

Bible Lessons



**"Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,
we are CHANGED" II Cor. 3:18**

ADULTS — YOUNG PEOPLE

**Volume 19, No. 3
July, Aug., Sept.
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Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

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Volume 19

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Theme for Third Quarter, 1987

For our studies in this series of lessons we will take up the various topics of the teachings of Jesus, given during His earthly ministry, from the Bible. We draw from the writers of the New Testament Gospels, namely, from Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. We believe that the teachings of Jesus make up the foundation of our faith and hope in God. He speaks with the highest authority that has ever been given to man. No man ever spake like this Man. We are persuaded to believe that the teachings of Jesus, when rightly and properly understood and obeyed, will bring the greatest satisfaction and success to our lives in this short time world, and will bring us to the desired haven in eternity in His loving presence. As He said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away." Mark 13:31. He also stated that "the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." John 6:63b. We will begin with the Sermon on the Mount recorded in the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of Matthew. Then we will endeavor to formulate lessons from other places where He taught wise and profitable lessons. We recently enjoyed a series of lessons on the various incidents in His life, but now we will concentrate on what He taught during His earthly life. May the inspiration of the Almighty accompany these lessons and bless our feeble efforts to bring out that which will be a help to us along life's way. —Brother Leslie C. Busbee

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July 5, 1987

CHRIST'S DISCIPLES THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Matt. 5:1 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be trodden under foot of men.

14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.

15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Memory Verse: Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion. Isaiah 8:18.

Central Thought: Those who qualify to be accepted of the Lord because of their faith, humility, willingness and submission to Him are declared to be the preserving element of this time world and the means of enlightening other souls that they come in contact with.

Word Definitions: *Poor in spirit:* Confessing publicly one's destitute and needy condition as a beggar or pauper. *Mourn:* To grieve or to be sorrowful. *Meek:* Mild, gentle, humble. *They shall inherit the earth:* That is, the land.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching, preaching, and healing. His fame went out through all the country and they brought their sick and diseased and devil possessed to Him and He healed them. Great multitudes followed Him "from Galilee, and from Decapolis (a ten-city region), and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan." Matt. 4:23-25. The world was ripe for a harvest of souls. Satan was entrenched in the minds, souls, and bodies of poor humanity. They needed healing, they needed salvation, and they were in darkness, sorely needing light and counsel. But Jesus knew

that not everyone was in a condition to receive and understand the teaching that He had for them, and that they needed so much. He must gather to Himself those who would be willing to follow Him and be His disciples. It was to these men who would be separated unto Himself, given to Him by His Father, that the main thrust of His teachings would be directed. Thus, seeing the multitudes and realizing that He needed to give special instruction to His disciples, He withdrew up into a mountain: and when He was set, His disciples came unto Him; and He opened His mouth, and taught them" How we need to sit at the feet of Jesus today and hear what words He speaks! While the world rushes on in its mad pursuit of earthly pleasure and wealth, we need to be still and let the words of Jesus sink into our hearts and minds. While the religious world rocks and reels in division and strife, we need to come back to the plain, simple teachings of our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount. As Whittier put it: "Ye see the curse that over-broods a world of sin and loss; I hear our Lord's beatitudes and prayer upon the cross."

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of picture do you have in your mind of a person who is all that these first 11 verses portray?
2. What are some of the qualities and dispositions that one might have which would hinder these things from being a reality in one's life?
3. Can you relate each requirement with the reward that is correspondingly promised?
4. Will one who is poor in spirit be covetous, demanding, or selfish?
5. What are some of the things that need to be mourned for and about?
6. How really interested is a truly meek person in being able to literally possess this fleeting earth?
7. What is the spiritual meaning to the thought: "they shall inherit the earth"?
8. Do these things have anything to do with being persecuted?
9. In what way are the children of God the salt of the earth and what is the savour that we must always have?
10. What makes the disciples of Jesus as a light shining out like a city on a hill?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Jesus is stating plain and undeniable facts. The poor in spirit, the meek, those who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, and the pure in heart,—all these will stand out in contrast to the selfish, vain, and proud society among which they live. It is only these kind of people who are true recipients of the Lord and His grace. This is part of the repentance and disposition of heart that one must come to for the salvation of Christ to take effect. To be poor in spirit is to be the opposite of proud. To mourn is to be at variance with the pleasure-mad throng. To be meek is to differ from the carnal and striving spirit of humanity. To hunger and thirst after righteousness sets one off from the passions and appetites of the fleshly and the carnal minded. Being merciful is not going to blend with the cold, legalistic society of this world. All these, along with being peacemakers, will set us at variance with the world around. Thus we shall be the salt of the earth, the preserving element of this time world, holding back the dark clouds of the wrath of God that hover above us! We need to keep the savour of the Holy Spirit richly abiding in our hearts at all times. Salt is also a seasoning grace. Our words and conversation must be seasoned with love and the grace of God, making attractive our profession of Him. There we stand on the mountain of the holiness of the Lord. As the Church of God, we will stand out and be noticed without shame. Jesus knew that His children would be a spectacle before the world! Lest our hearts faint, let us remember that we are called for this purpose to shine the light of His way around us as we pass through this life.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The song, "Let the Lower Lights Be Burning" has an interesting history. In a severe storm one night on Lake Erie, a passenger ship was trying to make the harbor at Cleveland. The lighthouse had been struck by lightning, and the ship could not get its direction in the storm, but in the distance, the captain could see little lights at intervals along the breakwater. Although the great beacon was out, the captain, by observing these little lights closely, was able to bring his ship safely into the harbor. The lower lights had saved his vessel. One passenger on the ship later wrote, "Brightly beams our Father's mercy From His lighthouse evermore, But to us He gives the

keeping Of the lights along the shore. Let the lower lights be burning! Send a gleam across the wave! Some poor fainting, struggling seaman You may rescue, you may save."

Although we may not feel talented or in a position to be a big light in this world, we all can brighten the corner where we are. Jesus likened us unto a small candle. As we go about our duties of the day, our lives should cast a warmth and brightness to those around us.

God made us in His own image. This signifies that all of us are a candle with the potential of creating light. However, it is not until the Holy Spirit touches these candles with the divine flame that they begin to shine. We are not to put off our own light, but we are to "let" our light shine. We are to allow Jesus to work through us. As we do so, we will portray the beatitudes that Christ spoke of.

—Wayne Murphey

July 12, 1987

CHRIST AND THE LAW OF MOSES

Matt. 5:17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.

18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these leas: commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

21 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

23 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

25 Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

26 Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Memory Verse: For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. John 1:17.

Central Thought: The teachings of Christ went far beyond what the law of Moses enjoined upon men, for it dealt with the root of the problem, which was sin in the heart of men. Only by receiving what Christ has provided can we ever hope to fulfill the law of God.

Word Definitions: *To make complete:* Finish, or satisfy. *"One jot or one tittle":* Both of these words denote the smallest part or the smallest letter of the alphabet. *Raca:* Empty or worthless one. *Uttermost farthing:* The smallest unit of money measure.

LESSON BACKGROUND

One of the greatest difficulties that Christ encountered when He dealt with His generation lay in matters that pertained to the law that had been handed down to them from Moses. So much of the people's comprehension of the law and its requirements and consequences of disobedience thereto lay only in the outward observance of its precepts. The spiritual aspect of the law and the inward principles of righteousness and holiness was known of them very little. It was in this point that the law had failed and was failing. Just the commandment alone afforded no spiritual power and inspiration for complete fulfillment. Thus the need was very evident for a higher power. This higher power Christ came to give. By the love that He manifested as God in the flesh, bearing the punishment for the sins of mankind, and by the risen life

afforded for the soul in His resurrection, the heart of man is cleansed from the very principle of sin, which cleansing the law was never able to do. If a man could live uprightly and well-pleasing unto God through the strength of the law, there would never have been a need for a Saviour. Jesus saves us from the power of sin and dispenses the principle of righteousness and holiness into our very innermost being. Thus the law is fulfilled in us in every practical sense. The righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees was an outward observance of deeds only. The righteousness of Christ issues from the heart.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Christ not come to destroy the law?
2. What shall he be called who breaks the least commandment and teaches others to do so, also?
3. Is it possible to keep the big commandments and break the seemingly lesser important commandments?
4. How much of the law was Christ to fulfill?
5. What is the only way that our righteousness can exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees?
6. How much farther does Christ go with the commandment "Thou shalt not kill"?
7. How much farther does Christ go with the commandment "Thou shalt not commit adultery"?
8. What profit is there to settle differences and effect peace between you and your fellow man quickly?
9. Why is God so interested in your relationship with your brother and fellow man?
10. Where does Christ want His laws written?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Romans 7:12. The end (or purpose) of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned. I Timothy 1:5. Jesus did not come to do away with the law. He came to bring spiritual life and strength to enable us to fulfill the sacred laws of God by writing them upon the tender tables of our hearts. Jesus shows what a serious thing it is to trifle with and disregard the least commandment of God. He said that whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. This word "least" does not mean that they will be accepted into the

kingdom of heaven in an inferior rank, but it really indicates that such will be excluded from the holy realm of God's Kingdom. They will be despised and cast aside. We teach others mostly by what we do. When we deliberately break the commandments of God we are setting an example that others will be emboldened to follow. The scribes and Pharisees did not really keep the law. They had an outward form that they called the law, but the real spiritual side of the commandments of God they failed miserably to attain to. We should keep a deep respect for God's laws. Not only are we to not kill, but we are to treat our brother and fellow man with such love and forbearance that we will not ever be tempted to harm them in any way. An expression like "If I was not a Christian I would give you a punch in the nose" is not in the vocabulary of one who has experienced the saving grace of Christ. We are to be careful how we speak to one another and how we speak of one another. Christ wants us to keep the avenue between us and our brother unobstructed. With our hearts made pure through His atoning blood and righteousness we can fully satisfy the demands of God's righteous law.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The fulfillment of the law took place when God's law was written in the hearts and minds of people, rather than on tables of stone. The law of Moses was a complicated set of rules. There were 613 precepts for the people to memorize and attempt to obey. No wonder the children of Israel were told, "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." Deut. 6:7-9. How much simpler it is to have them written upon the heart.

When the law is written upon our hearts, we are following a desire rather than obeying a commandment. The old law instructed, "Thou shalt not kill", but when God's law is written upon our hearts, we will not even be angry with our brother. Our whole attitude will be changed and we will not want harm of any kind to come to him.

In our service for the Lord we must have more than just a concern for the outward man. We cannot afford to fall into the

rut of asceticism, which is the idea that the more self-denial one practices, the more holy he is. Such was the rational of the Pharisees. Jesus said that, "except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." We must have the grace and truth of Jesus Christ within our hearts.

—Wayne Murphey

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July 19, 1987

JESUS CONCERNING SWEARING AND TAKING OATHS

Matthew 5:33 Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:

35 Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.

36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

Eccles. 5:1 Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil.

2 Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.

3 For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words.

4 When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed.

5 Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.

6 Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands?

7 For in the multitude of dreams and many words there are also divers vanities: but fear thou God.

James 5:12 But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other

oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

Memory Verse: Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him. Prov. 29:20.

Central Thought: Although under the Old Testament men were allowed to take and perform special pledges, promises, or oaths before God, Christ counsels us not to swear at all or make strong vows in which we call heaven or earth to witness. We, as children of God who have truth in our hearts and whose lives reflect the teachings of Christ, need not utter anything beyond honest testimony or report. When we say, "yes", make sure it is "yes", and when we say "no", let all facts and proof speak the same.

Word Definitions: "*Forswear thyself*": This is perjury, which is defined as swearing to falsehood or swearing to do anything and then failing to do it. *Oath*: A solemn pledge made by word of mouth or before an authorized officer, by which a person swears that certain statements made by him are true. Adam Clarke brings out that an oath is a statement or pledge that is made with an appeal to God for verification and witness. "*Be not rash with thy mouth*": Do not speak suddenly in time of alarm and agitation, but be rather calm and weigh carefully your words ere you speak them. "*Defer not to pay [your vow]*": Do not fail to pay your vow after you make it.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Jesus quotes from those of olden times concerning swearing and taking oaths. We do not know which particular Old Testament Scripture He was referring to when He said, "Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths." It may have been a combination of several Old Testament Scriptures that formulated this command. But in our lesson today we see that Jesus simplifies and clears all the difficulty, confusion, and complications that attend oaths and the taking of them. We must not swear at all. There is no need for an honest man who fears God and purposes to do that which is right to have to swear to anything. His word is true and needs not an oath to back it up. On the other hand, all the swearing and taking of oaths of a dishonest man who is seeking to deceive will not make his statement true. We include Solomon's admonition in Ecclesiastes as a part of this

lesson because it brings out the warning against hasty and unwise statements and promises that can be made prior to a person being properly prepared or with understanding. It is much simpler and of less difficulty to exercise caution and avoid doing things that bring trouble, than working one's way out of trouble. And we know that most of human woes and problems originate through the medium of the tongue. We do not need to swear to anything. Just be sure that what you say is right and true, and do not assume prematurely. Who are we to swear before God or to appeal to Him for verification of anything that we in our frail humanity have conceived? If it is true, He will back us up and stand with us in it. But if it is not true, all the ceremonies and loud talk will not make it true.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why do people swear?
2. Does a person need to swear to something that is already true?
3. What should we do before we make strong statements or solemn promises?
4. What is our comparison to God?
5. Who are we to assert ourselves to speak loudly and hastily with our tongue?
6. The old adage: "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" can fit into our lesson here. How?
7. What usually causes dreams and what kind of person has a multitude of words?
8. Why should one not swear or take an oath even before a judge or court?
9. What should one do when asked to take an oath?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The writer in Hebrews 6:16 explains why oaths are made. "For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife." This shows us that the reason men are called upon to take an oath is to bring the responsibility of what is to be said solely upon the person who makes the statement. It makes one feel the seriousness of saying something when he or she is under oath. Jesus instructs us not to swear at all. I believe that it would be wise for us to obey Him in this explicitly. When you are called as a witness in a court trial and you are asked to swear that you will speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the

truth, so help you God, you can request that you be given the right to affirm that what you are going to say will be the truth. You are still under great responsibility for what you say even when you affirm. You are under great responsibility before God to speak the truth regardless of the situation. One need not swear to prove that he or she is telling the truth. How thankful we are that Christ's way is not cluttered with the complicated schemes of men. We are to speak the truth in our hearts. Our lives would bear witness to what we speak. We should weigh our words carefully, and not speak proudly or to defend ourselves in a carnal manner. We must seek meekness and let our speech be always with grace, seasoned with the salt of the Spirit of God. Jesus is teaching us true caution and carefulness here. Many talk as if the breath and strength to speak are their own jurisdiction. This is a great mistake. We are not our own and the right to speak and to express ourselves is not a right but a God-given privilege. We should exercise it with care and use it with caution. Thus our yea will be "yea" and what we say will be backed up by what we live.

—Bro. Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

One of the tricks the enemy uses to hinder a saint is to put them in bondage. If, in a moment of weakness a Christian vows a vow or promises something that cannot be carried out, the devil will have a real heyday in bringing condemnation and accusations upon that person. There have been instances when people have become emotional in their feelings toward God and made a vow to do a particular thing. When the emotional feelings subsided and they were able to view their vow from a Biblical and rational perspective, they realized that they were hasty and unwise. This places a conscientious person in a state of condemnation. The verses in our lesson say, "Better is it that thou shouldest not vow than that thou shouldest vow and not pay. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands?" How much better it is, when God deals with us, to simply determine within our hearts, that by God's grace, we will do all that He requires of us. It is important to be enlightened along this line, for we can save ourselves a lot of grief.

It will also dim our light and the influence of the Church in the world. It is, to say the least, inconsistent in the eyes of the world for us to make a vow, endeavor within ourselves to perform it, find out that the grace of God will not cover it, and fail therein. Let us heed this lesson and ponder the path of our feet. (Prov. 4:26). We should be hesitant to make irrational vows before God or be hasty with our words.

—Wayne Murphey

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July 26, 1987

JESUS GIVES US THE GOLDEN RULE

Matthew 5:38 Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also.

41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

Luke 6:31 And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

32 For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them.

33 And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same.

34 And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

35 But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye

shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.

36 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

37 Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:

38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

Memory Verse: Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. Matthew 7:12.

Central Thought: Instead of seeking revenge and doing unto others as they do unto us, Jesus teaches us to treat our fellow man as we would desire to be treated, which means to love them and do them good in turn for an evil they may do unto us: for this is really the whole essence of all that the law and the prophets taught as well as being a reflection of the kind, benevolent nature of the Heavenly Father Himself.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We are continuing our studies of the teachings of Jesus. We have in our lesson today another phase of His Sermon on the Mount plus a part of Jesus' sermon delivered, as Luke 6:17 put it, in the plain, in the company of His disciples, with a great multitude before Him who had come to be healed. It is very evident that Jesus taught His doctrines over and over in various places at numbers of occasions. The sermon in the plain is very similar to the sermon on the mount. We join the two together in dealing with this phase of His teaching as the expressions in one compliment and help fill out the other. The teaching that we have in our lesson is what is generally called "The Golden Rule." In following His teachings in this Golden Rule we find the answer and solution to many, many of the problems of humanity. While He said in Luke "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful," we find the expression in Matthew rendered: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." We can thus see that the perfection that Christ is referring to here is that of being merciful and longsuffering with humanity even as God is. Compare the expressions in verse 45 and 35 of our lesson. See how they compliment and modify each other. The expression "eye for an eye, and tooth for a tooth" is expressed three

times in the law. It is a general precept of justice that if I hurt you, then you have the right to hurt me back. Perhaps justice is administered thus, but does it really solve the problem? Of course not! The love that Jesus enjoins here solves the problem wonderfully. How much better is Christ's way!

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What does "eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" mean?
2. What was wrong with that system?
3. What problems were solved thereby?
4. What kind of society would we have today if everyone obeyed the Golden Rule?
5. How can a person really love their enemies?
6. How are we to treat people who hate us?
7. What should be our prayer to God on the behalf of those who persecute and spitefully use us?
8. Why should we do these things?
9. How does God treat people who do not love nor serve Him?
10. How and with what measure are things going to come to us?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

A person in a carnal and unregenerated condition without the grace of God cannot live up to the standard of the teachings of our lesson. Jesus knew that this would perhaps get as close to us and be more difficult for us than any of His other teachings. A good look at our world around and the society that we live in shows how far and wide humanity has strayed from this kind of spirit. It is still largely "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth". Do the problems that face our society ever improve? No, but, rather, it is steadily getting worse all the time. Even people who profess to be Christians and saints of God forget these teachings in their dealings with one another. One can become like an enemy to his brother when he disagrees or fails to concur with the other to the fullest detail. We would do well if we would recall this lesson often in life. Did Jesus live up to this teaching? See how He moved among men in gentleness and forbearance and mercy. He let the countenance of His goodness shine wherever He went. Many an aching brow and crippled limb He healed freely with no requirement of return. See Him feed the multitude, many of which did not follow Him for the real truth. Yes, Jesus lived up to this. As an old history that I remember in

school days said, "He taught a religion of love and peace. 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you,' was the golden rule that He gave to the world. His life was the finest example of doing good to others that has ever been known in the world. Jesus lived simply, and did not look for power or honor. He did the things each day that brought hope out of misery, and love out of hate. He taught that loving kindness alone would stop all strife—kindness on the part of leaders, kind and mutual love in families and communities. Such a spirit of helpfulness, He said, would save the weak from being injured by the strong and the poor from being ill-treated by the rich." (From *Old Europe And Our Nation* by Baker, Duncalf, and Bacon; Row, Peterson, and Co., 1946.)

—Bro. Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

" 'All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.' "

"This is a wonderfully comprehensive rule of action. It bids us consider the interests of others as well as our own. It bids us set our neighbor alongside of ourself and think of him as having the same rights as we have and requiring from us the same treatment that we give to ourself. It gives us a standard by which to test all our motives and all our conduct bearing on others. We are at once in thought to change places with the person toward whom duty is to be determined, and ask, 'If he were where I am, and I were where he is, how should I want him to treat me in this case?' The application of this rule would instantly put a stop to all rash, hasty actions, for it commands us to consider our neighbor and question our own heart before doing anything. It would slay all selfishness, for it compels us to regard our neighbor's interests as precisely equal to our own. It would lead us to honor others, for it puts us and them on the same platform.

"The application of this rule would put a stop to all injustice and wrong, for none of us would do injustice or wrong to ourselves, and we are to treat our neighbor as if he were ourself. It would lead us to seek the highest good of all other men, even the lowliest, for we surely want all men to seek our good. The thorough applying of this Golden Rule would put an end to all strife, in families, in communities, among nations.

(Taken from the book *Come Ye apart* by J. R. Miller.)

August 2, 1987

**A RELIGION UNTO GOD AND NOT
FOR THE PRAISE OF MEN**

Matthew 6:1 Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

2 Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

4 That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

16 Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

17 But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;

18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

Memory Verse: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. Colossians 3:23, 24.

Central Thought: Our giving, our praying and fasting, and whatever other activity that we engage in as professed

Christians must be carried out with a single eye to please God, not seeking the praise and admiration of men.

Word Definitions: *Alms:* What we render or give to help the poor. *Openly:* In plain view of others. *Vain repetitions:* Useless repetitions of words and phrases that tend to weary and dull the one who prays. *Hypocrite:* One who acts or speaks under a false part.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Jesus recognized one of the greatest problems that lay in the hearts of the professed religious people of His day. It was the dual nature that plagued their lives, causing them to perform religious activities with not only a thought toward God, but with a desire to win the admiration of their fellow creatures as well. Jesus called such hypocrites. Jesus offers counsel that will cut right across this spirit of hypocrisy, by commanding that our works of righteousness, our prayers, and our times of fasting be done without the scrutiny of men. It must be done in quietness and in secrecy. For it to be effectual before the all-seeing eye of God, it must be carried out in secret from men, from loved ones, and even from ourselves. How can we give and keep it from ourselves? We can give and pray with as little thought and consideration for ourselves as possible. We should not muse or think or ponder over what we do, speaking not of it to others. It is not that others will not know about it, for they will, but it is not in our hearts for them to know it. If it is buried in the tomb of forgetfulness forever, we will never try to bring it to life. But the all-seeing eye of God Almighty sees it all, and He is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love. He sees it in secret, and He will reward you openly. It is said that one trait of a hypocrite is that he will never pray in secret. In secret one has thoughts about God, and that a hypocrite can't stand. But he can make a big prayer for people to hear. God save and keep us all from this awful hypocrisy that Jesus condemns.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What makes people want to do things for the praise of men?
2. How can giving, praying, and fasting be rendered of no profit to God?
3. Does Jesus mean that one must not pray in public at all?

4. Who sees and knows whether such activity is done to God only?
5. What does the closet of prayer signify?
6. What does the expression "shut thy door" mean?
7. Is it necessary for one to pray long prayers for God to take notice?
8. What is prayer really for if it is not to inform God of anything?
9. What is in the heart that makes a person want the praise of men?
10. What is their reward who seek the praise of men?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Prayer is not a means of enlightening God, for God is all-knowing, all-wise, and ever present. Prayer is for us, a means of expressing our worship, love, faith, decision, and submissiveness to God. It brings spiritual values into focus in our hearts and minds. It shows that we are reaching out to our Creator, that we care and are concerned with things that have to do with Him and His relationship with us. Real, true prayer comes from the innermost part of us. It is not formed by outward words and gestures. Sometimes prayer is unuttered outwardly, but like a fire burning in the heart. God is so high and lofty, but He hears the prayer of the destitute, and will not despise their prayer. (Psalm 102:17). It is so good and worthwhile to give alms and do charitable deeds to others. It is vital that we have a benevolent attitude towards our fellow creatures on earth. No one can get far in the Christian life without this attribute. But Jesus shows how that this gracious activity of doing good to others can be ruined by this crosscurrent of wanting others to know about our good deeds, also. We do these things to bless our fellow man and to please the Lord "But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Heb. 13:16. There is great benefit in fasting, laying aside food and comforts of life in our efforts to reach God for the benefits of others. But even in this Jesus shows how that the good purpose can be frustrated by a desire to let other people know about our fasting. We kind of like to have others know about our hardships so we can have their sympathy. But if we give over to this sort of thing, it will thwart the pleasure of the Lord and the reward that HE wants to bestow. Let us take heed that all we do is directed solely to the will of God and His pleasure, thus can we hope to enjoy His full reward.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Any religious act instantly loses all of its value when any motive but the desire to honor God and gain His approval is in our hearts. If we give with the thought of receiving preferential treatment or recognition in return, we receive our reward here and cannot expect any hereafter. It is also important in giving, to give with no strings attached. Even as we are taught to forgive and forget, we should learn how to give and forget.

Florence Nightengale had the right perspective on giving. She had a mission of mercy which she performed among wounded soldiers. She labored so long until her name was enshrined in every soldier's heart. On one particular instance when honor was being bestowed upon her, she declined to have her picture taken because she wanted to be forgotten, and that Christ alone might be remembered as the Author of all the blessings which her hand had distributed.

One of the most important things we ever do in this life is to pray. There is nothing else which we do that so deeply affects us. With this thought in mind we should be eager to get even the smallest fragment of instruction about prayer that Christ had to offer. Jesus said that when we pray we should enter into our secret closet. The reason for this is the same principle of giving without fanfare. It is possible to use a pious act to gain a holier-than-thou attitude. There is a time and place for public prayers, but it should not be taken advantage of to put self on display.

—Wayne Murphey

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August 9, 1987

SERVING GOD OR MAMMON

Matthew 6:19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Memory Verse: For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. I Timothy 6:10.

Central Thought: Seeing that the uncertain treasures of earth will fade and pass away, we ought to put our trust fully in God to supply our earthly needs, and set our hearts to seek those eternal riches that are found in the kingdom of God.

Word Definitions: *Mammon*: Riches, earthly wealth. "*Take no thought*": Be not anxious about or worry concerning earthly things.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today Jesus strikes right at another great problem that we mortals have. He deals with the desire for

wealth and the solitious care of meeting our earthly needs. Both of these can be a problem. There are some people whose goal in life is to become wealthy. They work hard and strive for it. It occupies the great part of their minds and has the uppermost place in their hearts and affections. The glitter of gold, the security that money offers in the things it will buy, and the restless heart of man ever reaching for that which he has not—all of these things go together to produce the travail and turmoil that we have in the world today. And it seems that many, so many, never become aware of the vanity of their dark pursuits, but are continually chasing rainbows and fantastic dreams of wealth and carnal security even up into old age. And there are continual letdowns of loss, theft, droughts, depressions, financial crises, and personal disappointments. Jesus has the answer. He does not want us to be disappointed and frustrated. He knows that will be our doom if we seek for the treasures of earth. The moth, the rust, and the thief are too abundant around us to deny the truth of His words. We could add to that list. There are termites, disease, swindlers, lawsuits, crashes, wrecks, breakdowns, failures, shortages, high prices, changes, complications, air, water, and land pollutions, plagues, epidemics, and many other things that can come on the scene just when you least expect them. We can avoid all these things if we will set our affections on things above and let godliness with contentment be our greatest gain. (I Timothy 6:6).

—Bro. Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What makes the treasures of earth unprofitable and undesirable?
2. What makes heavenly treasures so desirable and profitable?
3. What determines where our heart is?
4. Where will we be if the last great day finds us with our hearts wrapped around these earthly treasures?
5. What are the two masters that Jesus spoke of?
6. How can mammon be a master?
7. What must we do to keep from being a servant of mammon?
8. How does Jesus assure us that the Heavenly Father will care for our earthly needs?
9. What should we seek first?
10. What attitude should we take for the future?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

How disappointed many people have been who set their stakes to obtain earthly wealth! There are a few who have achieved this goal, but in the final wind up very little can be attributed to their gains as far as happiness, peace, and real success is concerned. We must always bear in mind that this life, this earth, and this realm of time is uncertain, and at the most, so soon passed away. The treasures that we might heap up for our own security and satisfaction can dwindle and be gone in a little while. And even if we hold on to them and guard them for safekeeping for a lifetime, we will soon be ushered out into eternity by the chilling hand of death, leaving them all behind. How different it is with heavenly treasures! No earthly power can take them away from us if we hold fast to our faith and love for Christ. We can possess the kingdom of God and these treasures right here in this present life. And in doing so, we can lay up and store treasures in the glory world that we can enjoy through the eternal ages in heaven. Oh, let us not be blind to the realities of spiritual things. Let us awake to the fleetingness of time and this world! If we make money and carnal security our goal in life, we have ourselves to blame in the disappointment that will follow. Many never take heed to these warnings, and think that they can go out and make it their own way. Some may be able to do so in this life, but, oh, the awful letdown and disappointment that they will face in the judgment! God has promised to help us with our earthly life. He knows that you need money, food, clothing, shelter, and other commodities that help to make life sweeter and more enjoyable. The main thing He wills that we do is to put Him and the welfare of our souls and the souls of others first. He will see to it that the other part is taken care of. But if we get the cart before the horse, so to speak, there is a pretty good chance that we will miss out all the way around. May we open our hearts to the truth of these teachings of Christ. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Money is meant to be man's servant, and so long as he is its perfect master, it may be a blessing to him and a means by which he may do much good. It is when man becomes the servant of money that it is wrong. The rich young ruler was the servant of money and Jesus told him to sell all that he had, but Joseph of Arimathaea was also a rich man and

nowhere do we find Jesus requiring him to sell all. Instead, we find him providing a tomb for Jesus at His death.

"Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life." Does this mean that we are not to use the mind that God gave us? It would be as if God told us not to walk after giving us feet, or not to talk after giving us a tongue. We are to use our mind to plan for the future and for the years ahead. It is worry and anxiety that Christ is warning against. When we are overanxious about the future, then we become the servant of mammon.

Are we to draw the inference from Christ's sermon that since the birds neither sow nor reap, we should refuse to work to provide for our needs? If so, we would soon starve. God would not feed us as He does the birds. He has given us the ability to sow and reap and expects us to do so. Nowhere does God encourage a "trust" which idly waits to be cared for. Christ is teaching that man is much more valuable than a bird and since He cares for the birds, He will surely care for man. We need not worry or fret over those things of the future that are beyond our control, for God will take care of them.

—Wayne Murphey

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A Blackboard Lesson

By D. L. Moody

When I was in San Francisco, I went into a Sabbath-school the first Sunday I was there. It was a rainy day, and there were so few present that the Superintendent thought of dismissing them, but instead, he afterward invited me to speak to the whole school as one class. The lesson was that passage from the Sermon on the Mount: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal."

I invited a young man to the blackboard, and we proceeded to compare a few things that some people have on earth, and a few things that other people have in heaven.

"Now," said I, "name some earthly treasures."

They all shouted "Gold."

"Well, that is so," I said, "I suppose that is your greatest treasure out here in California. Now let us go on; what is another?"

A second boy shouted, "Lands."

"Well," I said, "we will put down Lands."

"What else do the people out here in California think a good deal of and have their hearts set on?"

They said "Houses."

"Put that down; what else?"

"Pleasure."

"Put that down."

"Honor—fame."

"Put that down."

"Business."

"Yes," I said; "a great many people have their hearts buried in their business—put that down." As if a little afraid, one of them said "dress," and the whole school smiled.

"Put that down," I said. "Why, I believe there are some people in the world who think more of dress than any other thing. They just live for dress. I heard not long ago from a very good authority, of a young lady who was dying of consumption. She had been living in the world and for the world, and it seemed as if the world had taken full possession of her. She thought she would die Thursday night, and Thursday she wanted them to crimp her hair, so that she would look beautiful in her coffin. But she didn't die Thursday night. She lingered through Friday, and Friday she didn't want them to take her hair down, but to keep it up until she passed away. And the friends said she looked very beautiful in the coffin! Just what people wear—the idea of people having their hearts set upon things of that kind!"

"And what else, now?" Well, they were a little ashamed to say it, but one said:

"Rum."

"Yes," I said, "put that down. There is many a man thinks more of the rum-bottle than he does of the Kingdom of God. He will give up his wife, he will give up his home and his mother, character and reputation forever for the rum-bottle. Many a man by his life is crying out, 'Give me rum, and I will give you heaven, and all its glories. I will sell my wife and children. I will make them beggars and paupers. I will degrade and disgrace them for the rum-bottle. That is my treasure.'

" 'Oh, thou rum bottle! I worship thee,' is the cry of many—they turn their backs on heaven with all its glories for rum. Some of them thought, when that little boy said 'rum,' that he made a mistake, that it was not a treasure, but it is a treasure to thousands." Another one said:

"Fast horses."

Said I, "Put it down. There is many a man who thinks a good deal of fast horses, and he wants to go out and take a fast horse and drive Sunday, and spend his Sabbath in this way." And after we finished, and thought of everything we could, I said: "Suppose we just take down some of these heavenly treasures.

"And," said I, "What is there now that the Lord wants us to set our hearts and affections on?" And they all said: "JESUS."

"That is good; we will put Him down first at the head of the list. Now what else?" And they said:

"Angels."

"Put them down. We will have their society when we go to heaven. That is a treasure up there, really. What else?"

"The friends who have died in Christ, who have fallen asleep in Christ."

"Put them down. Death has taken them from us now, but we will be with them by and by. What else?"

"Crowns."

"Yes, we are going to have a crown, a crown of glory, a crown of righteousness, a crown that fadeth not away. What else?"

"The tree of life."

"Yes," I said, "the tree of life. We shall have a right to it. We can go to that tree and pluck its fruit, eat, and live forever. What else?"

"The river of life."

"Yes, we shall walk upon the banks of that clean river."

"Harps," one said.

Another one said, "palms."

"Yes," I said, "put them down. Those are treasures that we will have there."

"Purity."

"Yes, there will be none but the pure there. White robes, without spot or wrinkle on our garments. A great many find many flaws in our characters down here, but by and by Christ will present us before the Father without spot and without wrinkle, and we shall stand there complete in Him," I said. "Can you think of anything else?" And one of them said:

"A new song."

"Yes, we shall have a new song. It is the song of Moses and the Lamb. I don't know just who wrote it or how, but it will be a glorious song. I suppose the singing we have here on earth will be nothing compared with the songs of that upper

world. Do you know the principal thing we are told we are going to do in heaven is singing, and that is why men ought to sing down here. We ought to begin to sing here so that it will not come strange when we get to heaven. I pity the professed Christian who has not a song in his heart—who never ‘feels like singing.’ It seems to me if we are truly children of God, we will want to sing about it. And so, when we get there, we cannot help shouting out the loud hallelujahs of heaven.”

Then I said: “Is there anything else?” Well, they went on. I cannot give you all, because we had to have two columns put down of the heavenly treasures. We stood there a little while and drew the contrast between the earthly and the heavenly treasures. We looked at them a little while, and when we came to put them all down beside Christ, the earthly treasures looked small, after all. What would all this world full of gold be compared with Jesus Christ? You who have Christ, would you like to part with Him for gold? Would you like to give Him up for all the honor the earth can bestow on you for a few months or a few years? Think of Christ! Think of the treasures of heaven. And then think of these earthly treasures that we have our hearts set upon, and that so many of us are living for.

God blessed that lesson upon the blackboard in a marvelous way, for the man who had been writing down the treasures on the board happened to be an unconverted Sunday school teacher, and had gone out there to California to make money; his heart was set upon gold, and he was living for that instead of for God. That was the idol of his heart, and do you know God convicted him at that blackboard, and the first convert that God gave me on the Pacific coast was that man, and he was the last man who shook hands with me when I left San Francisco. He saw how empty the earthly treasures were, and how grand and glorious the riches of heaven. Oh, if God would but open your eyes—and I think if you are honest and ask Him to do it He will—He will show you how empty this world is in comparison with what He has in store.

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August 16, 1987

WARNINGS AGAINST UNRIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT

Matthew 7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.

2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

John 7:24 Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

Romans 14:4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

I Cor. 4:3 "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self.

4 For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.

5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

Memory Verse: Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven. Luke 6:37.

Central Thought: We should be very careful how we judge and condemn others, for Jesus said that our judgment will be as we have judged others, and it is better for us not to judge or

condemn than to have to meet judgment that we have given out coming back to us in condemnation for faults that we did not perceive in our own hearts and lives.

Word Definitions: *Judge:* To distinguish or decide (mentally or judicially). *Mote:* A speck or small splinter. *Beam:* a plank or large object.

LESSON BACKGROUND

It is part of our human nature to pass judgment and make a decision about everything and everyone that we meet up with in life. We even are passing judgment on ourselves, accusing or excusing ourselves in things we do and say. We calculate, sum up matters, make decisions, and pass judgment on things, whether to accept or reject, own or disown, receive or refuse, praise or defame, commend or criticize, and so on and on. Jesus knew that mankind was this way. It really is not evil to do this because life is made up of the decisions that we make and the direction and esteem that we have on values. Where the problem comes in lies in the action and the transpiring of words that proceed from these judgments that we formulate. We are so quick to judge that we pre-judge many things and people before we ever have a chance to really behold what they are. This is prejudice. Wars are fought and lives are lost over this boiling activity of mankind. Homes are broken up, friendships dissolved, businesses ruined, and lives are wrecked through people passing judgment on matters without the right attitude and purpose. We should weigh carefully the wise counsel our Lord gives us here, and also consider earnestly what the apostle Paul says with regard to this matter of judging. Notice how Paul says that he does not even judge himself! If we are not able to really judge ourselves properly in our own understanding, how can we judge our fellow man? If we will remember that the judgment that we pass will make its way back and judge us like we put it out, we will be less apt to judge as quickly and as rashly as we do sometimes. Jesus has it right, and if we will follow His counsel in these matters, we will be a lot better off.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why does Jesus teach us not to judge?
2. What will happen if the judgment that we pass on others can be proven to condemn us for something we are not aware of?

3. Will we escape the judgment because we were ignorant if we have passed it on others?
4. What makes a person so aware of a small thing in others and unaware of large things in himself?
5. How can we judge righteous judgment?
6. Instead of judging others, what should we be doing?
7. If we judge and condemn our brother whose heart is perfect with God, what will God do for him?
8. Do we really have any right to judge anyone?
9. Why is it dangerous to judge someone on our own ideas alone?
10. What can and will God do if we wait on His proper time?
11. Do you believe that you have learned this lesson well?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

One of the main reasons why, according to our Master's teaching, we should not judge our brother or fellow man is due to the great limitation of our vision and understanding. We just do not know them well enough to judge or condemn them. We need to also realize the weakness of human nature at this point. We can very easily be mistaken in our judgments. We can try, condemn, and execute someone in our own mind and they may be totally innocent. It is wise to keep the calculations and thoughts that we have for and toward people to ourselves and give our fellow creature of earth a chance to prove himself. Instead of counting everyone guilty until they are proven innocent, we ought to count them innocent until they are proven guilty. And even then we are not to condemn them, but to seek a way to help them. Jesus came into a society cursed with high-minded men who were quick to seek condemnation and judgment upon others. Much strife and turmoil issued from the ranks of humanity because of this. He is trying to tell us: "Give one another a chance. Don't be so quick to cast one another down, but seek to help your brother and lead him to the better way. While you are downing him, there may be things worthy of condemnation in your life much worse in the sight of God than what he has. Take it easy with your judgments. Go slow and weigh carefully your words and actions to him. All you see is the outside and what he really means in his heart may have a different hue. Be merciful and longsuffering and be more to seek God for understanding about your own personal needs, and then you can be in the right frame of mind and heart to reach out and help your brother in his needs."

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

If we want to receive kindly judgment from others, we must be kind ourselves. The Bible and history have proven that if we are harsh and critical with others we need not be surprised if we are harshly criticized. Conversely, if we speak kindly, appreciatively and charitably of someone today, very likely we will hear tomorrow of some pleasant word that someone else has said of us. One person wrote, "We make very largely the music or the discord for our own hearts. We get back what we give. We gather the harvest of our own sowing. Then, even in the last judgment, we shall receive from the Judge what we have shown to others."

Logical thinking would dictate that if a person had a beam in their eye they would be blinded to the faults of others. This is not the case. According to Christ's admonitions, a person with a beam in their eye can see even a small thing like a mote in someone else's eye. In going a step farther, it seems to be the one with the beam in their eye who thinks he is competent to pull the mote out of another's eye. It seems that the person who has a fault is always trying to behold the same thing in another. The person who is searching for pride in the lives of others may very well have pride in their own life. A quick-tempered person is very apt to be put out at the display of someone else's bad temper. Rude people generally are the very first to be offended at the rudeness of others. The sharp-tongued person generally has little use for the same fault in another. If we are quick to perceive blemishes and faults in others, it is a pretty good indication of a fault within ourselves. This ought to make us very careful in our judgment of others.

—Wayne Murphey

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August 23, 1987

GIVING NOT THAT WHICH IS HOLY UNTO DOGS

Matthew 7:6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

II Timothy 2:1 Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

14 Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.

15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

16 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

I Cor. 2:6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

II Thess. 3:1 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you:

2 And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.

Phil. 3:2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.

Rev. 22:14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

Memory Verse: But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. I Corinthians 2:14.

Central Thought: It is not wise to try to communicate spiritual truths and values to the unregenerated and carnal man, for they are not capable of comprehending the precious things of the hidden wisdom of God. Such blind and fleshly minded persons are called "dogs" in the Bible.

Word Definitions: *Concision:* The Greek word means a cutting off, which denotes the spirit in people who want to devour, cut people off: division and trouble makers.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Here is a Scripture that we have a tendency to overlook as spoken by our Lord. He speaks about two kinds of animals who have a bad disposition, especially if they are wild, and untamed. The dog family includes the devouring species of wolves, coyotes, jackals, and the fox. When the Bible speaks of dogs, it is principally speaking of men and women who have a devouring, fault-finding, harsh, critical, and carnal spirit. Adam Clarke describes such people as "those who are continually returning like the snarling, ill-natured dog to their easily predominate sins of rash judgment, barking at and tearing the characters of others by evil speaking, backbiting and slander-ing; and the swine, is frequently returning to wallow in the mud of sensual gratifications and impurities." The holy sacraments of the ordinances of the Church and the spiritual communion of the saints are not for these people unless they make a full reformation from their sins and are born again with the Spirit from above. The gospel is the good news of salvation and mercy from God and this is to be announced publicly and personally to all. But the real essence of life in Christ and the spiritual content of the Word of God can only be truly received by the soul who has been changed from death unto life. There is no use trying to feed spiritual food to a carnal mind who cannot be subject to the law of God. Wisdom and Holy Spirit anointing must be employed in dealing with such.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is Jesus referring to here in the term "dogs"?
2. Why is it not wise to try to talk spiritual language to a carnal person?
3. What kind of men did Paul tell Timothy to commit his teachings to?
4. What will profane and vain talk cause?

5. How are we to handle evil communications?
6. Will everyone hear and welcome the gospel?
7. What was Paul's request for prayer concerning wicked and unreasonable men?
8. What are we to beware of in dealing with souls?
9. What are we safe from when we heed the Lord's commandment and enter into the city of God?
10. How does the natural man relate to the things of the Spirit of God?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

When Paul made the statement that the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, he spoke a truth so important for us to remember. The word "natural" here means the animal part of man. A man who is not enlightened by the Spirit of God and made alive by the life of Christ lives no higher than the animal. He is controlled by the fleshly lusts of his body and mind. His appetites are purely carnal. He will react to opposition and harm much like the dog. He will fight and devour others who cross his desires. It is really a dreadful comparison that is drawn here in the Scriptures, but it is a true one. People are like dogs and like hogs when it comes to going after their own desires and reacting to the one who withstands them. There is a fear in an animal that causes him to do things. When this fear is disproved and the animal is made aware of love and kindness in the human who is dealing with him, he loses his devouring attitude. Jesus warns us in our lesson about dogs and swine. He is talking about people. There are some people who cannot be trusted to be spoken to on spiritual lines. They cannot and they will not see the truth. They are willingly ignorant of the things of God. A veil hangs over their minds and the god of this world has succeeded in blinding them lest that glorious light of Christ should shine unto them. If a person will have an open mind to hear and consider the truth, and let its loving precepts penetrate down into the heart, that person can be delivered from its doggish nature. How we need to beware of dogs and swine! If a person does not receive the truth of the gospel, do not be disheartened. You have probably been dealing with a dog or a swine, spiritually speaking. Do not waste your time and breath trying to communicate spiritual things to such, but rather pray for the Lord to deal with them and bring them to repentance.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision." Such people are in the world today. They don't introduce themselves as such and the possibility is they will present themselves as having your interest at heart. Rev. 22:15 characterizes them as a group who "loveth and maketh a lie." Then how do we recognize them? It takes a God-given discernment. In our last lesson we studied about judging. Perhaps it would be well to differentiate between judging and having discernment. Judging is going out of your way to find faults in others. Judging always has an interior motive of self-benefit. These people, with a "dog-like" nature, will come to you to devour and make a concision. It is for our own soul's protection that we should be able to discern.

I Corinthians 2:15, which follows our memory verse, says, "But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man." The center margin translates the words "judgeth" and "judges" in this verse as "discerneth" and "Discerned." This indicates that to have true discernment is a mark of spirituality. Hebrews 5:14 calls discernment a mark of maturity. Discernment is obtained by seeking God for it. (I Kings 3:11).

Our society is plagued with a certain breed of high-pressure telephone salesmen. In order to discontinue your conversation with them you may have to be rather abrupt. As long as they can get you to answer their questions and talk about their product, they have a chance of changing your mind. This is true of these "dogs" who are peddling their ideas. As long as they can get you to reason with them, they will be encouraged to change you. It is fruitless to reason with a person of this nature. Their carnal minds will not understand it and they will use it to turn and rend you. —Wayne Murphey

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September 6, 1987

THE TWO WAYS

Matthew 7:13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

Luke 13:23 Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them,

24 Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

Prov. 4:14 Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men.

15 Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.

16 For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall.

17 For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence.

18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

19 The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.

Isa. 35:8 And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.

9 No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there:

Jer. 6:16 Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. . . .

Memory Verse: Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard. Proverbs 13:15.

Central Thought: There are but two ways in life that we can go. The way to life is difficult and we must strive with great effort to go that way. The way to hell and eternal destruction is convenient, popular, and easy, and most people seem inclined to go that way.

Word Definitions: *Strait:* Narrow (because of obstacles standing close about). *Strive:* Agonize, struggle, contend,

compete, endeavor. *Wayfaring*: One who walks the road, a traveler or sojourner.

LESSON BACKGROUND

One might wonder, as we behold the masses of the earth, in the same kind of way that the person wondered who asked Jesus the question: "Lord, are there few that be saved?" Notice how Jesus answered. He did not answer them directly as they put it to Him. He did put it down just the way it really is. Regardless of how few or many will be saved, it is true that only those who strive with all their heart and give up all for His sake will enter in. Jesus lets us know that the attainment of life will not be without difficulty and hardship, and often with pain. From Proverbs we have the comparison between the two ways. A dark picture is presented here of the way of sin and evil. To go against God and His plan is to put yourself on the broad way to destruction. But a bright picture shows in those who press their way to take the path of the just. It is even so, proven over and over again. The way, the Bible way, is the only way to life everlasting. Jesus said that He was the way, the truth, and the life. There is but one true way. While musing upon the state of affairs in our world with the multiplicity of churches all saying that they are right, etc., I was impressed with the words of the song: "No human creed or church will answer in that day, when God each heart will search, then choose HIS way." Song Number 173 *Evening Light Songs*. To go the Bible way we must give up our foolish and sinful ways. We must always live, do, think, act and be according to Christ's manner and precepts. Let us, as Jeremiah says, stand in the ways, see (look, observe), and ask for the old (the tried and established) paths. It is the good way and we shall find rest for our souls.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Can you name some of the reasons why the way to life is so difficult?
2. Why is it much easier to go the way of destruction?
3. What must we do if we would go the way upward to life?
4. Is the way to destruction ever within our reach?
5. Name some of the things that make the way of the transgressor so hard?
6. Why is the way of the Lord much easier in the long run?
7. What is this highway to glory called?

8. What kind of lion does he speak of as not going on this holy way?
9. Who will walk thereon?
10. Should we look and observe the ways and compare them with the true way?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The gate of hell and everlasting destruction is wide. There is plenty of room for every one to enter, and plenty of people who are going that way. You do not have to repent and give up the pleasures of this world. You do not have to bear a cross and suffer as a Christian. You do not have to be different from the worldly crowd. You do not have to follow Jesus in humility, holiness, purity, honesty, truth, light, faith, and all the other things that go to make up a holy life. Just have a good time and enjoy the lusts of the flesh and the pride of life. You will have plenty of company, too. This is because the majority of people are just as vain and empty as you are. The gate is wide and the way is broad. No self-denial, no persecutions, no reproaches are on this convenient and easy way. But you had better look ahead. This way is downward. Yes, you watch people who take the worldly way of sin. It is downward everytime. It is progressing more and more to shame and dishonor. More wickedness, pride, vanity, and error. But look at that one who has turned from the sins of life to go God's way. You will see trials, hardships, and suffering, yes. But look some more, and a little farther up the way. There is life and fellowship with God. There are inner riches of the soul that never fade away. There are blessings of joy and happiness in the service of Christ. And, most of all, look yonder! See the gleam of that heavenly mansion shining from across the river of death! Oh, it will be worth it all to see Jesus some blessed day! Let us continue to go the strait and narrow way, and shun that path that goes down below. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Jeremiah instructed the Israelites to ask for the "old paths" and the "good way". Israel was in a deplorable condition and needed some guidance to stave off their predicted destruction and to calm the turmoil that was among them. Although this was Old Testament Scripture and they were to look back towards the days when God was blessing Israel, it would be well for us also to consider the truth that is found in

it. There are many ways that are purported to be a "good way", and there are many who proclaim to be following "old paths". This can be rather confusing as to which one of these ways we should follow. The key to these instructions is found in the fact that when you are in the "old paths" and the "good way", you will find rest to your soul. Rest to the soul is what Christ promised. (Matt. 11:28-29). Jesus plainly stated, "I am the way." John 14:6. When we follow in His footsteps, we will be walking in the "old paths" and the "good way"

Rest was one point in which the law was no comparison to the dispensation of Christ. Notice the inception of the law. Moses told the Israelites not to come up on Mt. Sinai or to even touch the border of it or they would die. Then came thunder, lightning, a cloud, fire, smoke, an earthquake, a trumpet blast and a loud voice. All the people were afraid and trembled. When Christ was born the message was, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy" and "peace, good will toward men." Whereas the law said stand back and be afraid, Christ said, come unto me and find rest.

There is no other way like the way that leads to heaven. On the broad way people are like the troubled sea. (Isaiah 57:20). Their life is one long heartbreak from beginning to end. The beginning of the Christian's way is good in that the weight of sin is lifted. The continuation of it is good in that the perspective on life is good. Its termination cannot be improved upon for it leads to heaven, to God Himself.

—Wayne Murphey

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CHOOSE YE!

There comes a time in the life of every one, who is permitted to come to that stage, when he is able to discern values, qualities, good and evil, tastes and desires, and when he will be confronted with the responsibility of choosing between different articles—clothing, tools, fields of labor, a life companion, and many other things. But the greatest and most solemn is the choice one makes as to which spirit he will follow, whether the Spirit of God, or the spirit of the devil. This decision comes to every one who reaches the age of accountability.

When we were babes in our mother's arms, we were not qualified to do our own choosing, so it was the duty of those under whose care we were placed to choose for us. They chose the kind of clothes we should wear, and the kind of food we should eat for the nourishment of our bodies, and as we grew older, little by little, much of this responsibility was placed on us.

The Board of Education chooses the kind of books we should study in order to fill our place in the world of activities. Some have been influenced by others to choose certain fields of labor for their life's work, and have been successful as they were guided by men and women of wisdom and understanding who were interested in their welfare, and saw in them the qualifications and abilities to succeed in certain lines. Then there were others who refused the advice of those who wished them well, and fell far short of what they could have accomplished. There are many decisions that are trivial in their nature, and there are decisions to be made that are of great importance.

There are many books on the market today that are designed to help the young man or young woman in making their choice as to which course they should pursue. I am thinking of one, the title of which is *Choosing a Life's Work*. It sets forth the advantages to be enjoyed, also the disadvantages to be encountered, and the reward to be obtained through perseverance. Such advice and instruction have proven to be of great value to many from a monetary standpoint.

There is a reward offered that is of far more value than dollars and cents. We read in Proverbs 8:10-11, "Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold. For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it." Proverbs 1:8

says, "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother." A wise son heareth the instruction of his father. In God's Book of instruction we read, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Ephesians 6:1-4. In one of Paul's letters to Timothy he says, "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." II Timothy 3:14, 15. We have been warned in God's Book of instruction that "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Proverbs 14:12.

Moses was taught by a God-fearing mother while he was under her care and he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." Hebrews 11:24, 15. Luke 10:41, 42 reads, "And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Mary had chosen to sit and learn at Jesus' feet.

Choose now, don't delay! You will never be called upon to make a decision that is of more importance than the road you will travel—the strait and narrow way of life, or the broad way of sin. The exhortation is, "... Choose you this day whom ye will serve; ..." Joshua 24:15. "Today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. Behold, now is the day of salvation." II Corinthians 5:11 says, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men."

Dear ones, we are using our influence to help you make the right choice. Heed the instruction of a wise man. Choose ye this day whom ye will serve. Today if ye will hear His voice harden not your heart. God so loved the world He gave His son to die on the cross that you might not be lost. Now is the day of salvation. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord we persuade men. Many have been almost persuaded, but did not yield to God, and died to fill a Christless grave. The wages of sin is death. The gift of God is eternal life. You cannot serve

God by force. The willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land. God is calling for willing-hearted men and women, boys and girls. The reward is everlasting life, and a home in heaven. A few more days and you must go to reap the deeds that you have done. The Lord has gone to prepare a place for the righteous. The wicked shall be cast into hell where the fire is not quenched and where the worm dieth not. Jesus says, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28. Oh, come to the Lord today! The same God that saved Paul will save you if you will just come to Him now. —Ulysses Phillips

(Available in tract form.)

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September 13, 1987

WARNINGS AGAINST FALSE PROPHETS

Matthew 7:15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

II Cor. 11:13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

II Peter 1:21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the

will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

2:1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

Memory Verse: For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Matthew 24:24.

Central Thought: Satan has found instruments to work through to deceive souls all down through the ages since the beginning of time, and he has many people deceived in wrong doctrines and error whom he is using to speak lies in hypocrisy to deceive souls today.

Word Definitions: *Ravening:* Devouring, damaging, consuming.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Today we will study the last main topic of Christ's sermon on the mount. It is a warning that every soul needs to take seriously. Not every person who claims to be a servant of Christ and a gospel preacher is true. There are many false prophets gone out into the world. (I John 4:1) There are many doctrines that are taught and followed which, though they are acclaimed by ever so many as the doctrine of Christ, are in reality false doctrines. The only thing that Jesus stressed (as did also Paul and Peter) was that by their fruits we could know them. In other words, we are not to judge a man by how he can speak or sway the crowds or by how much the people praise and support him. We are to examine the fruit of his life. The quality of a man's life is much more important than how good a speaker he is. We are either a good tree or a corrupt tree. There is no middle ground. It is very, very striking to note Paul's warning concerning false prophets. Satan, being transformed as an angel of light, is deceiving many who forget what kind of fruit is to be looked for. The old conception of the devil as being a green eyed monster with a pitchfork is a misconception. Satan knows better than to go around showing himself as he is. He approached Eve with "innocent and

reasonable" talk. He used the subtle and crafty serpent. He tempted Jesus in the same manner. He finds men and women that he can work through today. They may seem ever so nice and they may be able to hold you spellbound because of their oratorical powers. They will be able to sway the unsuspecting masses. It is a sad situation, but it is true. Let us look to the Lord for His guiding Spirit to keep us from these false prophets.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What does Jesus tell us to beware of?
2. How do false prophets deceive?
3. What are we to look for in a preacher as proof of his trueness?
4. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?
5. Who will enter into the kingdom of heaven?
6. Is it possible to prophesy in Christ's name, cast out devils, and do many wonderful works, and still not belong to Him?
7. What are Satan and his ministers able to pretend to be?
8. What will their end be?
9. Besides the holy men of God moved by the Holy Ghost, what other kind of prophets were among the people of old?
10. What do false teachers bring in among the people?
11. Will they have very much influence with the people?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Jesus warned us to beware of false prophets. He said that they would show great signs and wonders, do many wonderful works like casting out devils and prophesying in His name. We have many false prophets today. Many radio preachers and big (so called) television preachers who are rolling in the filthy lucre of their followers are proving to be false ministers. Many who conduct healing campaigns are fakes. They sway the people and get their money. People are so gullible today. Through the medium of the radio and the television they sound and look so good to the people's corrupted wisdom. Jesus warned us about them. The recent scandals that have rocked some of the television personality giants who carried on professions as being the ministers of God are just more vivid proof of what Jesus warned us about. All over the world Satan is deceiving people. He has deceived the Communistic world. He has deceived the church world. He is deceiving the

sinners. And he would not balk at trying to deceive us who are saved. Jesus warned us about these things. There were false leaders in His day. He met them where ever He went. It is a sad and a solemn challenge that we face today. With a world steeped in darkness and cursed with false religion, we can only pray and seek God's guidance as we go along our life's journey. We can know them by their fruits. We can see the effect of their labors. Does it build up people's love and faith and holiness of heart and life? The big campaigns under the big tents where thousands meet together in one great big emotional experience is all vanity. Very few of those people, if any, really get the true grace of God and a born-again experience. They get their conscience soothed over and thrilled in doing big things, but how far does it go? May God have mercy on us and guide us from all of these pitfalls of destruction.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Every person is required by the Word to be in touch with the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ. He taught plainly in the Scriptures that all were to be filled with the Holy Ghost, and that the Holy Ghost given from above, would lead them into all truth. His mission and purpose was to direct the lives of God's people, for without Him and His leading, men will go astray. The Scriptures say it is not in man to direct his own steps in the way everlasting. God, in His infinite wisdom and mercy, gave special gifts and callings to individuals among His people, and so long as they perform under the unction of the Holy Spirit they are a wonderful blessing to the flock. But remember this: God's man will never proclaim nor demonstrate himself as an overlord over God's people and begin to "pressure" and "drive" them. The true shepherd goes before and leads. The herdsman goes behind and drives. True shepherds will give their all for God's cause and His flock. The hireling is not willing to do very much without some kind of remuneration. Cut off, or limit, his recompense and his labor will dwindle accordingly. The true shepherd will look to his God, who sent him, for all his needs, and his labor will be performed as though his pay were the very best. The other laborer will be seeking to "pry open" men's pocketbooks to keep their efforts going. Sometimes they achieve amazing success.

Here is a startling thought: God places the responsibility squarely upon the shoulders of each one of His sheep to be

able to discern the difference and follow the proper path. That is why He wanted each one filled with the Holy Ghost. The Holy Spirit will never lead astray. Men may fail or deviate, but the Holy Ghost, never.

—C. W. Wilson
(Written in 1972)

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September 20, 1987

JESUS CHRIST, THE SOLID ROCK TO BUILD UPON

Matthew 7:24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:

29 For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

I Peter 2:1 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,

2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,

5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner.

8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to

them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

Memory Verse: For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. I Corinthians 3:11.

Central Thought: Hearing and obeying the doctrines of Jesus Christ is the wisest step one can take in life. By doing this we build our lives on something that is solid and everlasting, something that will stand all the storms of life and the judgment shock as well.

Word Definitions: *Malice:* Ill will. *Guile:* Deceit. *Hypocrisies:* Pretence. *Sincere milk of the word:* The rational milk free of guile. (Greek) *Disallowed:* Refused or rejected. *Elect:* Choice. *Precious:* Very costly, valuable.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have in our lesson today the closing remarks of Christ's Sermon on the Mount. He sums up how vital His teachings were to mankind. This "whosoever" applies to everyone. If we will hear, heed, and obey what Jesus has taught us in this sermon, we are, in fact, building our experience upon a solid rock that the storms and adversities of time and the judgment cannot shake. What Jesus taught was the truth, and He concluded His message with this warning to us: a promise of what will happen if we will hear and "do" what He teaches, and a promise of what will happen if we hear and fail to obey. It is up to us what our destiny will be. The apostle Peter, whose own name denotes "a stone" (something solid) speaks of us building on that solid Rock, quoting from Isaiah 28:16, which is a prophecy of the solid Rock that Zion, or the Church of God, would be built upon. Peter was fully persuaded of who Christ was, as he testified in Matthew 16:16, in response to Christ's query: "Whom say ye that I am?" Simon Peter's answer was: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus commended Peter, saying, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona [son of Jona]: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Peter knew what Jesus meant. It was not on Peter that Christ built His Church, as some affirm, but it was upon the Christ that is revealed in such a precious manner to those who believe and follow Him. As we obey and trust in Him, He is

made so precious to our hearts, a safe and unfailing foundation to build upon.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What must we do to be like the man who builds upon the rock?
2. What are some of the adverse elements in the world that come against one who professes to believe in Christ?
3. In what way is the doctrine of Christ solid and unmovable?
4. Who decides which kind of building program one will follow?
5. Are we all building one way or the other?
6. Why were the people astonished at Christ's doctrine?
7. Why do we have to lay aside malice, guile, hypocrisies, envy, and all evil speakings?
8. What does partaking of the sincere milk of the Word do for us?
9. What kind of stone are we coming to for to build upon?
10. Does everyone who hears the truth build upon this Rock? What about those who do not?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

It is a terrible thing to think about a person who spends their life time building a building that will come tumbling down around their heads in a time when they will need it the most. We are all builders. We are working every day on a building that we will have to live in when we leave this life and go to eternity. By hearing, believing, obeying, and continuing in Christ, we build a structure that will prevail through the heat and the cold, the times of famine and plenty, the storms and the calm. The elements of this world in all of its contradiction and antagonism will not move the soul who continues to trust and follow the Master. He is truly the living Stone, the solid foundation of the Church of God. But He is disallowed and rejected of men. This thought comes from the prophecy in Psalm 118:22, where it is written: "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner." Jesus quoted this prophecy to the Jews in conjunction with His parable about the vineyard in Matthew 21. The vineyard was Israel, the husbandmen were the rulers and the servants were the prophets who had often been slain and abused. The son who was slain and cast out of the vineyard was Jesus whom they had crucified. Jesus asked the question,

"What will the lord of the vineyard do unto those husbandmen?" Matthew said that the people answered his question there that he would destroy those husbandmen and let out the vineyard to others. It was then that Jesus quoted this Scripture about the rejected stone becoming the head of the corner, adding that "whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." This is a very serious note. We had better be careful how we treat this Rock that God has chosen to be the head stone of His Church. It can be a stumbling Stone or it can be a Rock to build upon. It is up to us as to what this Stone will be. Let us believe and obey Christ, and He will be precious to us and will afford us with safety and success in our pilgrimage of life.

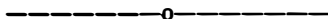
—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Both the man that built his house upon the rock and the man that built upon the sand heard the words of Christ. The difference was that one obeyed His words and one didn't. Both men built houses very much alike so far as the structures were concerned, but there were two different kinds of foundations. Likewise, some people today may seem to be just as upstanding as all other Christians. The difference is that they only have a profession. Such an experience will never stand the onslaught of tests and trials which will come to all men.

When we are anchored on the rock, Christ Jesus, we have nothing to fear. The Christian cannot help but feel the vehemence of the storm, for we are human. However, we can be assured of our end. One story tells of a cowardly lion who expressed that he had been unable to sleep for weeks because he was so frightened of things. "Have you tried counting sheep?" he was asked. "No," the lion cried, "I'm afraid of them." There are so many things in this life that would cause one to be fainthearted. Just a profession will be of little value in these situations because there is nothing to stand on. When we build upon Christ we can claim the promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Matt. 28:20.

—Wayne Murphey



September 27, 1987

CHRIST REVEALS HIS QUICKENING POWER

John 5:17 But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

18 Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

20 For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

23 That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation: but is passed from death unto life.

25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

29 And shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

Memory Verse: Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Romans 6:4.

Central Thought: God Almighty our Heavenly Father has quickening power to give life to men. As His beloved Son, Jesus has that same power to quicken the soul of man from the death of sin and trespasses to a new life of holiness and fellowship with God, and He is also able to quicken and raise the dead and judge them at the last day.

Word Definitions: *Quicken:* To restore to life; to make alive that which is dead.

LESSON BACKGROUND

At the pool of Bethesda, Jesus has just brought healing to the man who had been infirm for thirty-eight years. The incident occurred on the Sabbath day. The Jews were angry with the man who was healed because he was carrying his bed on the Sabbath, and they were angry with Jesus because He had healed on that holy day. Jesus added one more error in the darkened people's minds when He made the statement that "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." In their minds the people must have attributed this healing as the work of God, but they could not handle the idea that Jesus did this in conjunction with God as His Father. To them, that would make Jesus equal with, or on the same level with, God. Although this idea of Jesus being the Son of God Almighty, the Jews' Jehovah, is fairly common and accepted by us today, it is a very repulsive thought to the Jews. Jesus of Nazareth the Son of God?! Why, the very idea! Absurd! Impossible! Ridiculous! This was their reaction, and it incited their anger and their indignation so greatly that they thirsted for the spilling of His blood. But Jesus defended Himself very well. He endeavors to show them the close relationship that He had with the Father, and how that He, as the Son, possessed the same power and authority that the Father had. In fact, as He stated, this power and authority was given to Him by the Father. It was so given insomuch that whosoever would believe the words that Christ preached and follow Him would pass from death to life. The same honor that these people professed to give to God they were refusing to give to Jesus. In reality, because they refused to honor Christ, they were also dishonoring the Father. And in dishonoring God they were forfeiting and turning away their only chance of real life.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why were the Jews seeking to kill Jesus?
2. What kind of relationship did Jesus have with God?
3. What kind of power do both the Son and the Father possess?
4. Who do the Son and the Father desire to quicken?
5. What do they want to quicken them to?
6. What are the two resurrections spoken of in our lesson?
7. Besides the power to quicken, what other kind of authority did God commit to the Son?
8. How can a soul in the dead state of sin be resurrected?
9. What is going to happen in the last day?
10. Who will be resurrected unto life? Unto damnation?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The life that Jesus has the power to give to souls is a central and most important part of His ministration to mankind. In the beginning, the Father made all things out of nothing. He gave the earth its sustenance and life, and He breathed the breath of life into a clay form and it came to life. Originally, man not only possessed physical life, but he also had spiritual life, contact and fellowship with God. But, sad to say, man fell from God's favor and lost that spiritual life that he had been created with. Jesus came to restore this life to man. By bearing the punishment for man's sin, and being raised to life from death, He provided newness of life for every soul who believes in Him and follows Him. "From death unto life!" What wonderful words! How precious it is that there is quickening life in Jesus, the second Adam! He said, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and they that hear shall live." This is the first resurrection, a spiritual coming to life from the dead state of sin and transgression. We gain this resurrection now. We can be brought out from sin's dark grave to life, oh, life! again. We hear His voice and heed His call, and we are made alive unto God and His precious holiness and grace. We can, as our memory verse tells us, walk with Christ in newness of life. It is a new life of victory with the Lord. It will never get old. It is an eternal life that we can and must retain through earth's little while. But Jesus spoke of another resurrection. "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His [Christ's] voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done

evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. This is the last and general resurrection of which all mankind will partake of. Though men have been dead for centuries, and their bodies have long since crumbled to ashes or are consumed by flames or sunk in the depth of the sea, at the command of Christ they will return to stand before Him in judgment where they will receive their reward for the things done in their body.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Humans stand in awe at the exhibition of power. Great conquerors have left their mark on this world. Men like Alexander the Great, Napoleon, Hitler, Stalin, etc., have held within their hands the fate of people's lives, cities, countries and continents. Historians record these feats and they are etched into the minds of those who read them. These people are remembered.

It is impressive to sit in a large jet airplane and feel the power that presses you into your seat and carries you, along with many others, to an altitude of 35,000 feet. It is beyond our understanding when we consider the power that has been harnessed to propel a rocket to the moon or the power to furnish lights for a large metropolitan area.

These things are minute in comparison to the power that Christ has. Jesus said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Matt. 28:18. One time this power was accused of turning the world upside down. (Acts 17:6). Christ has the power to raise the dead back to life; something that man has tried in vain to do. Christ can change a wicked sinner into a holy person which is something that our correction departments can only dream of. Someday Christ will harness the power to resurrect every person who has ever lived and carry them far beyond the skies. Someday, every knee shall bow in awe at the power of Christ.

—Wayne Murphey

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A RETIRED MERCHANT

A London merchant engaged in Mediterranean commerce, had successfully prosecuted his business, and amassed what all merchants desire, an ample fortune. His, indeed, was a princely one. He had purchased a large and beautiful estate in the country, and had built and furnished a splendid mansion in town, on the Surrey side of the river, and now that he was verging towards sixty, he concluded to retire and enjoy the remnant of his life in peaceful leisure.

He negotiated for the sale of his abundance-making business, and sold it for another fortune. He then retired. He was a bachelor. He had his halls, his parlors, dining-rooms, and drawing-rooms, his library and cabinets of curiosities. The floors were covered with the most mosaic specimens of Brussels and Turkey carpetings, the furniture was the most complete and exquisite selections, the walls were adorned with splendid mirrors and with classic paintings, and fine linen decorated all.

Carriages, horses, grooms, and servants were at his command. Books, pictures, and engravings were at hand to interest him. The daily and the weekly papers, and the periodicals, brought to his table all the news of the great world, and his friends and his acquaintances paid him homage. How happy must the man be who has all this!

He was not happy. He had no aim, no motive. The zest with which he read the papers when he was a merchant, he had lost now he had ceased to be engaged in commerce. A storm, a fleet, a pestilence along the Mediterranean shores, was full of interest to him before, because he had investments there. Now, they were of no consequence to him. The views and aims of government were watched by him before with searching scrutiny, because his destiny was bound up with theirs. The parliamentary debates were of the greatest consequence before, as indicating British policy; but that to him now ceased to be an object of importance. His fortune was achieved, his course was run, his destiny fulfilled.

Soon, every thing and place appeared to him one uniform and universal blank. His beautiful apartments were unused, his carriage and horses unemployed, his books unread, his papers unopened, his meals untasted, and his clothes unworn. He had lost all enjoyment of life, and contemplated suicide.

Saturday night arrived, and he resolved on Sunday morning early, before the busy populace were stirring, he would make

his way to Waterloo Bridge and jump into the river, or tumble off.

At three o'clock, he set out on his final expedition, and had nearly reached the bridge, the shadows of the night protecting him from observation, when a figure stood before him. Amazed at being seen by anyone, he turned out of the path, when the figure crouching low before him, revealed a tattered, miserable man, baring his head in abjectness.

"What are you doing here?" inquired the retired merchant.

"I have a wife and family, whom I can't help from starving, and I am afraid to go and see them. Last night I knew they would be turned into the streets," replied the man.

"Take that," replied the merchant, giving him his purse, with gold and silver in it—thinking to himself, "how much more useful this will be to him, than in my pockets in the water."

"God bless you, sir—God bless you, sir," exclaimed the man several times, kneeling before the astonished merchant.

"Stop," said the merchant, "do not overwhelm me so with your thanksgivings—but tell me where you live."

"In Lambeth, sir."

"Then why are you *here* this morning?" said the merchant.

"I do not like to tell you," said the man. "I am ashamed to tell a gentleman like you."

"Why so?" replied the merchant.

"Well, sir," replied the man, "as I had not a single penny, and did not know how to get one, I came here to drown myself, although I knew it was wicked!"

The merchant was astonished and appalled, and after a long silence, said, "Sir, I am overwhelmed with wealth, and yet I am so miserable that I came here this morning for the same purpose as yourself. There's something more in this than I can understand at present. Let me go with you to see your family."

The man made every excuse to hinder the merchant, but he would go.

"Have you lost your character?" said the merchant.

"No, sir," replied the man, "but I am so miserably poor and wretched—and, for anything I know, my wife and children may be turned into the street."

"Why are you out of work and pay?" resumed the merchant.

"I used to groom the horses of the stage-coaches," said the man, "but since the railroads are come up the coaches are put down, and many men, like me, have no employment."

They plodded on their way, two miles of brick and mortar piled on either side. At last they came to a third-rate house, when a rough, common-looking woman opened the door and shutter. As soon as she saw the man, she let loose her tongue upon him for all the villainy in the world, but something which passed from his hand to hers hushed her in an instant; and observing the merchant, she courtesied to him civilly.

The man ran up-stairs, leaving the merchant and woman together, which gave the former an opportunity to make inquiries. Having satisfied himself that want was the crime of the family, he told the woman who he was, promised to see her paid, and induced her to set on and cook a breakfast for the family, and supply them with anything which they needed.

The man returned, and the merchant went up-stairs to see, for the first time, the wretched family in rags, dirt, and misery. He comforted them with hope of better days, and bidding the man take a hasty meal below, took him with him, and helped with his own hands to load a cart with bed, bedding, clothes, furniture, and food for the family.

The man was gone, and the merchant for the first moment, reflected on all that had passed. He was relieved of his misery by doing something for another, and out of mere selfishness he resolved on doing good to others, to prevent the necessity for drowning himself.

He employed the man in his stable, removed the family near, and placed them in a cottage, sending the children to school. Soon he sought out misery to relieve, and was led to consider the cause of all misery—sin. He turned to God and found Him, and sought to turn his fellow sinners.

He aided every good word and work, and was the humble teller of his own humbling story. He had been a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls, and having found the pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it; and the retired earthly merchant became an active heavenly merchant.

(Taken from Choice Readings for the Home Circle)

What Money Cannot Do

Money, no doubt, is a power; but a power of well defined and narrow limits. It will purchase plenty, but not peace; it will furnish your table with luxuries, but not you with an appetite to enjoy them. It will encompass you with flatterers, but never procure you one true friend; it will bribe for you into

silence the tongues of accusing men, but not an accusing conscience; it will pay some debt, but not the largest one of all, your debt to the law of God; it will relieve many fears, but not those of guilt — the terrors that crown the brows of Death. He stands as grim and terrible by the dying bed of wealth as by the pallet of the poorest beggar whom pitiless riches has thrust from her door. —Sel.

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