

[From the New York Observer.]

INTERNATIONAL S. S. LESSONS.

BY REV. E. P. ROGERS.

FEBRUARY 1.

TRUE DISCIPLES.

MATT. 5:1-16.

GOLDEN TEXT,—"Ye are the light of the world."—Matt. 5:14.

Central Truth:—The blessedness of believers.

More than a year had now passed since our Lord began his public ministry. During that time he had wrought his first miracle in Cana of Galilee: had celebrated his first Passover at Jerusalem, and had held his remarkable interview with Nicodemus, who sought his counsel at night; had held the striking conversation with the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well; had gone through many parts of Galilee; had miraculously healed the nobleman's son; had been rejected by the people at Nazareth, and removed to Capernium; had worked the miracle of the draught of fishes, and called Peter, James, John, and Levi, the publican, to be disciples; had worked many other miracles, among them that at Bethesda, and the healing of the paretic's hand Capernium; and had called the twelve Apostles, to whom the famous "Sermon on the Mount" was preached.

This discourse may be called a sort of inaugural sermon for the twelve, to whom in company with other disciples, it was first preached.

The place where it was delivered was a hill a little west of the Sea of Galilee, less than a hundred feet in height, with two summits called the "horns of Hattin," from the village of Hattin, which was near by. It had a smooth and level spot on the top, where a company could be easily accommodated, and stood in the midst of a fertile and beautiful region.

The discourse was spoken for the special instruction of the twelve Apostles, though many others probably listened to its teachings. Our Lord had spent the preceding night in prayer, and in the morning he called, each by name, the twelve humble Galileans who were to be his companions and friends, the preachers of his gospel and the chief counsellors in his kingdom.

The Church has immortalized these men as "the glorious company of the Apostles," and they well deserve such honorable remembrance. But at this time they were only a company of simple-minded believers, with crude ideas of that kingdom of which they were to be the leaders, and to human eyes poorly equipped for the great work which was now to be committed to them. But God has always chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the mighty, committing the treasures of the gospels to "earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power" might be his alone.

To those chosen ones gathered before him on the hill of Hattin, the Great Teacher proceeded to address his matchless discourse. It was his first public manifesto: the first announcement of the principles of the new kingdom which he was to set up on the earth. He declares what are the orders of nobility in that kingdom, and a glance at these convinces us that his kingdom is indeed "not of this world." The blessed ones, the honored ones in that kingdom, are not the rich, the mighty, the prosperous, and the complacent, but they are the poor, the sorrowful, the meek, the hungry and thirsting after goodness, the merciful, the pure, the peacemakers, the persecuted for righteousness' sake.

These are not the signs of popularity with the world. They describe character rather than condition. They mark the development of an inward work of grace in logical connection and progressive stages. They set forth a style of character utterly

antagonistic to that which the world praises. The world has its own "Beatitudes," but they are not these. These have in themselves their own reward. They who possess them are not merely promised blessedness in the future; they are declared to be already blessed in the present.

This "Sermon on the Mount" may be considered as a true description and definition of Christian discipleship and of the felicity of those who possess and manifest these traits. They are said to be "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world." They keep it pure and they furnish it with illumination.

Religion gives a healthy tone to the moral atmosphere, and preserves society from decay. It enlitenes and adorns all life, and makes every faithful Christian a beneficent power among men. It is not only the lofty or the learned who are its best examples. "A little child, a meek maiden, a humble laborer, may be as true a bearer of the savor and the radiance of Jesus Christ, as an anointed priest before the altar, or an ordained preacher in the pulpit." (Dykes.)

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. There is a natural and logical order in the development of true Christian character.

A man in poor spirit, under a sense of moral unworthiness, will be a mourner over his sinfulness, and such mourning will lead to meekness. This will naturally awaken strong desire like hunger and thirst, after real spiritual goodness. A sense of one's own need of mercy will lead to a merciful spirit towards others. Purity or sincerity of heart will naturally follow the preceding steps, and a sense of the blessedness of communion with God will lead the believer to desire that all his fellow-men shall be at peace with God. If his efforts to promote this, subject him to persecution, he is able to endure it and glorify God in it.

2. God has spoken to men from three mountains, Sinai, Hattin and Calvary.

The utterances of each are individually significant, yet strangely concordant. We are taught the majesty and purity of the Law, the value of the Atonement, and the blessedness of the justified believer. Sinai is needful for our first teaching, Calvary for our second lesson, and the "Sermon on the Mount" completes the instruction by which "we are made wise unto salvation."

3. To be poor in spirit is by no means to be mean in spirit.

That which is base by nature is not made noble by religion.

4. Meekness is not cowardice. Never be afraid to do right. "The righteous is bold as a lion."

5. There is a hunger and thirst of the soul as well as the body.

God can satisfy the one as well as the other. "Man cannot live by bread alone." Christ is "the living bread which came down from heaven."

6. To obtain mercy we must be ready to show mercy.

7. A pure and holy God cannot look upon sin, save with abhorrence.

But a believing and forgiven sinner is permitted to see God.

8. First, purity; then, peace.

9. Those who are canonized in Christ's kingdom must be willing to be canonized for Christ's kingdom. **R.T.B**

10. Nothing is more worthless than savorless salt, except a Christian who has a name to live and is dead.

11. Christians are the light of the world.

But light and lightning are not the same thing. The flash and fulmination of the one is a different thing from the illumination of the other. Far sweeter and more precious is the serene and steady radiance of the star, than the glare of the meteor, which blazes and startles and passes away!

True faith leads the soul to Christ under every calamity.

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Aug. 30

N. TIDD.

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aug26

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Text Book Uniformity.

RESULT WHERE BOOKS HAVE TO STAND ON THEIR OWN MERIT.

At a Convention of School Directors, of Centre County, held a Bellefonte, December 26, 1878, pursuant to the call of H. Meyer, Esq., County Superintendent, for the purpose of considering the propriety of taking measures to secure a uniformity of the text-books used in the schools of said county, the following action was taken, over fifty directors being present and nearly all the district in the county being represented:

COPY OF MINUTES.

Upon motion of C. P. Stonerod, of Snow Shoe township, the following preamble and resolutions were adopted:

WHEREAS: Great expense and waste are frequently incurred by the present and constantly changing variety of text-books used in the common schools of Centre county, therefore, be it

Resolved, By the representative directors here in session, that a system of text-books, suitable, complete and uniform, be adopted in accordance with the laws of the State, throughout the county.

Upon motion of J. C. P. Jones, the following plan was adopted with but one dissenting vote, to carry into effect the following preamble and resolutions:

First. The various publishing houses to send samples of their books to each school board in the county for examination and to submit therewith the lowest exchange, introductory and wholesale prices, and the length of time they will guarantee to furnish them at said price.

Second. No agent of any publishing house to be permitted to do any work in the county, to be either general or local agent, beyond sending his books and terms as above stated. Any house or agent violating this understanding, their books to be counted out of the contest.

Third. The several school boards of the county, after examination of the various books which may have been submitted, to hold a meeting at which each director shall make out a list of the books which he prefers to have adopted in the county, and send it to Henry Meyer, Esq., County Superintendent, at Rebersburg, Pa., prior to the first day of June, 1879, who shall make several statements so sent, and the books upon the various branches having the highest number of votes or preference shall be the series recommended for county uniformity.

The County Superintendent, after having made the above canvass as above, to send the result of the same to each of the papers in the county for publication.

W. C. HEINLE, Chairman.

J. C. P. JONES, Secretary.

The following is the result of the votes of the Directors of Centre county, Pa., on the uniformity of Text-books in said county, with the number of votes cast for each book, under the foregoing plan and resolutions:

Table with columns: READERS, SPELLERS, GEOGRAPHIES, HISTORIES, MENTAL ARITHMETIC, ALGEBRA, COPY BOOKS, GRAMMARS, LANGUAGE LESSONS, BOOK-KEEPING, CIVIL GOVERNMENT. Includes sub-headers like 'and all' and 'HONORABLY DISCHARGED SOLDIERS'.