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Lesson VII.—Second Quarter, For May 15, 1910.

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Text of the Lesson, Matt. xii, 22-32, 38-42—Memory Verse, 41—Golden Text, Matt. xii, 30—Commentary Prepared by Rev. D. M. Stearns.

We have today the option of the regular lesson or a special lesson on the Holy Spirit, but as the lesson for the day gives opportunity for a study of the Holy Spirit we will continue regularly. First we see Him healing a demon possessed man who was both blind and dumb, and the man both spoke and saw. The people were amazed and said, "Is not this the son of David?" perhaps recalling the words of Isa. xxxv, 5, 6, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as an hart and the tongue of the dumb sing. Recently we saw Him heal a demon possessed dumb man (Lk. 11, 14, 15). But in this case the afflicted man was blind as well as dumb. But nothing is too hard for the Lord. Can we imagine a kingdom without sickness or infirmity or suffering of any kind? Yet that is what we expect and shall surely see in His time (Isa. xxxiii, 24; Rev. xxi, 1-4).

The blind Pharisees madly accuse Him of casting out demons by the power of the devil himself, as if Satan would cast out Satan and work against himself. How foolishly the devil does cause people to talk! They talk much more foolishly today when they say and teach that there is no devil at all and no hell. It would seem from verse 27 that unbelievers were permitted by their ruler to do some wonderful things, even as the magicians of Egypt counterfeited the miracles of Moses up to a certain point. We know from II Thess. ii, 9; Rev. xiii, 11-15, that at the end of this age the devil will specially deceive many by his miracles and signs and lying wonders. Our Lord Jesus said that if it were possible they would deceive the very elect (Matt. xxiv, 24), so we must not be deceived by the wonders wrought by the adversary in the name of spiritualism, Christian Science and other false teaching of our times. These things will continue and increase until the devil, the strong man of verse 29, shall have been bound, and shut up in the bottomless pit for 1,000 years (Rev. xx, 1-3). The truth of God, just as it stands in His word, is the only power that will set us free from all delusions (John viii, 32, 36).

We are either with Christ or against Him; either taught by the spirit of God or the devil (verses 28, 30). If people resist the Holy Spirit and listen to the teaching of demons it is, as Jesus said, impossible to escape the damnation of hell (Matt. xxiii, 35). As I understand it the unpardonable sin of verses 31, 32, and I John v, 16, is the persistent turning from the Holy Spirit to the devil and attributing to the latter the works of the Spirit. Let it comfort and encourage any who fear they have committed the unpardonable sin to remember that the very fact that they have a fear of such guilt is evidence that the Holy Spirit has not left them, and, however far they may have wandered, if they will only turn to the Lord the word stands, "Him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out" (John vi, 37). That words are an evidence of the condition of the heart (verse 34) should make us covet to have the word of God dwelling in us richly in order that our words may savor of Christ. It would be well to be like Elihu in Job xxxii, 18-20, and that would be the case if our experience was that of Job xxxii, 12; Jer. xv, 16. If we kept verse 36 of our lesson in mind it would make us more careful in view of Rom. xiv, 10, 12.

In verse 38 see these blind and foolish Pharisees asking for a sign after He had already wrought in their presence all the signs which the prophet had said would be done by the Messiah. No wonder that He called them an evil and adulterous (idol worshiping, world conformed) generation (verse 39), a generation of vipers (verse 34; xxiii, 33), of their father the devil (John viii, 44), for He knew them well and knew what was in them.

See in verses 40, 41, His indorsement of the story of Jonah and the great fish and Nineveh and her repentance and no doubt He looked onward to the time when Israel, cast up on their shores by the nations, would become truly penitent at His appearance in glory and carry His message not to one city, but to all nations for their good. See in verse 42 His indorsement of the story of the queen of Sheba and the wisdom of Solomon, and doubtless He looked onward to the fulfillment of Isa. lx. Is he to us a greater than Jonah or Solomon or Moses or Aaron? Do we say, with great gratitude and gladness, "We have such an High Priest" (Heb. viii, 1; vii, 26; iv, 15), and have we as believers entered into rest? (Heb. iv, 3).

Those who profess to be His friends and yet talk down the things that He believed are no friends of His, but rather belong to the company represented by the Pharisees of His day. Being rejected by the nation; whose rulers had determined to kill Him (verse 14), He is led, by a visit from His mother and His brethren, to declare, "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father, which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother" (verse 50). Compare Luke viii, 21.

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