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Comments on the Lesson

SUNDAY, MAY 8

"THE CLASH WITH RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY"

In last week's lesson we studied about Jesus declaring his authority by the act of cleansing the temple of its commercialism and fraud — an act that could not go unchallenged by the priests and scribes. This week's lesson reveals something of the attitude of these infuriated religious leaders, who, if they dared, would have taken the life of Jesus who had so interfered with their "status quo." The popularity with which Jesus had been accepted by the common people deterred them from immediate forceful action, but their smouldering hatred and envy found an outlet in their cunning attempt to trick him in conversation — to make him say something which they could use against him and so within the law and in the name of justice bring about his death. It was not good to have one of whom the people said "He taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes" wandering from place to place followed by eager multitudes. Such an authority must be silenced.

The Biblical Basis:
Mark 11:27-33. Mark 12:28-34

The church leaders saw in Jesus a challenge to their religion and to their authority. When Jesus cleansed the temple they were greatly disturbed and sometime later ask him by what authority he acted. Jesus said he would answer them if they would first answer a question, namely whether the baptism of John was from heaven or from men. "They dared not answer from heaven," because the Sanhedrin had ignored John's Baptism; they dared not say "of men," because the nation at large held the martyr John to be a prophet indeed. The question of Jesus makes it plain that he regarded the source of his authority as the same as John's. Both came from God.

The spirit in which the second question was asked (Mk. 12:28-34) was different from that of the first. This particular scribe, it would seem, was greatly impressed by Jesus' reply to his fellow scribes and to the Sadducees (Mk. 12:18-27) who had raised the much debated point of "Resurrection from the dead" — a doctrine which was upheld by the Pharisees but denied by the Sadducees. His question apparently was sincerely asked and was not intended as trickery. In replying to his question which in essence asked which is the most important commandment Jesus said in effect: "The commandment to love God begins by stressing the unity of the Godhead and then insists on the worship of God with the whole personality." Jesus continued his reply by stressing the importance of loving one's neighbour as the second and companion commandment.

In these two passages of scripture and in the verses that lie between telling of the parable of the Absentee Landlord, the question regarding the tribute money and the question regarding the resurrection, we find Jesus facing his opponents and meeting their plotting and treachery in such a way that when the interview is over he is left the authoritative word.

The Application:
We would do well to consider to just what extent Jesus is the authority in our lives. Jesus was opposed by the Scribes and Pharisees because his authority crossed their lives of self-satisfaction. To what extent are we self-satisfied and how do we respond to the authority of the Christ as he disturbs our complacency? Jesus speaks of a fourfold worship of God?

1. "With all thy heart" (moral consciousness)
 2. "With all thy soul" (vital emotion)
 3. "With all thy mind" (intellect)
 4. "With all thy strength" (The full exercise of all the powers of the personality).
- How does our worship compare with this standard set by the Master? Think of last Sunday's worship in the light of this fourfold criterion.
- Jesus also spoke of loving our neighbours as ourselves. Here too he spoke in an authoritative voice. How does our life, bound up as it is with racial, class and colour discrimination, look in the eyes of Christ? Are our responses to the great missionary challenge and the Christly idea of neighbourliness compatible? Think of the missionary effort of your church, your family, yourself as an individual, and compare it with the words of Jesus "thy neighbour as thyself."

We like the Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees and others are liable to become self-satisfied and set up our own authority and to become resentful when the authoritative word of Jesus cuts across our way of life. From this lesson we can learn that, quibble and argue as we may, Jesus remains the Master and the absolute fullness of religious life is found in complete surrender to his authority.

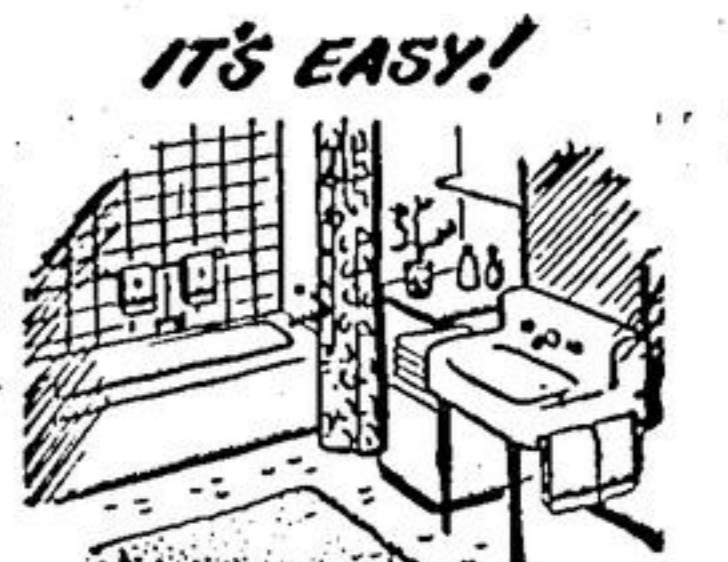
Helpful Quotations:
"A love of man which is not"



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based on the love of God is always liable to succumb to the temptations of self-gratification, self-interest and sentimentality.

"The love of God is the only secure and permanent basis for the love of man."

Jesus never overthrew anything that was worth keeping and he did not attack a thing just for the sake of attacking it.

"For all his gentleness, Jesus makes demands such as no political messiah would dare to make."

"If the modern man had even a normal sensibility to what he owes God, he would be so constrained by the requirements of elementary courtesy that he would not withhold himself from sharing in the public worship of God."

ASHGROVE

The annual meeting of the Women's Institute was held at the home of Mrs. Hector Bird on April 10th, with 25 ladies and 2 visitors present. The roll call was answered by "A rhyme to go with your name". Mrs. Stringer gave the motto "Make the most of life wherever you are." Mr. Blain from Brampton gave an illustrated lecture on certain hardware and their uses. Mrs. Horace Barnes entertained with a reading and Barbara Cunningham and Marlon Bird sang a duet. The delegates for the district annual were chosen — Mrs. C. Austin, Mrs. Harvey Nurse, Mrs. R. Cunningham and Mrs. Thos. Giffen.

The following officers were elected for 1949-50:

Past president, Mrs. Thos. Giffen; President, Mrs. Charles Austin; 1st Vice Pres., Mrs. Milton Bird; 2nd Vice Pres., Mrs. Leslie Giffen; Sec'y. Treas., Mrs. Harvey Nurse; Assist. Sec'y. Treas., Mrs. H. Barnes; Directors, Mrs. W. Brownridge, Mrs. T. Giffen, Mrs. W. Bird, Mrs. A. J. Ruddell. Dist. Director, Mrs. R. Cunningham; Pianist, Mrs. Hector Bird; Assist. Pianist, Mrs. T. Brownridge; Flower Committee, Mrs. Bruce Bridgen, Mrs. Cecil Wilson, Mrs. Clayton Wilson, Courtesy Committee, Mrs. C. B. Dick, Mrs. Frank Wilson, Mrs.

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