

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

GETTING THE MAIN IDEA

By William T. Ellis.

The International Sunday School Lesson For April 6 is "God Our Heavenly Father"—Matthew 6:23-34.

Queer folk are called "eccentric," because they are out of center. They are not properly geared up, machinery out of order with respect to what is most important, they are, in consequence, imperfectly related to the incidental things of life. They do not put first things first, and so, for them, the entire multiplication table is out of kilter. This is exactly what ails most of the unhappy persons in the world. They are the victims of their own maladjustment. Carried too far this business of being out of center, or eccentric, leads to the lunatic asylum, where the first characteristic of all the inmates is that they view things out of proportion and relationship.

What then is central to a symmetrical life? The answer has been made by all the centuries, and by the universe itself. The main idea is—God. Toward that truth of a Supreme Being all the ages have groped, and the most revealing fact about any race or era is the idea of God.

Now the Sunday Schools of the land are setting out on a six months' course of studies in the great teachings of the Bible, and they begin with the basic and all-comprehending truth that there is a God, and that he is the Father sent. These twenty-four lessons, to which we look forward, may be tabulated here:

1. God.

2. Christ.

3. (Easter.)

4. The Holy Spirit.

5. Man.

6. Sin.

7. Grace.

8. Repentance.

9. Faith.

10. Obedience.

11. Prayer.

12. Love.

13. The Church.

14. Baptism.

15. The Lord's Supper.

16. Fellowship.

17. Worship.

18. Evangelism.

19. Missions.

20. Social Responsibility.

21. Temperance.

22. The Kingdom of God.

23. The Future Life.

24. The Bible.

May We Do As We Please?

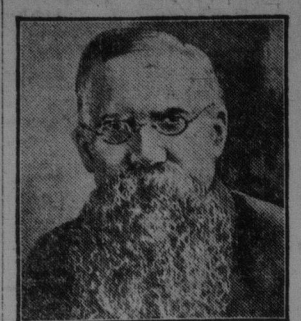
Aboard ship one time I heard an "emancipated" woman declare that respecting virtue itself "One might do as one pleased," and it was "nobody's business." Questioned, she at once admitted that she did not believe in God or in any absolute standards of right or wrong. She thought God and the Bible good for those still in the childhood of the race? Of course it was easy to make clear that these "new" views were but the jungle come to town in city clothes; and that from her own low standard of selfishness they were unwelcome and unwelcome. The human race as a whole in all lands, has learned that fact. But the incident shed light on the trend of the times.

"In vain we call old notions fudge, And bend our conscience to our dealing; The Ten Commandments will not budge, And stealing still continues stealing."

There are some truths and facts as fixed as the pole star. While we are busy making over the world we have to take these into account. None of our vaunted progress has taken us

A CRIPPLE FOR THREE YEARS

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From Fetiche To Nirvana.

Jungle-dwellers and oriental philosopher and conquering general all accept the idea of a God. It is but the mid-African's stick, or it may be the dreamy-eyed Buddha's abstraction of Allness which he calls Nirvana. In its totality, the human race has voted solidly for a Being, outside of itself, to whom it owes a responsibility.

Since the war, as not before for generations, all of civilization subscribes to the creed, "I believe in God." We hear the reverent words of General Foch, General Pershing, General Haig, Admiral Beatty, and the other fighting men, and we agree that this God has mightily displayed his personal providence during the world war. We see that he is a God who fights for justice and righteousness

and liberty and brotherhood. His character is revealed by his works.

What we believe about God is the most important factor in shaping our own conduct and character. Shallow-minded persons occasionally say, "It does not matter what a man believes, so long as he acts right." But history is one long testimony to the truth that men act only according to their beliefs. The beliefs of Luther's Germany had to be changed by the cult of materialistic philosophy before there could be produced the monstrosity of "kultur" and frightfulness. "As a man thinketh, so he is." Given a holy God to whom people are loyal and you will have a holy people. Let our boys and girls grow up untaught concerning God, or in circles where the will of God is not reckoned with, and there will inevitably follow a generation of selfish and loose-living men and women.

Collins, the free-thinker, once said a plain farmer, and asked him where he was going. "To church, sir." "What are you going to do there?" "Worship God." "Is he a great God or a little God?" "Both." "How can that be?" "He is so great, sir, that the heaven of heavens cannot contain him, and so little that he can dwell in my heart." Collins said that this answer from the farmer had more effect upon his mind than all the learned books written against him.

A Man as a Mirror.

Once, in the city of Alexandria, in Egypt, I interviewed Abbas Effendi, the head of the Behai cult; and his talk was all of "manifestations," or, of men who mirrored God. He kept returning to this idea of the prophets as mirrors. It is a good one. In the greatest modern telescope one does not look directly at the heavenly bodies, but into a wonderful and perfectly mirrored. So to see God most clearly, we must behold him mirrored in the face of Jesus Christ. We cannot comprehend God in his totality; but we can behold him in the person and qualities of his sent Revealer, his only Son.

"Every man is responsible for his face at fifty," said a distinguished lawyer. Our personalities do come to reflect what we really represent. Some men make us think of base things; selfishness, sensuality, selfishness or smallness of soul are stamped on their faces. Other men and women—it is often women—start us to thinking of God. Their faces mirror spirituality. And whenever we look upon Jesus, we see all of God that it is possible for us to comprehend. He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." Christ is God's looking glass.

The qualities of God, which Jesus portrayed were Father qualities. That idea was something new in religion. A God of battles, a God of fire, a God of nature, a God of vengeance, a God of terror—all these figures were familiar to the race. But in the mirror of the master men saw God as a Father, pitiful, patient, protecting, providing and pardoning. It is an overwhelming thought that all the infinite and omnipotent qualities of God are at the service of his father's heart.

That is a word for today. All over the earth men and women need to learn. They need the ever-present God who has a fatherly nature; and that he sent his Son to say so. I know a woman of strong character, a trained nurse, who is now employed by a few general physicians, giving her time exclusively to this work, to visit their nervous and distraught patients and read to them the New Testament, and talk to them about God as Christ made him plain. For these scientifically-trained doctors have learned that the oftentimes the hearts of men and women that are sick; and that they need, more than medicines and surgery, to hear the voice of Jesus say, "Come unto Me and rest." My wise nurse-friend has become a minister to souls.

A Path to Peace.

Our commonest ailment in the western world today is nervous prostration. We are fretting ourselves into impotence and pain and joylessness, because we are losing our faith in God. It is God that we need most of all. A clear comprehension of the truth that Jesus so beautifully expounded, on the gently sloping hill by the Lake of Galilee, just outside of Tiberias, is the sovereign remedy for our day's ills. He showed how the very Father nature of God entailed exemption from anxiety.

"Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on: is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?"

"Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?"

"And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin."

"And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. And tomorrow is cast into the oven, and the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

"Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall the Gentiles seek? for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

"Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

"I know not where his island lift Their fringed palms in air; I only know I cannot drift, Beyond his love and care."

Timelier than the cablegram in this paper is the word of Jesus that the God who is a Father also has a kingdom; and that all who would be his sons and know his peace should devote themselves with supreme passion to that kingdom. We are all bent on bettering the blood-bought world and upon keeping faith with our dear dead, who proved their sonship by their sacrifice in France. What they did to win can only be secured as the king-

dom of God comes among men; the kingdom that is love and justice and good will; the kingdom that is the one sure league of nations. As our soldiers offered up their all for a kingdom cause, can we ignore the call of Christ to pursue, with passionate and self-immolating devotion, the kingdom that glorifies the King and serves him? Here is the challenge for the new day. Our God whose fatherly heart yearns for tokens of our love stands up to live and die for his kingdom, his cause, his flag. In that service there is complete satisfaction and perfect freedom.

CAPTAIN KETTLE ON THE WARPATH

(Continued from page 1, 2nd Section).

"Hello, sir," said the little sailor, turning around. "Glad to see you're here all right again. You had a bit of a bump."

"It seemed to me several bumps." "My fault, sir, entirely. I brought her alongside in a way that ought to cost me my arman's ticket. I told you all along she was a beast to navigate; but I'm not going to excuse myself behind him. You put it on your shoulder out in getting ashore."

"And you put it in, my dear?" "I tried," said Dr. Brown; "I did my best."

"But you had to call in a second opinion, eh?" "Well, sir, you see, Miss hadn't had the experience in getting limbs and putting them into joint that I have. But I think you'll find we did the job all right between us."

"I'm afraid that's a total loss. You see, sir, if the Dames had got it, being neutrals, they'd probably have traded it back to the Germans. So I just put a match to the petrol tank before I left. We were only just across the border, and a whole regiment of German soldiers skipped over to put out the blaze."

"And didn't they? Quick, man—don't say they managed it!"

"It looked as if some of your bombs got overheated, sir. She made one of the finest blow-ups I ever heard of, and the great big, square hole that was left was beginning to fill with water when we set off for the house. The farmer here seems rather pleased. He says the great difficulty on this farm has been enough water for milk-cooling."

"Eh, well, we seem to have made some good Germans after all. And our little girl here with the nice eyes has had the time of her life, haven't you, my dear? You appear to be the person that's been mainly scared off, Captain. You'll have trouble with that chap if the Rhine Tour was essential."

"Don't you make any mistake there, sir. I've got that crowd in hand, and a bit to spare, if Rhine poetry will do it."

"What—you've written the things?" "I have, sir. It seems to me I generally can write poetry best about places I haven't seen! Seeing them generally spoils my flow. If I don't give that chemist Loversy a good beating I'll eat my hat. These new Rhine Tour poems of mine beat the real thing hands down. They'll just make the swastika when I give them from our pulpit."

THE END.

I must gain my confidence in my own ability to keep my resolves when they are made.—Lincoln.

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Where you see no good, silence is best.—Anton.

After your death you were better have a bad epitaph than ill report while you lived.—Shakespeare.

Abide in me, and I in you. . . for without me ye can do nothing.—John 15:4, 5.

Where I have but him Is my Fatherland; And all gifts and graces come Heritage into my hand: Brothers long departed I in His disciples find restored.

The Path to Health

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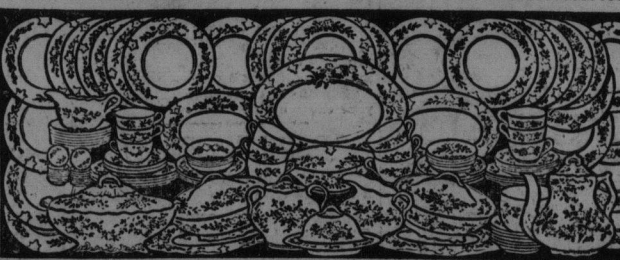
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