

The Sunday School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON XXXVIII.

Sept. 21, 1879. } THE CHRISTIAN CITIZEN. } Tit. iii. 1-9

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's."—Matt. xxii. 21.

HOME STUDIES.

- M. Rom. xiii. 1-7..... Powers ordained of God.
T. 1 Pet. ii. 1-17..... Submission to rulers.
W. Tit. iii. 1-9..... The Christian citizen.
Th. Matt. xxii. 15-22.... The things which are Cæsar's.
F. Matt. xvii. 22-27.... Tribute paid.
S. Tit. iv. 1-25..... A pattern of good works.
S. Heb. x. 14-25..... Without wavering.

HELPS TO STUDY.

Amongst the various nationalities brought together "in one place" on the day of Pentecost to hear the Gospel for the first time "every man in his own language," we find (Acts ii. 11) that there were "Cretes," or Cretans—people belonging to the island of Crete, now called Candia, in the Mediterranean Sea. It is probable that some of these carried the good news to their native island, for when Paul and Titus visited it (i. 5) they found Christians there, though these were in an unorganized state and distracted by heresies. "To set in order the things that" were "wanting," Paul left Titus in Crete, and afterwards sent him the epistle which contains our present lesson, with very full instructions and advice as to what those things were which were wanting and how they were to be supplied. Of Titus himself there is little known. He is not mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. From Galatians ii. 3, we learn that he was a Greek; from Titus i. 4, it is apparent that he was one of Paul's converts—"mine own son after the common faith;" and we gather from such passages as 2 Cor. vii. 13, 14; viii. 6, that he was one of Paul's most trusted co-labourers. In the passage which forms our lesson Paul tells Titus to remind the Christians of Crete of their duties as citizens, showing them that their profession involved good behaviour in all the relations of life, on the ground that although salvation is by grace and "not by works of righteousness which we have done," it is still none the less necessary that "they which have believed in God," to show their faith by its proper fruits, should "be careful to maintain good works." The following topical division may be adopted: (1) *The Duties of the Christian Citizen*, (2) *Salvation by Grace*, (3) *Good Works Maintained*.

I. THE DUTIES OF THE CHRISTIAN CITIZEN—vers. 1-3.

True Christianity is not only consistent with but conducive to the highest patriotism and loyalty. The subjects of the kingdom of heaven are the best subjects of the kingdoms of earth; and, as a rule those countries in which true religion is most prevalent are the freest from political disorder. The Christian learns obedience in the best school, and the more faithful he is to his principles the readier he is to be subject to principalities and powers and to obey magistrates, so long as obedience to them does not interfere with the obedience which he owes to God. The Cretans were, in Paul's time, under the dominion of the Roman Empire, and in their heathen condition had the reputation of being an unruly people. It would also seem as if some of those who became Christians, but did not as yet properly understand the principles of Christianity, justified their disobedience on the ground that being now under law to Christ they were no longer obliged to render obedience to a heathen government. This error the apostle corrects by showing what the Christian ought to be in this respect—an example of order and good citizenship to his ungodly neighbours. The relations of Church and State are most clearly and beautifully defined in our golden text: "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's." There is no proper or necessary cause for antagonism in this matter. The infraction of the rule in one or the other of its clauses has led to much trouble and even to much bloodshed. Cæsar—the civil ruler—has sometimes gone out of his sphere to legislate in matters of religion and of conscience, that is in "things that are God's;" while on the other hand, corrupt systems, professedly Christian, have, in God's name, claimed a power over temporal governments and a jurisdiction in civil matters for which they have no authority in the Word of God and which are properly among "the things which are Cæsar's." Intelligent and enlightened Christians have always resisted both of these encroachments and it was not without the shedding of the blood of many martyrs that our present civil and religious liberties were attained. Those who obey this rule yield their spiritual guidance and, their allegiance in religious matters, to God; they cheerfully obey the civil laws of the land in which they live, or if those laws are wrong they try to get them rectified by orderly and constitutional means; and they submit neither to Erastianism nor to Popery.

The apostle calls upon Christians to give their hearty support to any benevolent enterprise, national or local, that is calculated to be of real benefit to their fellow-citizens; and the promoters of such enterprises find that it is better to look for support to religious people than to those infidels who talk so much of their benevolence and love to mankind as being more than enough to make up for their want of religion; for it is the former and not the latter who are ready to every good work of this or of any other kind. Christians are instructed to speak evil of no man. "There is

peculiar reason," says one, "why the Christian man should not be counted in among the great army of slanderers. He, at least, should be above scandal. Love for the souls of men should keep him from repeating stories to the discredit of neighbours, and from adding to them. He should act on the principle that every man is innocent until he is proven to be guilty. No man should be more bold, nor more kind, in rebuking evil to one's face, and no one so slow to speak of it behind one's back. He should be known as the helper of every man who needs help, and not as a backbiter. One is not always justified in speaking evil of any one, even when he is speaking the truth. That sometimes is uttered with the malevolent feeling that is like to that which possesses a man when he assassinates another. Nothing but a good purpose will ever justify a man in speaking of the evil that he knows is practised by his neighbour—either the reclamation of the man, or the suppression of the sin, or both. On the other hand, the spirit of the direction, not to speak evil of one's neighbour, does not mean that one should make him out better than he is. That would still be 'speaking evil.' Christianity never countenances aught but honesty." To be no brawlers but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men. The true Christian alone is the real "gentle-man," not self-asserting or pugnacious but patient and forbearing; and this not from weakness or cowardice; it takes more strength and courage to be meek than to be resistant: "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city" (Prov. xvi. 22). In the third verse: "for we ourselves were sometime foolish, etc., Paul gives a reason why Christians should be gentle and forbearing to others. He includes himself in the list of evil-doers, and in so doing displays the very spirit of meekness which he commends. Christians are but redeemed sinners, and they remember what they formerly were. John Newton, a minister remarkable for godliness and Christian devotedness, upon seeing a man being taken to Newgate to be hanged for murder, said "But for the grace of God, there goes John Newton."

II. SALVATION BY GRACE.—vers. 4-7.

"All are sinners," says a modern preacher, "but there are two kinds of sinners—washed sinners and unwashed sinners" and between these two kinds of sinners there is as much difference as there is between light and darkness. The washing is not superficial; it reaches to the heart, and is equivalent to being "created anew;" it is the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which is shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. The washed sinner neither hates nor despises the unwashed. He knows that it is no merit of his; no works of righteousness that he has done, but the kindness and love of God, that makes him to differ; that he has to thank God for enabling him to do these same works of righteousness; that he is "justified freely by" God's "grace" (Rom. iii. 24); that it is "the grace of God that bringeth salvation" (Titus ii. 11); in short, that "salvation is of the Lord" (Jonah ii. 9).

III. GOOD WORKS MAINTAINED.—vers. 8, 9.

Does the believer then expect to be saved irrespective of his own character and conduct? to continue in his sins, and become an inhabitant of that place into which no sin can enter? to trample the moral law under foot and get to paradise over its neck? to become obnoxious even to human laws, and enter heaven with a morality that is not sufficient to keep him out of gaol? By no means. Jesus came to "save His people from their sins." He fits them for heaven, not in spite of the moral law, but by sanctifying them up to the demands of the moral law in all its breadth and depth of meaning—that is by making them perfectly holy. Christ "gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus ii. 14). The believer does not, like the scribes and pharisees, rest his claim to heaven on his own righteousness, but still he knows that his righteousness must exceed theirs. And he would not have "herewise. Through the "renewing of the Holy Ghost" he has been brought to hate sin, and to love holiness not only for the sake of the happiness which accompanies it but for its own sake. Paul directs Titus to affirm constantly that salvation is by grace, and to do so for the very purpose that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. There have been those who were afraid that the proclamation and acceptance of the doctrine of salvation by grace would lead to antinomianism, but Paul was not one of them.

The writer already quoted thinks the advice given in the last verse of the lesson peculiarly well-fitted for Sabbath school teachers and scholars. He says: "Many animosities have grown out of useless and profitless discussions in Bible classes concerning the authority of some minute precept, or of some trifling occurrence in Old Testament history. Such strivings never occur in regard to the great principles of the law, but almost invariably are over some insignificant matters that are not worth a lengthy consideration. 'They are unprofitable and vain;' just the opposite of good works, which are declared to be 'good and profitable unto men.' The arguing Christian is never a working Christian, and the working Christian never has the time, nor the inclination to waste his time, in a useless debate. Work gives a taste for spiritual food—argument is satisfied with a wrangle. There are many teachers who have been bothered with members of their classes who think it is an evidence of smartness to start questions that no one can answer, and thus involve the whole class in a senseless disputation. Here

is an opportunity, out of the Scriptures, and without going out of the way to do it, to show them that such things are 'unprofitable and vain.'"

SUGGESTIONS ON SINGING.

Whatever differences of opinion there may be on minor questions, there are certain principles which we believe exactness and propriety both establish in regard to sacred song.

First. While there should be a choir to lead the singing, that choir ought by all means, to be made up of Christian people.

Second. Since even Christians need to take pains to be in a fit state to worship, nothing is more important than that the members of the choir should be accustomed to attend the prayer and devotional meetings of the church.

Third. The singers should prepare themselves for their duty by prayer, and an earnest seeking of the Spirit's aid, just as the minister should prepare himself for preaching.

Fourth. If the singer can not pray, he can not sing. He may have the best voice in the world, but his efforts will be without power or blessing.

Fifth. It ought to be the custom for the pastor and his choir to have a season of prayer before commencing the service, in order to seek special preparation from God.

Sixth. Nothing is more evident than that the effect of singing is greatly dependent on the spiritual state of the singers at the time. Even a converted organist can make his piety felt through his keys.

Seventh. In order to insure those results, the church ought to have the appointment of singers in her own hands. The matter should not be put into the hands of a society, or an unconverted music committee.

Eighth. Beyond all else, it should be understood that the choir is for leading the congregation, and not for entertaining them with their musical performances. Great responsibility rests on the pastor in this matter. He should see to it that the people are furnished with plenty of books; and he should always, in a hearty, friendly way, urge all to unite in the singing. The example of the pastor is all-powerful.

Sometimes a minister gives out an invitation for all to sing, in such a sad, mournful tone, that no one cares any more about it than he seems to; and hence there is no spirit in the singing. As far as possible, the children should be enlisted. The hymns, at least, ought to be such as they can join in.—*Ira D. Sankey in the Watchword.*

PRESERVING CLEOPATRA'S NEEDLE.

The London Metropolitan Board of Works recently took in hand the subject of preserving their Cleopatra's Needle which had caused so much trouble to float to its destination. After consultation with experts, it was decided to grant to one Henry Browning the job of cleaning and coating the monolith with a solution of his own invention. The effect, says the "Times," has exceeded the most sanguine expectations. In operating upon the granite, Mr. Browning first gave it a thorough cleansing, removing all the sooty and greasy matters from the surface, and indurated it with his invisible preservative solution. The effect has been to give a freshness to the granite as if only just chiseled from the rock, retaining the original colour, disclosing the several veins, the white spar shining in the sun's rays like crystals, and exhibiting the polished portions as they formerly existed. More than this, the "Intagli," or the hieroglyphic engravings, come out far more pointedly than before, and the injuries the stone has received are now plainly distinguishable from the hieroglyphics. The solution soaks well into the pores of the granite, and the best authorities consider that it will have the effect of thoroughly preserving the monolith for centuries yet to come.

Around the Table.

TIME ENOUGH.

Be more cheerful; do not worry;
There is time enough to do
Every day the daily duties
That your Father sendeth you,
And to find some little moments
For heart-music fresh and new.

DUTY AND CHANCE.

IT was a beautiful day, sunny and warm, and Dick, Lou, Nell and little Tot set forth on their trip to the woods in high spirits. Bright as the day was, it had been preceded by frosts that must have scattered the nuts, they thought, and they expected to return with full baskets.

"Besides," as Tot explained, "we'll have a gooder time 'cause we're going to sell the nuts to help 'Little Folks' Mission Band."

That was the plan, and a whole pleasant day of rambling, with a picnic dinner in the wood,