

47. What is the answer given by all true believers to the great question, Who is Jesus?

Lesson Seventy-four

JESUS THE GREAT TEACHER

Scripture Reading: Matt. 22:15-46.

Scriptures to Memorize: "And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes" (Matt. 7:28-29). "And coming into his own country he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?" (Matt. 13:54). "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God" (John 3:2). "The officers answered, Never man so spake" (John 7:46).

48. Q. From what point of view shall we begin our study of the Jesus of history?

A. We shall study the Jesus of history, first, as The Great Teacher.

"Teacher" was the term most commonly used by His contemporaries in addressing Him. Matt. 8:19—"And there came a scribe, and said unto him, Teacher, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest?" Matt. 9:11—the Pharisees "said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Teacher with the publicans and sinners?" Mark 5:35—"Why troublest thou the Teacher any further?" John 3:1, 2—"Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; the same came unto him by night, and said to him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God," etc. Cf. Matt. 22:16, Luke 12:13, John 11:28, etc. *Jesus frequently alluded to Himself as The Teacher.* Matt. 26:18—here Jesus said to His disciples, "Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Teacher saith, My time is at hand; I keep the pass-

over at thy house with my disciples." Cf. Mark 14:14, Luke 22:11. John 13:13—"Ye call me, Teacher, and, Lord: and ye say well; for so I am." *Not only His contemporaries, but people of all subsequent ages, disciples and unbelievers alike, are unanimous in acknowledging Him to be The Great Teacher of all human history.*

49. Q. In what manner did Jesus of Nazareth present His teaching?

A. He taught the people "as one having authority." Matt. 7:28, 29—"the multitude were astonished at his teaching; for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes" (cf. Mark 1:22). Matt. 5:27—"Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery, but *I say unto you,*" etc. (cf. Matt. 5:34, 39, 44, etc.). Note the authoritative expression, "I say unto you." Note also the following facts with regard to His manner of presenting His teaching: (1) He *invariably spoke without hesitation*, even in reply to the most vexatious questions, such as that of the proper relation between church and state (Matt. 22:15-22); that of the persistence of earthly relationships in the future state (Matt. 22:23-33); that of the "greatest commandment" in the Mosaic law (Matt. 22:34-40), etc. (2) He *invariably spoke without effort*, without any indication of weariness, and in a quiet dignified manner that added force to His utterances. (3) He *invariably spoke without meditation or consultation*. He offered the correct solution to every troublesome problem presented to Him, then and there, on the spur of the moment. He never advised with disciples, friends, scribes or priests. (4) *He never expressed a doubt.* (5) *He spoke with such finality as to leave no room for further discussion.* Matt. 22:46—"And no one was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions." (6) *He made no mistakes.* No admission of error ever fell from His lips; and His shrewd and calculating enemies were invariably unsuccessful in their efforts to discredit His wisdom. (7) *He was always*

master of the situation (cf. Matt. 22:15-46). (8) *He always spoke in the simplest language.* Fondness for swollen language is a noticeable characteristic of human teachers and writers. The more "academic" the style of speech the more indicative of profundity it is supposed to be; however, "muddy water always looks deep." As Oliver Goldsmith said to Samuel Johnson, "You make your little fish talk like whales." "But Christ spoke of the loftiest subjects in the simplest language. Who ever needs a dictionary to study His words? His language is simple enough for a primer, and yet each word sparkles like a gem, and His sentences and sermons dazzle like a cabinet filled with diamonds. No wonder the common people heard Him gladly!" (M. M. Davis, *How to Be Saved*, p. 72). And the voice of all subsequent ages is that of the officers who were sent to apprehend Him, but who returned empty-handed, exclaiming: "Never man so spake!" (John 7:46).

50. Q. In what three general forms did Jesus of Nazareth present His teaching?

A. He presented His teaching in the form of (1) precept, (2) parable, and (3) narrative.

(1) A *precept* is ordinarily defined as a *rule* of moral conduct. The precepts of Jesus are, however, on such a lofty plane that we are compelled to think of them as *principles* rather than rules or laws. Matt. 5:28—"I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Matt. 5:34—"I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by the heaven, for it is the throne of God; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great king," etc. Matt. 5:39—"I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." Matt. 5:44—"I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven." Matt. 6:6—"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and

having shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee" etc. (2) A *parable* is a form of narration, of something that might occur in nature, from which moral and spiritual truths are to be drawn. Much of the Master's teaching was in the form of parable, the simplest method of teaching possible for the communication of profound truth, yet the most difficult of all for the human mind to originate. *In this form of teaching Jesus stands unique and inimitable.* His parables cannot be duplicated, not even by the brainiest scholar of this or any other age; and though clothed in the simplest language, the human intellect is incapable of plumbing their depths. "They grow bigger and bigger the more we study them; and what at first seemed a surface truth, deepens into a fathomless sea; and the margins apparently so near together become as wide as the world" (Davis, *ibid.*, p. 70). (3) Among the *narratives* of Jesus, we cite especially those of *The Good Samaritan*, *The Prodigal Son*, and *Lazarus and the Rich Man*. It has been rightly said that "one might as well attempt to brighten the sun or sweeten the rose" as to try to improve upon these masterpieces of narration. For sympathetic understanding of the human emotions, for absorbing human interest, for presentation of the more exalted principles of life and conduct (neighborliness, love, mercy, compassion, justice, etc.); for grasping and grouping of details in a few terse, meaningful statements (cf. Luke 15:13—"there he wasted his substance in riotous living." Luke 15:14—"and when he had spent all," etc. Luke 10:33—"and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion," etc. Luke 16:22—"the rich man also died, and was buried." Luke 16:26—"between us and you there is a great gulf fixed"); for sheer literary simplicity and beauty—*these narratives exemplify perfection itself. Nothing can be found in all the literature of the world that measures up to their standards of excellence.*

51. Q. What general plan did Jesus follow in the presentation of His teaching?

A. He followed the general plan of laying down comprehensive principles of life and conduct, rather than that of enacting fixed rules or laws.

(1) He reaffirmed all the essential moral principles of the Mosaic Law, but in a *positive* form, and in striking contrast to the *negative* form in which they were originally stated. Matt. 5:33-37, "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, Swear not at all . . . but let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one." "Thou shalt not"—so characteristic of the Sinaitic Code—does not appear in the teaching of Jesus, except in one or two instances where He found it necessary to repeat the Decalogue verbatim (cf. Mark 10:19).

(2) At the same time, He *raised* almost every standard set by the Mosaic Code, and did so by laying down comprehensive principles of moral conduct which, in the very nature of the case, have their root in *spiritual* incentives (such as love, faith, hope, penitence, etc.). Matt. 5:21, 22—"Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment," etc. Matt. 5:27, 28—"Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." (3) In brief, *He set up the proper ideals for men to strive to attain, ideals nothing short of perfection itself* (Matt. 5:48—"Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect"); *at the same time never compromising with sin, and never minimizing the fundamental truth that all who fall short of attaining these ideals, by reason of their own disobedience, indifference*

or neglect, must inevitably suffer a just retribution for their folly. Matt. 7:17-19, "Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." Matt. 7:24-27, "Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock: 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 the rock. And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall thereof." *True morality, then, according to the teaching of Jesus is the necessary and natural expression of true religion.*

REVIEW EXAMINATION OVER LESSON SEVENTY-FOUR

48. From what point of view shall we begin our study of the Jesus of history?
49. In what manner did Jesus of Nazareth present His teaching?
50. In what three general forms did Jesus of Nazareth present His teaching?
51. What general plan did Jesus follow in the presentation of His teaching?

Lesson Seventy-five

**THE TEACHING OF JESUS:
ITS UNITY AND COMPREHENSIVENESS**

Scripture Reading: John 16: 1-15, 12: 44-50.

Scriptures to Memorize: "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me may not abide in the darkness" (John 12: 46). "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you. All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he taketh of mine, and shall declare it unto you" (John 16: 13-15).

52. Q. What do we mean, in this connection, by the Teaching of Jesus?

A. By the Teaching of Jesus, we mean the entire New Testament Code.

That is, the truth which Jesus Himself revealed and established while in the flesh; and also the truth which He revealed and established through His Apostles by inspiration of the Spirit. It is all the *Teaching of Jesus*. Concerning the Apostles He said, in His Intercessory Prayer: "Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth. As thou didst send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world" (John 17: 17-18). To the Twelve, He said, when they were together in the upper room: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you. All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he taketh of mine,