

Christ Again Foretelling His Death and Resurrection and Discoursing on Humility Matthew 17:22 to 18:1

R.A. Torrey:

(Compare Mark 9:30â€“35; Luke 9:43â€“50)

DISCOVERY OF THE FACTS

1. The Shekel in the Fishâ€™s Mouth, 17:22â€“27

What does our Lord now announce to His disciples (vv. 22, 23)? What was His purpose in telling them so often in these days of His coming death and resurrection? Did they comprehend what He was talking about? (Mark 9:32; Luke 9:45.)

When they reached their home town, what demand was made upon Him (v. 24)? Why was He under no obligation to pay the temple tax (vv. 25, 26)? Did He pay it? Why (v. 27)? Is there any lesson here for us? How did He know that Peter would find a shekel in the fishâ€™s mouth?

2. How to Enter the Kingdom of Heaven and to Be Great in It, 18:1â€“4

With what question did the disciples next come to our Lord? What had suggested to them the asking of that question? What did it reveal? Did there ever arise any strife on this point after this? (Matt. 20:20, 21; Luke 22:21â€“24.) Is it credible that such strife should arise at such times among those who were so near the Lord? What will best help us to understand it?

How did He answer their question? How came there to be a child at hand? How large a child was it? What were His first words as He took the little child? How much deeper than the question does the answer go? What does â€œbe convertedâ€ mean (see R. V.)? Why was it necessary that they â€œbe convertedâ€? In what respect must they become as little children to enter into the kingdom at all? In what respects in general ought we all to become childlike? (1 Cor. 14:20; 1 Peter 1:14; 2:2; Matt. 6:31; 11:25; Eph. 5:1) In what respects must we be unlike children? (1 Cor. 14:20; Eph. 4:14.) Are we to understand from this verse that children are by nature in the kingdom or that they are of the spirit that fits them to easily enter? (John 3:6.) How can one who is old become a child? (John 3:3; 1 Peter 2:2.) What are the conditions of an â€œabundant entranceâ€? (2 Peter 1:5â€“11.)

Whom does our Lord say is the greatest in the kingdom? What is meant by â€œhumble himselfâ€? How else is this same principle stated by Him elsewhere? (Luke 14:11; Matt. 20:26, 27; 23:11, 12.) Who is the great illustration of this humbling oneself and the consequent exaltation? (Matt. 20:28; Phil. 2:6â€“11.) Do men often follow this road to greatness? What is the worldâ€™s idea of the path to greatness?

3. How to Treat the Members of the Kingdom, vv. 5â€“9

How did our Lord seek to emphasize the preciousness of these little ones to Him? Does He mean a literal child or one with the childlike spirit? Who are the ones then especially dear to Christ? (Is. 57:15.) What is meant by â€œin My nameâ€? What very solemn warning does He give in v. 6? What is meant by â€œoffendâ€? (See R. V.) What does the warning mean? To whom does it apply? How can we â€œcause one of these to stumbleâ€? (Gen. 13:7; 2 Sam. 12:14; Ro. 2:23, 24; 14:21; 15:1â€“3; 1 Cor. 8:9â€“13.) With what feeling does our Lord regard the occasions of stumbling in the world? What does He say of their necessity? Wherein lies the necessity? (1 Cor. 11:19.) Does it in any wise excuse the one through whom these occasions of stumbling come? (Acts 2:23.) If stumbling blocks are so bad how far ought we to go in avoiding them? (1 Cor. 8:13.) Are we only to give up the things that are in themselves bad? (Luke 14:26, 27, 33.) Why would it pay one to cut off a hand or a foot or pluck out an eye if they led to sin?

4. Godâ€™s Unquenchable Love for His Own, vv. 10â€“14

What warning does our Lord give in regard to the little ones? Is there need of that warning today? What reason does He give for not despising them? What does â€œbehold the face, etc.â€ indicate? (Esther 1:14; Luke 1:19.) Are we to learn from this that we have guardian angels? Whose angels have the prominent places? Why is v. 11 left out in the R. V.? Is there any place where it is found in the R. V.? (Luke 19:10.) If it belongs here just what is its meaning in this connection?

What parable does our Lord utter in vv. 12, 13? Where else found? Is it just the same? How many of us have gone astray? (Is. 53:6.) Who are the sheep that our Lord left? What sheep is God most interested in? How does God feel when He finds one of His lost sheep? How great is this joy? (Zeph. 3:17.) What application does our Lord make of the parable? Is God willing that any one should perish? (2 Peter 3:9.) What is Godâ€™s will? (John 6:39, 40; Luke 12:32; 1 Tim. 2:4.) Will one of these little ones perish? (John 10:27â€“29; 17:12.) If Godâ€™s will is that all be saved, why are not all saved? (John 5:40.)

CLASSIFICATION OF TEACHINGS

1. God

The Father of Jesus Christ, 10; the Father of all believers, 14; His dwelling placeâ€”heaven, bestows special privilege and honor upon children, 10; takes an especial interest in, seeks the lost, rejoices over the lost one found, 13; not His will that a single little one be lost, 14.

2. Our Lord

His deity, 23, 27; carefulness to avoid causing others to stumble, 27; atoning death, resurrection, 23; love to children, 2; solicitude for children, 10; attractiveness to children, 2; believed on by children, 6; received in little children, when they are received in His name, 5.

3. The Kingdom of Heaven

(1). Conditions of entrance:

Renunciation of self seeking, 1, 3; renunciation of pride, 3, 4.

(2). Condition of greatness in the kingdom:

Humility—taking the lowly place, 4.

4. Occasions of Stumbling

Must needs be, bring woe to the world, bring woe to the man through whom they come, 7; better to perish most miserably than to be an occasion of stumbling to a believing child, 6; better sacrifice the dearest and most indispensable thing than be an occasion of stumbling, 8, 9.