

## Lesson Eighty-two

## JESUS OUR PERFECT EXEMPLAR

Scripture Reading: John 14:1-11, 7:10-24.

Scriptures to Memorize: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6). "My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself" (John 7:16, 17).

26. Q. If Jesus was God in the flesh, how could He have been "in all points tempted like as we are?"

A. He was tempted "in all points like as we are" by virtue of His residence in the flesh.

(1) Heb. 2:14, 15—"Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Heb. 5:8, 9—"Though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation." (2) Rather than to accept the view that His sufferings were mere *semblances* of temptation and trial by virtue of His inherent divinity, it is far more reasonable to think that His sufferings and temptations were *enhanced* by the supreme excellence of His physical constitution and by the essential moral purity of His inner nature. "Let us beware of contradicting the express teaching of the Scriptures," writes Farrar, "by a supposition that he was not liable to real temptation. Nay, he was liable to temptation all the sorer, because it came like agony to a nature infinitely strong yet infinitely pure. In proportion as any one has striven all his life to be, like his great Ensampler, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from

sinner; in that proportion will he realize the intensity of the struggle, the anguish of the antipathy, which pervades a finely-touched spirit when, either by suggestions from within or from without, it has been dragged into an even apparent proximity to the possibilities of evil" (Farrar, *Life of Christ*, pp. 98-99). (3) Yes, Jesus was tempted. He suffered, too, beyond our poor power to evaluate. The Captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings (Heb. 2:10), sufferings the more intensified, we believe, by the perfection of His physical body, agony the more enhanced by the purity of His moral nature and its natural antipathy to any form of evil. "Our hard impure flesh," says Luther, "can hardly comprehend the agonizing sensitiveness of a sinless nature brought into contact with hostile wickedness and hateful antagonism."

**27. Q. What practical test of His teaching does Jesus propose to us?**

**A. He proposes that we shall test His teaching by practising it in our lives.**

(1) John 7:17—"If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself." Jesus was, if anything, an eminently *practical* Teacher, and the method He proposes here is an eminently practical method. (2) This was His method—He lived what He taught. "Many teachers of the world have tried to explain everything—they changed little or nothing. Jesus explained little and changed everything. Many teachers have tried to diagnose the disease of humanity—Jesus cures it. Many teachers have told us why the patient is suffering and that he should bear with fortitude—Jesus tells him to take up his bed and walk. Many philosophers speculate on how evil entered the world—Jesus presents Himself as the way by which it shall leave. He did not go into long discussions about the Way to God and the possibility of finding Him—he quietly said to men, 'I am the Way.' Many speculate with Pilate, and ask, 'What is truth?' Jesus shows himself and

says, 'I am the Truth.' Spencer defines physical life for us—Jesus defines life itself, by presenting himself and saying, 'I am the Life.' Anyone who truly looks upon him knows in the inmost depths of his soul that he is looking on Life itself" (E. Stanley Jones, *The Christ of the Indian Road*, pp. 197-198). (3) "Merely look at Jesus, and you behold a Man. But meet Him face to face in the inwardness of comradeship and obedience, of faltering need and kingly succor, and you know yourself to be meeting the very Person, the very Self of God. I do not explain this: I simply testify" (Hogg, *Redemption From This World*, pp. 65-66). (4) "All religious experience is an adventure of the soul," writes Raymond Calkins. "It is the logical advance of the whole personality into the realm of the unknown, which becomes known only as one is ready and willing to advance without knowing." (5) "Try it out—that is the scientific method. The student of chemistry does not stand across the street looking at the laboratory and speculating about the various reactions of all those chemicals. He goes into the laboratory, takes the tubes and materials into his own hands, and begins to make experiments. Then he knows. He is on his way to becoming a chemist. Make proof of this religion of Christ! Experience is the source of religious certainty. 'Taste and see that the Lord is good'—it is the only way that we can know the Lord" (Dr. Charles R. Brown, *The Gospel For Main Street*, p. 47).

**28. Q. In what did the holiness of Jesus of Nazareth consist primarily?**

**A. The holiness of Jesus consisted primarily in His absolute devotion to the will of God the Father.**

(1) *Consider His attitude as a child of twelve years:* Luke 2:49—"How is it that ye sought me? knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" (2) *Consider His attitude with regard to His own baptism.* Matt. 3:15—"Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." (3) *Consider His attitude of devotion throughout His*

*public ministry.* John 4:34—"My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work." John 5:30—"I seek not mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." John 6:38—"I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." John 9:4—"We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." (4) *Consider His attitude of devotion as revealed in His intercessory prayer to the Father.* John 17:4, 5—"I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do. And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." (5) *Consider His attitude of devotion to the Father's will, even in His moments of intense agony in the Garden of Gethsemane.* Luke 22:41, 42—"And he was parted from them about a stone's cast; and he kneeled down and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." (6) *Consider His attitude of unwavering devotion, even in His death on the Cross.* John 19:30—"When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit." Luke 23:46—"And Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said this, he gave up the ghost." What a glorious Ideal for us to strive to attain!

**29. Q. What first great lesson, then, does Jesus teach us by His example?**

**A. Jesus teaches us by His example, first, to make the will of God our supreme rule of conduct.**

(1) Matt. 7:21—"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 who is in heaven." Luke 6:46—"And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (2) Note Paul's attitude, on receiving the heavenly vision on the way to Damascus. Acts 22:10—"And I said, What shall I do, Lord?" Acts 26:19

—“Wherefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision.” (3) “Who can estimate the advantages and the benefits that would at once accrue to the Church and to the world, if all Christians would strictly follow the example of Christ in this one particular? If all, for instance, who are now following the popular party or the multitude to do evil, or who are led away by the sinful promptings of their own lusts, passions and appetites, would simply ask, as did Christ and Paul, ‘Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?’ how very soon would the Church be purified and the world saved!” (Milligan, *Scheme of Redemption*, pp. 245-246).

**30. Q. What second great lesson does Jesus teach us by His example?**

**A. Jesus teaches us by His example, in the second place, to resist temptation by reliance on the Word of God.**

This was Jesus’ manner and method of meeting and resisting temptation. In all His conflicts with the Evil One, his main reliance was upon the Holy Scriptures. In every case, and under all circumstances, His principal argument was simply this: “It is written.” Matt. 4:3, 4—“And the tempter came and said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread. But he [Jesus] answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Deut. 8:3). Matt. 4:7—“Jesus said unto him, Again it is written, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God” (Deut. 6:16). Matt. 4:10—“Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (Deut. 6:13). “Hence it is evident that in all cases and under all circumstances Christ attached the very highest authority to the *written Word of God*. It was with Him an end of all controversy. And how happy it would be for the Church, and also for the world, if today even all those who profess to receive the Bible as

the Word of God would in this respect follow His example! But instead of doing so, how many, alas! exalt the authority of their own weak reason above that of the Holy Scriptures!" (Milligan, *ibid.*, p. 248).

**31. Q. What third great lesson does Jesus teach us by His example?**

**A. Jesus teaches us by His example, in the third place, to be wholly consecrated to God.**

His supreme interests in life were the Father's house, the Father's business, the Father's word, and the Father's work. Cf. Rom. 12:1, 2—"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service. And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good, and acceptable and perfect will of God." "Alas! How far we all come short of this perfect standard! How very imperfectly we realize the extent of our obligations, our privileges, and our birth-rights as the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty! In many places the Church is now famishing, and the world is actually perishing for want of that help which God has enabled us to give them if we would; and yet how few, alas! how very few, are willing to come to the rescue, in the spirit of their Master! O, that every one of us had a heart like that of our Redeemer, and that our lives corresponded in all possible respects with His life! Then, indeed, would the wilderness and solitary parts of the Earth soon be made glad, and the deserts would rejoice and blossom as the rose" (Milligan, *ibid.*, pp. 249-250).

#### REVIEW EXAMINATION OVER LESSON EIGHTY-TWO

26. If Jesus was God in the flesh, how could He have been "in all points tempted like as we are?"
27. What practical test of His teaching does Jesus propose to us?

28. In what did the holiness of Jesus of Nazareth consist primarily?
29. What first great lesson, then, does Jesus teach us by His example?
30. What second great lesson does Jesus teach us by His example?
31. What third great lesson does Jesus teach us by His example?

### Lesson Eighty-three

#### THE CLAIMS OF JESUS OF NAZARETH

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Scripture Reading: John 8:31-59.

Scriptures to Memorize: "I am come out from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father" (John 16:28). "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Show us the Father?" (John 14:9).

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32. Q. What third aspect of the Jesus of history shall we now investigate?
  - A. We shall now proceed to investigate the claims Jesus made for Himself.
33. Q. What is a first claim that Jesus of Nazareth made for Himself?
  - A. He claimed, in the first place, to have come from God the Father.

John 6:38—"For I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." John 8:42—"Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I came forth and am come from God; for neither have I come of myself, but he hath sent me." John 7:28, 29—"Ye both know me, and know whence I am; and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. I know him; because I am from him, and he sent me." John 17:5—"Father, glorify