life of the believer must be a service of God, a worshipping in spirit and in truth, and that outward performance and service has no value if the heart is not right with God. But another step, and he would recognize his inability to obey the Law, and cast himself on the mercies of God. He was not far from Christ's Kingdom.

Notice the difference between the First and the Second Great Commandments: Our love to God must be greater than our love for father, mother, sister, brother, husband, wife, child, or friend. It must not fill our heart only, but our soul, our entire mind, and exercise all our strength, drawing all the powers of our life (time, talents, money) with it. God must be the Master of our life. Knowing how far we fall short of this ideal, we are led to daily repentance, seeking pardon through the perfect merits of Jesus Christ.

Love to our neighbors is a very important duty, but it avails nothing unless love to God is back of it and in it. Two comes after One. A good many people boast of their "good heart," their willingness to help others when in distress; but their works are done in self-righteousness. Where there is no faith in Christ, there is no true repentance, and where there is no repentance, there is no love of God, and without love of God nothing is pleasing to Him that men do for one another. Christ's answer was so convincing that it made an end of questioning.

6. Question: *Which of the Ten Commandments are summarized by the First Great Commandment; which by the Second?*

7. Read 1 John 4, 7-11.

Hymn: *Renew me, O eternal Light* (No. 350)  
or *Take my life, and let it be* (No. 355).

## 68. CHRIST DECLARES HIS DIVINITY

Mark 12, 35-37

35. And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the son of David? 36. For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. 37. David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he then his son? And the common people heard him gladly.

The question which Jesus here raises is: "Who is the Messiah? Who is the promised Redeemer of the world?" (Matth. 22, 42.) The scribes answer: "He is the son of David." This answer implies that the expected descendant of David, the Messiah, was to be a mere man. Jesus pro-



ceeds to show that their low view of the Messiah does not agree with the Scriptures. Quoting from Psalm 110, 1 He proves that this Son of David is also to be Son of God. "The Lord says to the Lord" — that is, to say, the Father speaks to the Son: — "Sit thou at my right hand."

8. *Relate the argument of Christ for His Divinity.*

9. *Questions: What important doctrine concerning the person of Jesus Christ is here taught? What proof for the inspiration of the Bible do we find in verse 36?*

### CLOSING DEVOTION

Hymn: All hail the power of Jesus' name! (No. 93)

Closing Prayer. Benediction

### A WEEK'S BIBLE READING:

Sunday: Genesis 17, 15-27

Monday: Genesis 18, 1-15

Tuesday: Genesis 18, 16-33

Wednesday: Genesis 19, 1-22

Thursday: Genesis 19, 23-38

Friday: Genesis 20, 1-18

Saturday: Genesis 21, 1-21

## EIGHTEENTH LESSON

Mark 12, 38—Chap. 13

### OPENING DEVOTION

Hymn: Let us ever walk with Jesus (No. 333)

or Come follow me, the Savior spake (No. 334)

Psalm 36. Prayer

### 69. WARNING AGAINST HYPOCRISY

Mark 12, 38-40

38. And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the market-places, 39. And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: 40. Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation.

The scribes enjoyed being called by honorary titles, like Rabbi (Matth. 23, 7), Master, Teacher, and to walk about in distinctive garb. They claimed the seats of honor at feasts, thus gratifying their vanity. And to their love of glory was added selfishness, which did not hesitate to rob the poor. Such hypocrisy will receive a terrible judgment on the Last Day.

1. *Question: Which Church to-day makes a practise of selling its intercessions for money? What doctrine, especially, is employed as a means of obtaining "widow's houses"?*

## 70. THE WIDOW'S MITE

Mark 12, 41-44

41. And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. 42. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. 43. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: 44. For all they did cast in of their abundance (surplus); but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.

There were in a court of the temple a number of chests for offerings, each being marked with the objects to which the offerings it received were to be devoted, — the temple expenses, sacrifices, sacred vessels, and so forth. The widow laid in two "mites," the smallest coin in circulation, each worth one-eighth of a cent. Yet, says our Lord, she cast in more than the rich; it was more in proportion to her means; indeed, all that she had.

2. *Retell the story.*

3. *Questions: Compare this story with the words of Paul 2 Cor. 9, 6, 7. What lesson does it contain for Christian giving? Why is no gift too great for the Kingdom of God? Read Rom. 8, 32.*

## 71. JESUS BEGINS A DISCOURSE ON JUDGMENT DAY

Mark 13, 1-8

1. And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here! 2. And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. 3. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, 4. Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?

5. And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any man deceive you: 6. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. 7. And when ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars, be ye not troubled: for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet. 8. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places (here and there), and there shall be famines and troubles: these are the beginnings of sorrows.

In this chapter is contained a great prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world. It was called forth by an exclamation of the disciples when they beheld the beauty of the temple from a distance: "What magnificent buildings! What immense stones. What wonderful decorations!" The temple was a complex of buildings planned by Herod and at this time not yet completed. With its great columns, its marble copings and golden ornaments it was one of the sights of the ancient world. Green and white marbles were used throughout the buildings, says the Jewish historian Josephus, and the front of the temple was covered with plates of gold which reflected back the sun in

fiery splendor. The parts of the exterior, where it was not covered with gold, were "exceedingly white, so that from a distance it looked like a mountain of snow." To the exclamation of the disciples the Savior replies: "Yes, see this building — not one stone will be left upon the other!" His prophecy was literally fulfilled. When Jerusalem was taken and destroyed by Titus in the year 70, he ordered the temple to be completely demolished, the entire superstructure being laid level with the ground.

Christ's remark made a deep impression on the disciples, and sitting with them on Mt. Olivet the same day, in full view of the temple, they ask Him when all this would happen. They ask for information on two subjects, the date of the destruction of the temple, and the signs that will precede His Second Advent (Matth. 24, 3). As He answers them, both events are in His mind's eye in the same instant and in speaking He makes no sharp distinction between the destruction of Jerusalem and His Second Coming. Yet He indicates that there will be an interval of time between the fall of Jerusalem and the Day of Judgment, as when He says that the Gospel must first be preached throughout the world.

His very first words are significant: "Take heed lest any man deceive you!" False Christs would come, deceivers claiming revelations from God and power to work miracles. Then He describes certain signs of the times which are to remind Christians of Judgment Day: Wars, earthquakes, famines.

4. *Question: Can you point out present day instances of this kind by which God has spoken of the Judgment to come? What would you answer those who say that these things are "perfectly natural"? Has God used other natural phenomena or occurrences as a Sign? Read Gen. 10, 12.*

*Hymn: We have a sure prophetic Word (No. 120)  
or Great God what do I see and hear (No. 553).*

## 72. THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL, A SIGN OF THE LATTER DAYS

Mark 13, 9-13

9. But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before the rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them. 10. And the gospel must first be published among all nations. 11. But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought (do not worry) beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost. 12. Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. 13. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure (hold out) unto the end, the same shall be saved.

5. *Read the parallel account Luke 21, 9-19.*

The time will come when Christians will be persecuted by the civil authorities, unbelievers will cause even Christian relatives to be sent to prison. Then it will happen that the very testimony of Christians, when questioned about their faith, will be "a testimony against them," that is, against their enemies; the speeches made in their own defense will be a powerful testimony to the truth. This really happened. The persecutions

greatly aided the spread of the Gospel through testimony (verse 11) of the martyrs. What wonderful evidence of the divine power of the Gospel! Nothing can overcome the Church that remains true to Christ's teachings. The gates of hell cannot prevail against it. Wherever the Gospel is preached, it rouses hatred; but those who remain true will in not a single instance lose their reward.

6. *Question: How shall we apply this passage when false prophets tell us that the last age of the Church (before Judgment Day) will be one of great glory and outward power, lasting a thousand years? Read also verses 19 and 20.*

### 73. FALSE PROPHETS A SIGN OF APPROACHING JUDGMENT

Mark 13, 14-23

14. But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains: 15. And let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his house: 16. And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment. 17. But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! 18. And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter. 19. For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be.

20. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days. 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 signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. 23. But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.

In obedience to this warning, the Christians who had remained in Jerusalem fled to the mountain village of Pella when the Romans were surrounding the city. "Let him that readeth, understand" — the Christians were to know that this siege against the city would end with its entire destruction and a massacre of its inhabitants. (Orientals spend much time on the roofs of their home. Verses 15 and 16 mean that they should flee without a moment's delay.) But the reference to Daniel shows that what applied to the Christians living in Jerusalem applies to the entire Gospel age. As Titus desecrated the temple, so Antichrist, the Roman papacy, would desecrate the spiritual temple, the Church. Through all the persecutions of the latter days the Lord will preserve His saints, and shorten the days of affliction whenever it is necessary for the preservation of His Church. All this has been fulfilled in the history of the Church. The persecutions under the Roman emperors in the first age of the Church (to about 300 A. D.) came in waves or periods, so that the Church was always able to recuperate. And when it seemed as if Antichrist was about to destroy all faith on earth, the days were again shortened through the deliverance wrought by Martin Luther. Even so the last great tribulations will be cut short through the coming of the Son of Man.

7. *Dan. 9, 27.*

**CLOSING DEVOTION**

Hymn: Lord Jesus Christ, with us abide (No. 110)

Closing Prayer. Benediction

**A WEEK'S BIBLE READING:**

Sunday: Genesis 21, 22-34

Monday: Genesis 22, 1-14

Tuesday: Genesis 22, 15-24

Wednesday: Genesis 23, 1-20

Thursday: Genesis 24, 1-28

Friday: Genesis 24, 29-51

Saturday: Genesis 24, 52-67

**NINETEENTH LESSON**

Mark 13, 24—Chap. 14, 9

**OPENING DEVOTION**

Hymn: The Bridegroom soon will call us (No. 134)

or O Lord, how shall I meet Thee (No. 136)

Psalm 5. Prayer

**74. THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN**

Mark 13, 24-31

24. But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, 25. And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. 26. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. 27. And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

28. Now learn a parable of the fig tree: When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near: 29. So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it (he) is nigh, even at the doors. 30. Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done. 31. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

The judgment upon Jerusalem is a type of the Last Judgment and in a certain sense is its beginning. "In those days," — the "latter days" so often referred to in Old Testament prophecy, the Gospel age which begins with Pentecost and ends with the Day of Judgment. The Savior, penetrating by his omniscience (all-knowing-ness) the far future, sees the terrible commotions which will precede His Coming. The entire universe will be shaken, and then the Savior will stand forth with His angels for the final Redemption of His children, gathered from all parts of the earth, and the Judgment of all nations. As a sign to all the world, "this generation," the Jewish people, shall remain on earth. Not one of the nations by which Israel was surrounded when this prophecy was uttered exists

today. But the Jews, though scattered over the entire surface of the globe, are still a distinct people. They do not amalgamate, they remain Jews—and will remain a distinct people until Jesus returns. Every Jew is a reminder of Judgment Day. This word of Christ has not passed away, nor will a single word which He uttered be ever successfully contradicted or found false, though heaven and earth pass away.

1. *Question: What comfort does this portion of our chapter contain for believing Christians? What warning does it contain? Read Zeph. 2, 3.*

## 75. "WATCH AND PRAY!"

Mark 13, 32-37

32. But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. 33. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. 34. For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. 35. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning. 36. Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. 37. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

1. *Read the parallel account Matthew 24, 36-42.*

Rightly to understand verse 32 we must understand that Jesus had two complete and perfect natures, the human and the divine. In His divine nature, He knew all things whatsoever, but in His human nature, while in the state of humiliation, He knew only such things as He willed to know. Since it was not expedient for the disciples, as it is not expedient for us to know the date of the Second Advent, so He willed to be ignorant of it. This declaration implies no limitation of Christ's divine nature. It really sets in a clear light what Scripture means when it says that Christ "took upon Him the form of a servant," divested Himself of the use of all divine attributes, also of His omniscience. If it served His ministry among men and our salvation, he employed these attributes, not otherwise. In this case it was not necessary or good for His believers to know what their curiosity, indeed, would like to discover, that is to say, the date of His return to Judgment. But Christ's will was in all things to do the will of His Father. When the Father willed to withhold from Him any of His designs, His will was to be ignorant. The Christian realizes that he is here face to face with a great mystery.

2. *Application. What folly, then, that people have in every age made attempts to figure out the Day of Judgment! They want to know more than the Father thought necessary for His Son to know while on earth!*

3. *Questions: To what danger does the last part of this section refer? How does this show in the lives of Christians? What means shall we use to retain an attitude of watchfulness?*

*Hymn: Ye servants of the Lord (No. 382).*

## 76. THE CONSPIRACY AGAINST CHRIST

Mark 14, 1-2

1. After two days was the feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death. 2. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar (a riot) of the people.

This fixes the date as Wednesday if, as is very probable, the Jewish Passover that year took place on Friday night. Matthew records that Christ's enemies met in the court or quadrangle of the residence of Caiaphas, high-priest at the time and son-in-law to Annas. Their fear of a riot was due to the presence of such a vast multitude of whom many had heard Jesus gladly.

4. *Question: Can you state some reasons why the leaders of the people wanted to put Christ to death? Which miracle brought matters to a head, so that they now were determined to put Him out of the way? Read John 11, 45-47.*

## 77. THE ANOINTING

Mark 14, 3-9

3. And being in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head. 4. And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? 5. For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her. 6. And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. 7. For ye have trouble the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. 8. She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying (has in advance anointed my body for burial). 9. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.

That Simon the leper was permitted to live in his house proves that he had been cured of his disease, very probably by our Lord. It was not uncommon to anoint guests at a banquet, but in the anointing of Christ by the woman of Bethany there was an unusual circumstance. The woman had used a very expensive ointment, an Indian perfume of which the quantity contained in a small vase was worth fifty dollars. Judas objected (John 12, 4, 5) and, quickly agreeing with him, some other disciples protested against this extravagance. We are told in another gospel that the reason Judas protested was because he was a thief, having embezzled funds from the money which people gave for the service of our Lord and which were entrusted to him as treasurer of the Twelve. This came out later, they did not know it at the time. He now had a craving for the price that might have been obtained for that ointment.

5. *Retell the story.*

6. *Question: What solemn warning does the fact that one of the Twelve had become a thief contain for us?*

Jesus rebuked His disciples and defended the action of the woman. Her act had been one of devotion, and had been prophetic of His death and burial. Wherever the Gospel would be preached, her devotion to Her Lord would be known and would become an inspiration for others to follow her example.

7. *Application. Let us not heed those who would discourage us from giving of our temporal goods for the service of Christ and His Gospel. Jesus is well pleased with such service. The woman of Bethany served Him in His days of humiliation; we have a risen Lord whose Gospel is preached throughout the world—shall we consider anything (money, time, labor) too precious*

*to offer for His service? Should we, who even as we study this lesson, experience a fulfilment of Christ's prophecy on this occasion, refuse to accept that Gospel, so confirmed to us?*

### CLOSING DEVOTION

Hymn: Jesus, the very thought of Thee (No. 98)  
Closing Prayer. Benediction

### A WEEK'S BIBLE READING:

Sunday: Genesis 25, 1-34  
Monday: Genesis 26, 1-16  
Tuesday: Genesis 26, 17-34  
Wednesday: Genesis 27, 1-29  
Thursday: Genesis 27, 30-46  
Friday: Genesis 28, 1-22  
Saturday: Genesis 29, 1-35

## TWENTIETH LESSON

Mark 14, 10-31

### OPENING DEVOTION

Hymn: Jesus, I will ponder now (No. 192)  
Psalm 92. Prayer

### 78. JUDAS SELLS HIS MASTER

Mark 14, 10-11

10. And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them. 11. And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought (a good opportunity) how he might conveniently betray him.

1. Read the parallel account John 12, 1-8.

The reprimand which Judas had received seems to have been the direct motive for his betrayal. But he had long traveled a downward path. He had one hidden fault, the love of money. Some people cannot understand that the love of money could have been the motive for his unutterably base act, yet Matthew distinctly says that he asked the chief priests: "What will you give me?" A hardened heart makes possible every crime. Yet it was not solely love of money but unbelief that led him to commit his crime. He knew Christ's power to work miracles, but he may like the Pharisees, have assigned them to an evil source; perhaps he argued that His power was gone, because He had of late been speaking of the humiliation that was awaiting Him. Then, instead of an earthly kingdom, in which Judas might have hoped to obtain a well-paying position, Christ had held forth the prospect of a Kingdom in which His disciples would be cross-bearers, hated of all men, — and there is no money in that. His former love was turned to hatred. In a frenzy of rage, smarting under the reprimand administered in Simon's house, disappointed in



His hopes of earthly glory, he commits the deed which has made his name a by-word for all time. Thirty pieces of silver — the price of a slave! What an example of the power of Satan over a heart which has turned away from Jesus Christ!

2. *Application.* Judas had been one of the Twelve, chosen to be witnesses to the Son of God to the end of time; he betrayed and sold his Master. There is no sin to which we are not liable if left to ourselves. You may have been chaste all our life, yet fall into uncleanness, true worshipers, yet fall into allegiance with devils, as in Spiritism, or into denial of every teaching of Christ, as in Christian Science. I look on the outcast of society, the jail-bird, and if I say "I shall never be one like that," he may yet take my place and I take his. "Watch and pray!"

## 79. PREPARATIONS FOR THE PASSOVER

Mark 14, 12-16

12. And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover (the Easter lamb), his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover? 13. And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. 14. And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman (owner) of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? 15. And he will shew you a large upper (upstairs) room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us. 16. And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

Receiving their directions at Bethany, the disciples went to Jerusalem, arranged for a room, then, according to the Jewish Easter custom, purchased the lamb, and took it up to the temple one hour after the evening sacrifice, when the priests were busy with the Passover sacrifices. One of them killed the lamb himself, its blood being caught by one of the priests and poured out at the foot of the altar. They then took the lamb to the house that had been secured, made arrangements to have it roasted, and to have the other dishes, prescribed in the law of Moses, prepared. With nightfall the Feast of the Passover began.

3. *Question:* When was the Feast of the Passover instituted? Read *Exod. 12, 3-17.* Of Whom was the Paschal lamb a type? Read *1 Cor. 5, 7.*

## 80. THE INSTITUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Mark 14, 17-25

17. And in the evening he cometh with the twelve. 18. And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me shall betray me. 19. And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, Is it I and another said, Is it I? 20. And he answered and said unto them, It is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish. 21. The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born.

22. And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. 23. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. 24. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new

testament, which is shed for many. 25. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

Incredible as it may seem, the traitor met with our Lord and the disciples for the eating of the Passover lamb. Conscience within him was dead. After they had partaken of the bread and of the roasted lamb, Jesus announced with deep emotion that one of the trusted Twelve would betray Him. His words are a reference to Psalm 41, 9. The apostles are thrown into confusion, — "Is it I?" Before this, at the footwashing reported by John, Jesus had intimated that there was a hypocrite among them. He had said: "Ye are clean, but not all." But the meaning of this expression became clear to them only later, and it does not appear that any one suspected Judas Iscariot. No doubt the traitor stood high in their estimation. Was he not a called apostle, had he not preached Christ and worked miracles in His name, healed the sick, cast out devils? Most skillfully he had concealed his change of heart, and at the moment when his diabolical purpose was settled, he, too, asked: "Is it I?"

4. *Question: What argument suggests itself to you as an answer to those who do not want to join the church "because there are so many hypocrites in it"?*

In the questioning of the disciples we note a tone of humility which may be traced to the lesson which Christ had given them a few moments before, when they were debating which should be the greatest in His Kingdom. They ask: "Is it I?" The man who says: "There is no fear of my falling; I am too experienced, too well grounded, I have too strong a Christian character," has already fallen.

Jesus gave the traitor a last warning by means of a sign which proved that He knew of his purpose. He said, the one that would (accidentally, as it were) dip with Him into the dish of sauce which was one of the prescribed parts of the Paschal meal, is the betrayer. But in the excitement this significant fact seems not to have been noticed. What a solemn warning He utters, while dipping into the sauce: The Savior would go His appointed way, but woe to the betrayer! The power which the love of money has over heart cannot be better illustrated than by the fact that Judas held out even after this appeal and warning.

Next is told the institution of the Sacrament of the Altar, called also the Lord's Supper, Holy Communion, or the Eucharist. The covenant was ushered in which God established by the sacrifice of His Son. Jesus here says in plain words that He regards His death as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. This is the great, central doctrine of the Christian religion. Here it is bound up with a sacramental act, the eating of Christ's true body, the drinking of His blood, given in, with, and under the bread and the wine. As the celebration of the first Passover gave to Israel faith and strength for the crossing of the Red Sea, so the Lord's Supper is for us a strengthening food upon our pilgrimage, being a visible, tangible token of the Father's love and the Son's sacrifice. As such it points forward to the eternal marriage supper of the Lamb (v. 25).

For His disciples the institution of the Sacrament was of special importance at this time. Jesus knew that this little flock would be tried and tempted as they had never been before. It was often a hard struggle to be true to their profession of faith while His presence was still assuring

them; now, they will be left alone. Christ desires to soothe, comfort, warn, fortify and encourage them, hence at this time he addressed to them the wonderful words of counsel and comfort which John records in his gospel, chapters 14-16, and spoke his high-priestly prayer, John chapter 17.

5. Question 1: *In which gospels is the institution of the Lord's Supper related, and in which epistle? See marginal references to verse 22.*

6. Question 2: *What are the words of institution which make this sacrament a means of grace?*

7. Question 3: *At which times especially shall we partake of Communion?*

Hymn: *Lo, upon the altar lies (No. 433)*  
*or Thy table I approach (No. 430).*

## 81. PETER'S DENIAL FORETOLD

Mark 14, 26-31

26. And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives. 27. And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. 28. But after that I am risen I will go before you into Galilee. 29. But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I. 30. And Jesus saith unto him, Verily, say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. 31. But he spake the more vehemently (persisted): If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.

Here the disciples are told that even they would, under the influence of fear and terror, lose confidence and hope in Jesus. The quotation is from Zech. 13, 7 and brings out with utmost clearness that it was God who laid upon Jesus the sins of the world. The Son willingly took upon Himself the curse for our sins, that we might be righteous before God. In the following we note again the presumption of Peter, who, conscious of his infirmities should have said: "I know that through my weakness this may easily happen; nevertheless, I trust to Thy goodness and mercy to save me." But he regarded neither the weakness of his own flesh nor the truth of his Master's word.

8. Application. *Have you ever known your best friends to go back on you? If you have, you will say that there are few sorrows in life as great as this. Yet Jesus, being true man, felt just this sorrow as He looked about on His disciples and saw one that would betray Him, another who would deny Him, and the rest fly hither and thither like frightened sheep, all faith in Him cast to the winds. First it was the rejection by His people in Nazareth. Then, the turning away of many disciples, who thereafter walked no more with Him (John 6, 66); and now He must become a stone of stumbling to His own Twelve! In this there is comfort for us, since we know, when we undergo bitter experiences, that we have a Brother in heaven who passed through the same; and where we have hurt and slighted others, possibly become false to our own, our best friends, He has atoned for this sin through the anguish which He felt when He said: "You shall all be offended in Me!"*

## CLOSING DEVOTION

Hymn: *My soul, be on thy guard (No. 379)*

Closing Prayer. Benediction

## A WEEK'S BIBLE READING:

Sunday: Genesis 30, 1-24

Monday: Genesis 30, 25-43

Tuesday: Genesis 31, 1-35

Wednesday: Genesis 31, 36-55

Thursday: Genesis 32, 1-23

Friday: Genesis 32, 24-32

Saturday: Genesis 33, 1-20

## TWENTY-FIRST LESSON

Mark 14, 32-72

## OPENING DEVOTION

Hymn: Lord of my life, Whose tender care (No. 18)

Psalm 86. Prayer

## 82. THE AGONY IN GETHSEMANE

Mark 14, 32-42

32. And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. 33. And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy (filled with fear and trembling), 34. And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch. 35. And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. 36. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt.

37. And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour? 38. Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak. 39. And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words. 40. And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither wist they (did they know) what to answer him.

41. And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42. Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

1. *Read the parallel account John 22, 39-46.*

During the conversations which followed the institution of the Lord's Supper, they had reached a little garden on the western slope of the Mount of Olives, the place calleth Gethsemane, which means "olive-press." Eight of His disciples remained without; they were to sit down at the entrance and pray. The three who had been, in a human sense, His best friends, accompanied Him into the garden. Gethsemane is still shown to visitors,

3. *Questions: From which incident related in these verses may we rightly conclude that Jesus does not want physical force employed for the defense of His truth? What Sword has He given His Church for that purpose? Read Eph. 6, 17. Is the force of government to-day being employed by some for the enforcement of what they hold to be Bible teachings?*

## 84. TRIAL AND CONVICTION OF JESUS BY THE GREAT COUNCIL

Mark 14, 53-65

53. And they led Jesus away to the high priest: and with him were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes. 54. And Peter followed him afar off, even into the palace of the high priest: and he sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire.

55. And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death; and found none. 56. For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together. 57. And there rose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying, 58. We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands. 59. But neither so did their witness (evidence) agree together.

60. And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? 61. But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? 62. And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. 63. Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? 64. Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death.

65. And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophecy: and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands.

John records a preliminary hearing which took place before Annas. It is omitted here, since it led to nothing. Notices must have been sent out, as the band started out to arrest Jesus, calling a special meeting of the Great Council. (This council, called the Sanhedrin, consisted of 71 judges, and was the religious court of the Jews.) This meeting now took place in the house of the high-priest. The time of the trial was about 4 a. m. Meanwhile Peter had obtained entrance to the palace, and he stood in the court where the soldiers had built a fire to drive away the chill of the April night.

4. *Question: You know how this boldness turned out for Peter. Have Christians good reason to avoid the intimate contact with worldlings? Can you illustrate "warming one's self at the fire" of the world in our own day?*

The farcical trial, in which accusers, judges and executioners were one, proceeds. Read John 2, 19 and note how the lying witnesses twisted the words of Christ. At that, they did not agree. Jesus is silent. If Caiaphas had even then stepped down from his throne, and the priests had knelt in repentance, saying, "Oh Christ, our hearts are hard to Thee, we have despised Thee, — but have mercy on us!" — what would He have

a small enclosure surrounded by a high wall, in it some venerable olive trees which, while probably not the same trees as stood there in Christ's time, may well be descendants of these. Here, then, took place that mysterious agony which the evangelists so movingly describe. The realization of the whole world's sins broke upon Christ, He felt the curse for them all; He was made sin for us. United with this fearful realization of divine anger, Jesus suffered what those suffer who are about to be led to the scaffold for a terrible crime. Our mind cannot fathom the intensity of this agony, no words can describe it. Farther and farther into the loneliness of the garden Jesus went, desperately He struggled, but His will was still in harmony with the will of His Father. It was this willingness that made perfect the obedience of Christ and gave His sufferings such value that God, for the sake of them, can forgive the world's sins.

### 83. JESUS MADE CAPTIVE

Mark 14, 43-52

43. And immediately, while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude (mob), with swords and staves (clubs), from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. 44. And he that betrayed him had given them a token (signal), saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him, and lead him away safely. 45. And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, Master, Master; and kissed him.

46. And they laid their hands on him, and took him. 47. And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. 48. And Jesus answered and said unto them, Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and with staves to take me? 49. I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not: but the Scriptures must be fulfilled. 50. And they all forsook him, and fled.

51. And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him: 52. And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.

The band of soldiers was drawn from the Roman garrison which was stationed in the fortress Antonia, near the temple. A "band" or cohort numbered about 600 men. Perhaps the Great Council of the Jews hoped to arrest Christ with all His disciples and thus put an end to the spread of His teachings. On former occasions, Jesus had passed right through His enemies when they tried to apprehend Him; this big crowd of armed men was to prevent that. On the disgusting hypocrisy of the traitor, in his act of betrayal, we will not dwell. The "Judas-kiss" has passed as a proverb into all languages. Enraged by the dastardly act of Judas, and remembering his promise to die with Christ, if necessary, Peter begins to lay about him with his sword. But Christ puts a stop to that, — read the account in John 18, 10-11. More than that, He says that these things must come to pass, He must be surrendered to the power of His enemies, — and at this the faith of the disciples went down in ruin; panic-stricken, they flee. At this point Mark relates an incident found only in his gospel, that of the young man who, evidently aroused from his bed by the noise of the arrest, had come to see what was the matter. It is often supposed by modern interpreters that this man was Mark himself.

2. *Retell the story.*

3. *Questions: From which incident related in these verses may we rightly conclude that Jesus does not want physical force employed for the defense of His truth? What Sword has He given His Church for that purpose? Read Eph. 6, 17. Is the force of government to-day being employed by some for the enforcement of what they hold to be Bible teachings?*

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4. *Question: You know how this boldness turned out for Peter. Have Christians good reason to avoid the intimate contact with worldlings? Can you illustrate "warming one's self at the fire" of the world in our own day?*

The farcical trial, in which accusers, judges and executioners were one, proceeds. Read John 2, 19 and note how the lying witnesses twisted the words of Christ. At that, they did not agree. Jesus is silent. If Caiaphas had even then stepped down from his throne, and the priests had knelt in repentance, saying, "Oh Christ, our hearts are hard to Thee, we have despised Thee, — but have mercy on us!" — what would He have

done? The question needs no answer. To ask of Christ is to receive. But their hearts were like a stone. Did they not remember the picture of the suffering Messiah, Isa. 53, 7, here fulfilled? When the trial seemed doomed to failure, owing to lack of evidence, the high-priest asks Jesus the direct question, whether He is the Messiah. Looking closely, we observe that he asks, whether Jesus claimed to be the **divine** Messiah. And Jesus says, Yes. This is one of the most important saying of our Lord, and one of the greatest texts of the Bible.

Jesus was either an impostor, or He was God. The Jews condemned Him as an impostor, and crucified Him. **But He rose again.** How will they be filled with terror when they see Him coming in the clouds of heaven!

5. Read Isa. 50, 6 and note how accurate was the fulfilment.

## 85. PETER'S DENIAL

Mark 14, 66-72

66. And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids (maidservants) of the high priest: 67. And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth. 68. But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch; and the cock crew (crowed). 69. And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is one of them. 70. And he denied it again. And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto. 71. But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak. 72. And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.

When the maid of the high-priest, probably a janitress or door-keeper, addressed Peter, he feigned lack of understanding. Uneasy in conscience he left the court-yard and went into the shadow of the door-way. Another maid points him out as a follower of the man under arrest. Peter denied any connection with Jesus, but as he spoke, they noticed his Galilean dialect, and they say, — "We can tell by your accent that you are a Galilean; you are a follower of Jesus, undoubtedly!" Then Peter with cursing and swearing denied any knowledge of Christ a third time. Then the cock crowed, and in that instant, says Luke, Jesus cast a look on Peter which went right to his heart. He recognized his sin, and with tears of repentance left the palace of the court.

6. Application. An old writer makes this comment: "Thou hast seen Peter's sin, see also his repentance. For to this very end were the sins and the repentances of the saints written, that whenever we sin, we may imitate their repentance. And Peter was allowed to fall not only for the reason mentioned, but also that he might learn to make allowances for those that stumble, knowing from his own experience what human weakness is."

7. Question 1: How was Peter restored to his apostleship? Read John 21, 15-17.

8. Question 2: Judas went and hanged himself. Both Peter and Judas suffered remorse after their fall; but what was lacking in the case of Judas? Read 1 Peter 2, 21-25.



**CLOSING DEVOTION**

Hymn: In the hour of trial (No. 409)

or Let me be Thine forever (No. 408)

Closing Prayer. Benediction

**A WEEK'S BIBLE READING:**

Sunday: Genesis 34, 1-31

Monday: Genesis 35, 1-15

Tuesday: Genesis 35, 16-29

Wednesday: Genesis 36, 1-43

Thursday: Genesis 37, 1-11

Friday: Genesis 37, 12-36

Saturday: Genesis 38, 1-30

**TWENTY-SECOND LESSON**

Mark 15, 1-28

**OPENING DEVOTION**

Hymn: In the cross of Christ I glory (No. 95)

Psalm 16. Prayer

**86. THE TRIAL BEFORE PILATE**

Mark 15, 1-14

1. And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate. 2. And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering said unto him, Thou sayest it. 3. And the chief priests accused him of many things; but he answered nothing. 4. And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee. 5. But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled (was astonished).

6. Now at that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired. 7. And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with them, who had committed murder in the insurrection. 8. And the multitude crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them. 9. But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews? 10. For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for (out of) envy. 11. But the chief priests moved the people (stirred up the crowd), that he should rather release Barabbas unto them.

12. And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews? 13. And they cried out again, Crucify him. 14. Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him.

Pilate was at this time governor of Judea, an office which he held by appointment from the Roman Emperor. He was, a few years after the crucifixion, summoned to Rome to answer certain charges made against

him, and was banished to France, where he is said to have committed suicide. The Roman governor resided generally at Caesarea, a Mediterranean port, but came to Jerusalem at Passover time to keep order. The Jews could not lawfully execute Jesus without the consent of Pilate. But the Roman official would not consider any purely religious accusation against Jesus, hence the charge was altered to one of treason.

The trial took place in the official residence of Pilate, and the judgment seat was in the open air. Jesus was held captive within the building, which Pilate more than once entered in order to confer with Jesus privately. The exact charges brought against Christ are mentioned by Luke (Chap. 23, 2. 5. 14). He was accused of stirring up rebellion against Caesar, refusing to pay taxes, and professing to be Christ or King. In the face of all these bitter accusations, Jesus observed a majestic silence, not uttering so much as a word. He knew that Pilate could not fail to note that the enmity of the Jews was grounded in jealousy. By this silence Jesus once more fulfilled the Scriptures. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, not resisting, exerting no power in His own defense, though omnipotence was His; because He was laying down His life for us. Jesus answered nothing, but "committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously." He left His name, His life, and the whole matter of His vindication to His Heavenly Father. There is no spot now on His name, though He died as a malefactor.

The evangelist pictures the trial for us in vivid colors. Before the tribunal of Pilate, the surging mob, among whom the high priests are circulating, keeping the excitement at its highest pitch; the Governor passing back and forth from the prison to the platform, trying to find some way out of the difficulty, yet in fear of the mob that was demanding the life of their King. He offers them the choice between Jesus and a fierce criminal, Barabbas, who had been a rebel chief and was now under arrest for murder. Helplessly he asks: "What then shall I do with Him whom you call your King?" In a new outburst of fury, they demand for Him the most cruel form of execution then customary, — crucifixion.

1. *Application.* "What then shall I do unto Him whom ye call the King of the Jews?" Pilate's question is a question which every one of us must answer—we must do something with Jesus. We must take Him to our hearts, to the highest place of love and honor, or we must reject Him. What shall we do with Him? Before everyone of us He stands waiting at our door, and we must ask and answer this very question, "What shall I do with Jesus?" He comes to us in every gentle and gracious way—to be our Savior, our Friend, our Lord, our Guide, and we must either accept Him or reject Him. We may postpone our answer, but delay does not rid us of the question—it only pushes it forward, and when we go on a little we shall meet it again. Not accepting is really rejecting, and, therefore, while we think we have not answered the question, we really have answered it. We should think seriously what the rejection of Christ involves. We know what it involved for Pilate. What will it involve for us? Would we crucify Him afresh?

Pilate now went through the farce of washing his hands before the rulers, saying that he was not responsible (Matth. 27, 24). But the stain upon his soul no water could wash off; the brand of dishonor marks his name with an immortality of shame. The lesson is for us. We all have our opportunity to stand for truth and right. What shall we do with Jesus who is called the Christ?

2. *Question: How does the case of Pilate apply to those who try to be neutral in matters of Christianity?*

## 87. THE SCOURGING AND THE MOCKERY

Mark 15, 15-19

15. And so Pilate, willing to content (satisfy) the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.

16. And the soldiers led him away into the hall (hall of justice), called Pretorium (courtyard); and they call together the whole band (regiment). 17. And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head, 18. And began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews! 19. And they smote him on the head with a reed (stick), and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him.

The whole band, numbering about 600 men, were now gathered around Jesus, making sport of Him. They draped about Him a purple robe, an emblem of royalty. The rod was to represent a scepter. The scourging (beating with a knotted whip) was done by Pilate in order to awaken the pity of the mob and thus gain the release of a prisoner upon whom he looked with superstitious awe. Yet it was also the first part of the agony of the crucifixion itself, a fitting introduction to the indignities invented by the garrison and to the cruelty of the crowning with thorns.

*Hymn: O bleeding Head, and wounded (No. 201, 1-4).*

## 88. THE CRUCIFIXION

Mark 15, 20-28

20. And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him. 21. And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross.

22. And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull. 23. And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not.

24. And when they had crucified him, they parted (distributed) his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take. 25. And it was the third hour, and they crucified him. 26. And the superscription of his accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS. 27. And with him they crucify two thieves (robbers); the one on his right hand, and the other on his left. 28. And the Scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.

Crucifixion was not a Jewish punishment. It originated among the Phœnicians, from whom it passed to the Romans. It was regarded as the most horrible form of punishment, and the most degrading one, fit only for slaves. The cross consisted of two pieces, a strong stake or pole eight or nine feet high, which was fixed in the ground, and a movable cross-piece, which was carried by the criminal to the place of execution. Before him went a herald bearing a tablet on which the offense was inscribed. The crosspiece was fastened to the upright pole after the criminal had been nailed upon it.

That Simon had been working in the fields is another indication that the Feast of the Passover had not yet begun, and thus helps us fix the date of the crucifixion. Simon was probably a Jew living in Jerusalem,

but born at Cyrene in Libya (Northern Africa) where there were many Jews. The names Alexander and Rufus occur only here in the Gospels. They were clearly Christians well known in the Roman Church for which our Gospel was composed. Rufus is probably the Rufus of Romans 16, 13, where he is called "chosen in the Lord." Who Alexander was, is unknown.

Jesus was crucified on Golgotha (an Aramaic word), the same as Calvary (from the Latin Calvaria), which means "a skull." The place received its name either because it was a place of execution, or from being an eminence shaped like a skull. In reading the story of the crucifixion it is necessary to note that both hands **and feet** were pierced. The absurdity of the claim made by infidels that Jesus was not really dead is clear: How could a man whose feet had been pierced with a spike have left the tomb to appear to the apostles?

The wine mixed with myrrh or gall was given to the condemned one to deaden the sensibilities. But Jesus refused the mixture; He wanted to endure His sufferings with clear consciousness and thus endure the agony to the utmost. He would not seek to lessen in any way the bitterness of the cup which His father had given Him to drink.

Next we see the executioners casting lots for Christ's garments. The coat was, according to the account of John, made a separate stake since it could not be divided. Gambling for that seamless robe, which trembling hands had touched in faith to find healing!

3. *There is a suggestion in this stripping off of Christ's garments. He hung naked on the cross that we may stand in the final judgment arrayed in robes of beauty. Those soldiers went about after that day wearing Christ's clothes; if we are saved we are wearing the robes of righteousness made by His obedience and suffering.*

Our Gospel notes the exact hour of the crucifixion, the third hour after sunrise, nine o'clock in the morning. Thus and then it was that the Son of God by His free will and consent was hanged to the accursed tree, Gal. 3, 13; thus was the Lord of glory (1 Cor. 2, 8) crucified like a criminal, the divine chastisement of our sins being laid upon Him that we might have peace.

Observe that the Savior was treated, in all respects, as one dying the slave's death. He was not shown the least lenity; the whole ritual of humiliation was observed. He was not even put to death as other Jews. Had it not been that they sought to protract His suffering, He would probably have been stoned to death; for this was the kind of death prescribed by the Levitical law for those condemned as blasphemers. So, the presence of these soldiers bespoke the national degradation of Israel! To humble Jesus, they were willing to parade their subjection to Rome by slaying Him as one of the most wicked of the slaves of Rome would have been.

#### 4. *Read Isaiah 53, 3-6.*

The title was written according to Roman custom on a block of white wood and was in this case affixed to the cross. The chief priests regarded Pilate's title as intended to insult the Jews by insinuating that a fitting ruler for such a nation was a condemned criminal; as if he would say, "You Jews are always starting rebellions because you want a king; well, here is a king for you; a king hanging on a cross!" And, how strange, — though Pilate had been vacillating enough during the trial, he stubbornly insisted that his inscription remain on the cross despite the request of the scribes and elders that it be removed. And now we note

how exactly the Old Testament prophecies were being fulfilled; two criminals were crucified, one on either side of Jesus, thus placing Him on a level with the veriest outcasts of humanity.

5. *Read Isaiah 53, 12.*

*Hymn: Beloved Jesus, what law hast Thou broken (No. 198, 1-4).*

### CLOSING DEVOTION

**Hymn: There is a fountain filled with blood (No. 200)**

**Closing Prayer. Benediction**

### A WEEK'S BIBLE READING:

Sunday: Genesis 39, 1-20

Monday: Genesis 39, 21-40—Chap. 23

Tuesday: Genesis 41, 1-14

Wednesday: Genesis 41, 15-41

Thursday: Genesis 41, 42-57

Friday: Genesis 42, 1-10

Saturday: Genesis 42, 21-38

## TWENTY-THIRD LESSON

Mark 15, 29-47

### OPENING DEVOTION

**Hymn: Thy life was giv'n for me (No. 352)**

**• or Savior; Thy dying love (No. 353)**

**Psalm 129. Prayer**

### 89. HOW JESUS DIED

Mark 15, 29-38

29. And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, 30. Save thyself, and come down from the cross. 31. Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save. 32. Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled (denounced) him.

33. And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? 35. And some of them that stood by, when they heard it said, Behold, he calleth Elias. 36. And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone (Come on); let us see whether Elias will come to take him down.

37. And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. 38. And the vail of the temple was rent in twain (two) from the top to the bottom.

Another prophecy is fulfilled, spoken in the 22 Psalm, v. 7. 8. 13, concerning the sufferings of the Savior, by the mockery which was heaped upon the crucified One by the people that passed by, especially by the high

priests (who, for once, did not consider it below their dignity to move among the common rabble!). "Thou that destroyest the temple," — they called upon Him to perform what He was actually about to do, for "the temple" was His body (John 2, 21). "He saved others; Himself He cannot save." Probably many in the crowd knew by the healing of their dear ones how true it was that He had saved others; but none guessed that in order to save them from eternal death, He would not spare Himself the death on the cross. Faithful Servant of Jehovah! "Obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Even the bandits on His right and left sides chimed in with the mockery, though after a while one of these turned to Christ with a petition for pardon, having repented of this and the many other sins of his wild life.

1. *What a picture! Thus hung on the accursed tree the King of the Jews — the Messiah who had been promised through all the centuries, longed for, prayed for, waited for. He was the King of whom David was the type. He had fulfilled all the Messianic predictions of the Old Testament. On one of the other crosses we see dying penitence. Few are the words we hear, but they are enough to show us the proofs of true regeneration in this man who not until the last hour repented and sought for mercy. On the other cross we see dying impenitence. This man saw Jesus, heard His prayer, listened to the words of His companion, and yet was lost. So one may be close to the Savior and yet perish. Men sometimes say, "I will take the chance of the thief on the cross." Yes, but which? for there were two.*

The darkness was another miracle, since the theory of an eclipse is impossible as the moon was at the full. This darkness veiled the intensest part of our Lord's passion. A jesting, hard-hearted crowd were thus pronounced unworthy to witness His last agony. The Father drew near as His Son was about to drain the bitter cup of its last dregs, and as truly separated Him from His taunting enemies as if the cross had been removed to the remotest solitudes of the desert. Thus the Scripture was fulfilled, that He should "tread the winepress alone." (Is. 63, 3.)

2. *Think of the effect of this darkness throughout the land. The interrupted meals, the travelers benighted at noon, the Temple service suspended. Did men turn their thoughts to Calvary, remembering that the Nazarene is being crucified? Think of its effects at Golgotha. Now conscience stings like an adder! Men convulsively clutch each other's hands, fearing vengeance will visit them. One hour has passed. All is still dark. There they stand breathless, hearing nothing but the groans and cries of those crucified. Two hours have gone; the third is passing, as they consider what they may expect when the light returns. At length the sun shines out again. All darkness flees, and the blessed Angel of Victory comes crowning Messiah's dying head.*

"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" We never can understand this cry. We learn here a little more of the infinite cost of our redemption. Then let us never forget that it is because death was so terrible to Him that we can look upon dying as simply passing through a valley of shadows with divine companionship. He "tasted death for every man." He endured death's awful bitterness, that we may die in sweet peace. These words are a cry of the human nature of Jesus, which alone could suffer desertion, when He experienced the bitterness of death. Upon the cross Jesus was making atonement for the sins of the world, "bearing our sins in His own body on the tree," for upon Him was laid "the iniquity of us all." He was so closely identified with the race which He came to save, that He felt the entire burden of its sin, and cried as a representative of humanity, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken My?"

Jesus died voluntarily. He "yielded" up the spirit, read John 10, 18. The death of Jesus took place at 3 P. M. The Easter lambs were still being sacrificed in the Temple when the Lamb of God laid down His life to take away the sins of the world.

*Hymn: O darkest woe! (No. 215, 1-4.)*

Two veils, a cubit (18 inches) apart, hung before the Holy of Holies. Both were rent. The meaning of this event is clear. The old covenant was at an end, the sacrifices abolished, even the Holy of Holies being now made common ground, opened to the feet of all, since all believers are priests before God. Undoubtedly the rending of the veil indicates the removing of the barrier between heaven and earth, a reconciling of God and man through the death of Christ.

3. *The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews must have had this rent veil in his mind when he wrote, "Having therefore, brethren, liberty to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus; by a new and living way, which He hath now made, through the veil, let us draw near with a true heart." Through Christ's death we have fellowship with God. As John said, "Our fellowship is with the Father." Now, prayer, confession, praise, are the simple utterance of the childlike heart to the Father; for, in consequence of Christ's death, we receive the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, "Abba, Father." It reminds us of the means whereby we can approach the Mercy-seat. Heb. 10, 20, "Through the veil, that is His flesh." The veil signified His flesh, which was rent and torn. Behold Jesus, then, in His sore extremity. See Him in mortal agony, and learn by Him that we have access to God. He is our propitiation: but for His death we must have remained in a state of alienation and ignorance. "By His stripes we are healed."*

4. *Shall the Lord suffer in vain as far as you are concerned? As you see Him die, you may also see God's mercy, just as the first thing the priest saw after the rending of the veil was the Mercy-seat. Oh, glorious passion! Oh, wondrous darkness, introducing us to the light of eternal love!*

## 90. THE WITNESSES

Mark 15, 39-41

39. And when the centurion (army captain) which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God. 40. There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome; 41. Who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto (waited on) him; and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem.

The death of Jesus was not a defeat but a victory, as was clear to every spectator. The Roman officer who had charge of the soldiers at the cross may easily have heard accounts of the Messiah expected by the Jews. At any rate, when Jesus died with such strong crying, like no man had ever died, his eyes were opened and he did not hesitate to confess, Truly this man was the Son of God. Thus did Christ even in His suffering and death gain adherents, — a condemned criminal and a Roman officer.

At some distance stood the women who had been in the company of Christ's disciples, ministering to His needs. Mary Magdalene means Mary the native of Magdala, a town near Tiberias. Salome is called by Matthew the mother of Zebedee's children. Our Gospel omits all mention of the presence of the mother of Jesus; it is probable that she had already been led away by John, to whose care Jesus had commended her.

## 91. THE BURIAL OF JESUS

Mark 15, 42-47

42. And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, 43. Joseph of Arimathea, an honorable counsellor (a counsellor of good position), which also waited (who himself was on the outlook) for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved (asked for) the body of Jesus. 44. And Pilate marvelled if he were (was surprised that he was) already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while (some time) dead. 45. And when he knew it (had ascertained it) of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.

46. And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone (boulder) unto the door of the sepulchre 47. And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Josès beheld (noted) where he was laid.

The burial of Jesus in a tomb of a wealthy and influential man was again a literal fulfilment of ancient prophecy. Isaiah had foretold that He would be "with the rich in His death" (Is. 53, 9). Joseph, according to Luke, was a member of the Great Council who had not consented to the death of Jesus. John records that he was assisted by Nicodemus, who had come to Jesus by night. Matthew mentions that the tomb belonged to Joseph.

## CLOSING DEVOTION

Hymn: Lord Jesus, who, our souls to save (No. 217)  
or Stricken, smitten and afflicted (No. 209)

Closing Prayer. Benediction

## A WEEK'S BIBLE READING:

Sunday: Genesis 43, 1-23

Monday: Genesis 43, 24-34

Tuesday: Genesis 44, 1-34

Wednesday: Genesis 45, 1-15

Thursday: Genesis 45, 16-28

Friday: Genesis 46, 1-25

Saturday: Genesis 46, 26-34

## TWENTY-FOURTH LESSON

Mark 16, 1-20

## OPENING DEVOTION

Hymn: Crown Him with many crowns (No. 104, 1-3)

Psalm 98. Prayer

## 92. THE WOMEN AT THE TOMB

Mark 16, 1-8

1. And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. 2. And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. 3. And



they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? 4. And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great. 5. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted (bewildered). 6. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. 7. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. 8. And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed (beside themselves), neither said they any thing to any man: for they were afraid.

Now Jesus had met the last enemy and apparently had been defeated by him. Death had carried Him down into the prison of darkness and had shut the door upon Him. If He had not risen, that would have been the end. If He were not able to overcome death, He could not be the world's Redeemer. All our hopes, all the hopes of the world, waited outside that sealed door to see if Jesus would come again.

1. *Christ rose early in the morning, e'er men had arisen from their beds to their sins and sorrows. What painter could depict the first journey out into the world from His tomb! But though the painter throws his pencil aside, and cannot attempt the task, faith and love do always behold Him! We see Him as He goes forth from the cave-tomb, just as the sun casts his first beam on the sepulchre. He walks on as star after star loses itself in the flood of sunlight—as if they said, "Now that Christ is risen, all who went before Him, Moses and the prophets, are eclipsed: they were, like we, God's stars, shining in the world's night; but now the day has dawned, we disappear."*

Let us turn to the resurrection story as told by the evangelists. Each evangelist tells a portion of the story and by comparing their accounts, the visits of the women on Easter morning are not very difficult to arrange in order. 1. Mary Magdalene and the other women visit the tomb immediately after the resurrection, and see one angel, or two. 2. She runs at once to Peter and John, who were probably alone at Peter's house, and thus misses the appearance of Christ to the women recorded by Matthew. 3. The other women returning more leisurely are met by Christ Himself, and report what they have seen to the other apostles. 4. Mary returns to the tomb, and after the departure of Peter and John, sees Jesus in the garden. Other arrangements of the events are also possible.

During our Lord's sojourn on earth devout women had attached themselves to the company of His disciples and provided for His wants. We have seen them among the witnesses of His crucifixion and His death and have seen them linger by the lifeless body until it was laid in the grave. Even then their love had not completed its task. It remained for them to finish the burial rites which had been so hastily performed by Nicodemus and Joseph and which had been cut short by the sunset with which the Jewish sabbath commenced. Hence we see them in the garden immediately after sunrise. They are laden with fragrant preparations to wrap about to the body of the slain Teacher and Friend. Then followed the interview with the angel who was the first on earth to utter the wonderful message: "He is risen!" The women are instructed to inform the disciples "and Peter." An ancient Christian writer says: "If the angel had not named Peter, he would not have dared to come amongst the disciples. Therefore he is specially named, lest he should despair on account of his denial. It was evidently intended as a special message of comfort to Peter."

## 93. JESUS APPEARS TO THE DISCIPLES

Mark 16, 9-18

9. Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. 10. And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. 11. And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.

12. After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country. 13. And they went and told it unto the residue (rest): neither believed they them.

14. Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. 15. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. 17. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues. 18. They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

That evening two lone pilgrims are walking towards the village of Emmaus seven miles distant from Jerusalem. They are glad to escape from town, since their Lord has been crucified, all their hopes dashed and their fond expectations disappointed. What was there in Jerusalem to interest them now? All that had been dearest to them there was to all appearance gone forever, for their Lord and Master was no more. They walked and talked, forgetting the lapse of time. They comment on the visit of the women to the grave and the vision of the angels, and if a gleam of hope fell into the darkness of their minds, the story, told more fully by Luke than in Mark, contains no reference to it; with the death of Christ all their hope for the Messianic Kingdom was gone. A third traveler overtakes them, joins their company, opens the Scriptures, then disappears, — it was the Lord!

*Hymn: Where wilt Thou go (No. 227).*

Nothing so strangely affects us in the reading of the Easter story as the unbelief of the disciples. Grief was one explanation (v. 10); they were still prostrate with the anguish that had crushed their hearts. Then, they were utterly disappointed, — "We trusted that it had been He who should have redeemed Israel." They had looked for a kingdom, and behold, their King was crucified. But while we can assign reasons for the unbelief of the disciples, they were none the less blamable. Did they not remember the witness borne to Him by the Father at the Baptism and the Transfiguration? Had the Lord not in express words foretold His death and had said that He would rise on the third day? Did they not have the prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the exaltation of the Redeemer? Jesus Himself reproached them for having missed the point of the Messianic prophecies (Luke 24, 25, 26).

What Christ's messengers could not do, He did Himself. When He appeared to His disciples their conversion from disbelief to faith was instantaneous. There was no further questioning, no further sadness. For a moment "they believed not for joy," but immediately they passed from doubt to confidence. And ever after the apostles were witnesses of the resurrection, and spoke boldly of what their eyes had seen, their ears had heard, their hands had handled. And the Lord confirmed their message, as he had promised, by signs and miracles.

2. *Well might the disciples rejoice in the resurrection of their Lord! If Christ is not raised our faith is vain. If Jesus remained in the grave, He was not only deluded Himself but had deluded His trusting disciples. Then Christianity is shaken to its foundations and there is no hope of a blessed life beyond the grave. There is, indeed, in that case, no assurance that the world has been redeemed, no demonstration that our sins are atoned for. "But now hath Christ been raised from the dead." Read 1 Cor. 15, 14-20, 54-57.*

3. *We rejoice in the resurrection: —*

1. *For it is the seal and proof of Christ's Messiahship. It furnishes proof that He is the beloved Son of the Father—for "God raised Him from the dead!"*

2. *It is the evidence that His crucifixion satisfied all the claims of justice. We are redeemed.*

3. *It is the guarantee of our own resurrection on the Last Day. There was a time when to touch the dead, or the place where they had lain, was defilement; but through Christ, the risen Lord, death ceases to be revolting or dreadful.*

4. *When these holy women had gazed and wondered, they rose quickly and went to the place where they had expected to meet Christ. Even so let us rise from this contemplation to go to the living Lord; for He lives for us — He is with us — no dry relic, or doubtful traditions, He Himself.*

5. *We should get here a lesson of comfort for our own hearts when we stand by the graves of our Christian dead. The body of our loved one may be in the grave, but the friend we knew and loved is not there — he is with the Lord. Speaking of believers who are departed, Paul says they are "absent from the body," "at home with the Lord." Jesus rose, and so shall all who sleep in Him rise. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him."*

In close connection with the resurrection of Christ, and as an incident of one of His appearances to the disciples, is mentioned the commission which Christ entrusted to His Church. Why had the Son of God become man, why had He fulfilled the ministry of humiliation, endured the deepest woes and had died a shameful death? Surely not that after His departure from this earth all things might be as before. The glad tidings of salvation should be made known to all men. The Gospel message was to be proclaimed by the apostles, indeed, but not by them only; the commission is given by our Lord to all the disciples who were gathered with Him at various times during the forty days after Good Friday. The missionary call is extended to the entire Church, all Christians are entrusted with the great commission. Not an order of men, the clergy, but the whole Church receives this sacred trust. It is our business, after we have become believers in Christ, to become witnesses of Him to those who have not seen Him. It is not said, "Go and bear witness," but, "Go and be witnesses." The testimony is not to be merely words — it must also be in the life.

## 94. THE ASCENSION

Mark 16, 19-20

19. So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. 20. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

And so our Lord is exalted at last and sitteth at the right hand of the Father Almighty, from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. No more is He walking this earth in feebleness and submitting to the insults of the wicked. His days of toil, of hunger, of weariness are over. No more must He wage contests with hypocrites and guard against the snares of crafty enemies. He has been despised and rejected of men, has been overwhelmed with the baptism of suffering and has drunk to the dregs the bitter cup of woe. But all this is past and over, He now enters upon His eternal possession. He is received up in heaven and sits down at the right hand of God. What is meant by this expression? The right hand of a sovereign was considered the position of honor and authority. When our Savior is pictured as at the right hand of God, we are to understand that He, the God-Man, our brother, is now given all authority in heaven and on earth. He has resumed the use of every divine attribute. But though Jesus is exalted high above the heavens He has not lost any of His interest in this world, nor has He withdrawn His hands from the work of redemption. He ever lives in heaven to make intercession for us. His merits plead for us eternally.

4. Surely, as we gaze up into the heavens, thinking of our risen Lord, painful thoughts of our sins against Him must arise in our minds. Still He bears with us, and comforts us by His spiritual grace—sending His Spirit into our hearts, admonishing us to “Seek those things which are above,” leaving “the things which are behind.”

He went as a forerunner. He had told His disciples this. And not only so; but also that He would descend and bear them company to the home He had prepared. For He said, “I will come again and receive you unto Myself; that where I am there ye may be also”; and, lest sorrow should blind their eyes to the truth, He sent His angels to remind them of it. Acts 1, 10. 11. Let us remember, He is as much our forerunner as theirs. Already He has prepared the mansion for each faithful disciple: and speaking to every loving, longing heart, His voice is heard, saying, “Lo, I come quickly.”

He departs to heaven that we may follow Him there, and in thought and feeling dwell with Him above the world. “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.”

### CLOSING DEVOTION

Hymn: Jesus shall reign wher'er the sun (No. 483, 1-3)

Closing Prayer. Benediction

#### A WEEK'S BIBLE READING:

Sunday: Genesis 47, 1-12

Monday: Genesis 47, 13-20

Tuesday: Genesis 47, 21-31

Wednesday: Genesis 48, 1-22

Thursday: Genesis 49, 1-33

Friday: Genesis 50, 1-14

Saturday: Genesis 50, 15-26



## OPENING PRAYERS

O Holy Spirit, Sanctifier and Comforter, visit us, we pray Thee, with Thy love and favor, enlighten our minds more and more with the light of Thy everlasting Gospel, graft into our hearts a love of Thy truth, increase in us true religion, enable us heartily to choose that good part which shall not be taken away from us, nourish us with all goodness, and of Thy great mercy preserve us unto the heavenly kingdom, O blessed Spirit, whom, with the Father and the Son together, we worship and glorify as one God, world without end. Amen.

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Lord, our God, Thou Lover of mankind, we humbly beseech Thee, enlighten and instruct us by Thy Word in the true knowledge of Thee and Thy will. Teach us Thy precepts and judgments, and let our hearts be occupied in Thy Law day and night. Confirm us in true faith, and number us with Thy flock. Vouchsafe unto us the garment of incorruption, cleanse us from all pollution of flesh and spirit, and let Thy Holy Spirit dwell in us, that all our coming in and going out may please Thee, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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Eternal and ever-blessed God, who art the Author of our life and the End of our pilgrimage, we beseech Thee so to guide us by Thy Word and Spirit amid all perils and temptations that we may not wander from Thy way, but may finish our course in safety, and come to our eternal rest in Thee through the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

## CLOSING PRAYERS

Blessed Lord, who hast caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and apply them, that by patience and comfort of Thy Holy Word we may embrace, and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which Thou hast given us in our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

O almighty God, whom to know is everlasting life, grant us perfectly to know Thy Son Jesus Christ to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life, that following His steps, we may steadfastly walk in the way that leadeth to eternal life; through the same Thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who hast given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness through the glorious revelation of the Gospel, cause Thy Word to dwell in us richly, we beseech Thee, and fill us with the knowledge of Thy will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that we may know our sin, and Thy Son as the Savior from sin, and may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever, one God, world without end. Amen.

Lord God, Heavenly Father, we pray Thee so to govern and guide us by Thy Holy Spirit that we may with all our heart hear and receive Thy Word, and truly sanctify the Lord's Day, to the end that we may, in turn, be sanctified by Thy Word, that we may rest all our confidence and hope on Jesus Christ, Thy Son, amend our lives in accordance with Thy Word, and avoid every offense, until we shall, by Thy grace in Christ, be saved forever through the same, Thy Son. We ask it in His name. Amen.

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven: Hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil; For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

## BENEDICTION

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with us all. Amen.

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