

## The Sunday School.

## INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

## LESSON L.

Dec. 14. } *THE HEAVENLY CITY.* { Rev. xxi. 21-27  
1899. } { xlii. 1-5.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."—Heb. xi. 10.

## HOME STUDIES.

M. Isa. lxxv. 17-25.....New heavens and earth.  
T. Ezek. xlviii. 1-12.....The holy waters.  
W. Rev. xix. 1-21.....The marriage of the Lamb.  
Th. Rev. xx. 1-15.....The throne of judgment.  
F. Rev. xxi. 1-8.....All things new.  
S. Rev. xxi. 10-27.....The heavenly city.  
Sab. Rev. xxii. 1-5.....The tree of life.

## HELPS TO STUDY.

In this lesson we have part of the description which John gives of the "Holy City," or "New Jerusalem," that he saw in his vision.

This description, like the rest of the book, is symbolical. The Bible nowhere reveals to us the position, the structure or the material of heaven; but it tells us much regarding its moral condition and the character of its inhabitants.

An exact and literal description of the abode of the blessed would necessarily be expressed in terms which would be quite new to us, and which we therefore could not understand; but by means of earthly symbols enough is revealed to us of that glory which is indefinable in earthly language, to raise our desires to the things which are above, and make us anxious to have our character fitted for celestial citizenship.

Some of the negative and positive characteristics of heaven and its inhabitants may be gathered from the lesson and placed under the following heads: (1) *Some things that are not in Heaven,* (2) *Some things that are in Heaven.*

I. SOME THINGS THAT ARE NOT IN HEAVEN.—Keeping as near as possible to the order followed in the text, we find that there is in heaven,

1. *No Temple.*—chap. xxi. 22. John saw no temple in the city, for it was all temple. The outward forms and ordinances instituted in the Church on earth are no longer required in heaven; because there worship, service, and communion with God are direct. His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face (xxii. 3, 4.)

The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it: "The object of all worship was there and the Great Sacrifice Himself."—*Alford.*

2. *No Sun, Moon, or Candle.*—xxi. 23; xxii. 5. Compare Isaiah xiv. 23. As the light of the sun makes the stars invisible, so would the light of heaven make the sun itself invisible. Its presence would not increase the light, neither would its absence diminish it. The Lord God—He who said, "Let there be light"—giveth them light. They are in direct communication with the source of knowledge and purity.

3. *No Night.*—xxi. 25; xxii. 5. No night of ignorance, intellectual or spiritual; no night to hide evil deeds; no night of sorrow; no hidings of God's countenance; no need of night where there is no weariness.

There is no place in heaven for those who "prefer the darkness to the light."

4. *No Sin.*—xxi. 27. Even were it possible for a person to continue to love sin, and still get to heaven, he would not be happy there. There shall in no wise enter therein anything that defileth. The negative "in no wise" is very intense in the original.

"Who then can be saved?" They which are written in the Lamb's book of life. They were once sinful even as others, but they "have washed their robes and made them clean in the blood of the Lamb;" they have been sanctified; they love sin no longer; and a sinless place is their chosen habitation. The presence of sin on earth is the most essential difference between it and heaven.

5. *No Curse.*—xxii. 3. The earth labours under a curse—the curse of a broken law (Gal. iii. 10). In heaven there is no broken law and therefore no curse. The saved were once under the curse, but Christ took it upon Himself and freed them from it.

## II. SOME THINGS THAT ARE IN HEAVEN.

The blessedness of heaven does not entirely consist in negatives. The absence of sin and sorrow is much; but there are positive attractions besides. In heaven there is:

1. *Room.* In the part of chap. xxi. which precedes our lesson, we have an account of an angel measuring the city; perhaps for the purpose of convincing John and others that it is large enough, affording abundant accommodation for the nations of them that are saved.

2. *Welcome.*—xxi. 21. The city is represented as having twelve gates, always standing invitingly open. They shall not be shut at all by day, and then there shall be no night there, so they shall never be shut. There is nothing on the part of the city or of its Lord, to exclude anyone. It is only his own character that shuts anyone out.

3. *Safety.* This is symbolized by the height of the walls and by their precious foundations. Under the figure of the richest gems of earth we are taught that God employs the wealth of the universe for the protection of the redeemed.

4. *Health.*—xxii. 2. The tree of life: Not one particular tree, but a species of tree. Twelve manner of fruits: Some render it *twelve fruits*, that is, twelve crops—one each month.

5. *Holiness.* The sanctity of the redeemed does not end with freedom from sin. We are told that His servants serve Him, indicating that they are actively employed in doing good.

6. *Happiness.* There is nothing in the universe that can mar the happiness of the saved. Their heart's desire on earth was to be freed from sin, to be enabled to do God's will, and to enjoy the presence of their Saviour. This desire is accomplished. They see His face; He recognizes them as His own, His name is in their foreheads; none shall be able to "pluck them out of His hand;" they shall reign for ever and ever.

## WHAT WILL MAKE HIM A CHRISTIAN?

A note came to me not long ago in regard to the average boy of fifteen years. This note was from the father of such a boy, and doubtless not a few parents have the same anxious thoughts about their boy that the writer of the note evidently had about his. The note contained this question: "What will put the average boy of fifteen in the way of salvation, and make him a Christian?" It has occurred to me that as other parents are asking the same important question, in answering it for one I may answer it for many. The question implies that the average boy of fifteen is not a Christian. It does not ask what will save him, but what will put him in the way of salvation. Now where does the average boy stand?

I here assume that the writer of the note meant, not the rough boy, not the boy on the street, airing his fast tendencies, but the decent well-behaved boy, whose conduct is outwardly correct, and who is reasonably thoughtful. I believe many such are a good deal nearer being Christians than they think they are, and that what they most need is, not the acceptance of a creed, but the performance of some specific act that shall commit them to known duty. Suppose an acorn lying on the ground could look up to the tree from which it fell, and say, "What will put me in the way of becoming an oak-tree?" The possibility of the oak is in the acorn. Place it in your bureau drawer, and it never moves in the direction of becoming a tree. Put it in the ground, and you place it under conditions that put it in the way of becoming an oak-tree in time. The average boy must place himself under conditions that are suitable for his becoming a Christian, in order to become one. If I wish to go to a given place, I must take the road that leads there, and then keep in the road. What then is the one specific act for the average boy to perform? The man who is going the wrong way must change his course, and strike into the right way. That involves a choice between two courses—a determination to stop going in one direction, and to begin to go in another.

To get into the way of salvation, then, is simply to change one's purposes that need changing. A Christian is a Christ person; and one cannot be a Christ person, and not come into proper relations to Christ. Our acorn has the law of growth within it, but must be in actual contact with the ground that is to nourish it, and bring out its latent powers, or it will remain an acorn. Such a contact as the acorn has with mother earth, the human heart must have with Christ to become a Christian heart. There is a rap at the door. I say, "Come in." "But," says one on the outside, "I can't get in; the door is locked." I push back the bolt and open the door, and my friend comes in. To me, the whole process of becoming a Christian resolves itself into this: First, there must be belief in Christ; and it is as easy to believe in Him as it is to give our honest confidence to an earthly friend. Secondly, there must be a deliberate purpose to do what Christ has told us to do; and the summary is a brief one, it is only to do right by God and man. Christ, admitted to the heart, in the same confiding way that a friend, in whom we have all confidence, is admitted there, and an honest decision made to live as Christ tells us to live,—that is all that is needed to be in the way of salvation. Conversion, if you choose to use that word, is thus a simple, common-sense affair, that the average boy need not be more puzzled about than he would be in making any other decision whatever.—*Egbert L. Bangs in S. S. Times.*

## REVIEWS.

Every lesson may be subjected to pre-views, views, and reviews. If the work is well done it will be subjected to each of these methods. A pre-view is the general outlook upon a lesson before its detailed study is attempted. It is the "preliminary reconnaissance" of the surveyor of truth. It includes the surroundings as well as the contents of the lesson. Its aim is comprehensive rather than particular.

After this preparatory outlook, the lesson must be viewed in all its parts, and in the connections and bearings of these parts. This is the detailed survey, or the careful study of the lesson. Thus far every teacher must go, and having gone thus far he is in a fair way to teach the lesson. He at least has discovered in some measure what is contained within it. Many teachers go thus far in preparation, but go no farther. The third element of good work, reviews, they do not understand, or they misunderstand, and therefore they either neglect it entirely, or attempt it in forms which insure failure.

Fundamental to all effective reviewing are weekly reviews in the class, and from the desk. In his opening services the superintendent should ask questions enough to put the school in sympathy with past work, and on a direct line of approach from that to the lesson of the day. By this means a fair start is secured. Every person in the school needs this, and therefore it should be a general exercise. They all need it before

the new lesson is taught, therefore it should be an opening exercise. This brief, pointed, well-considered effort may be known as the superintendent's opening review. It reviews enough of what has gone before to open the way for a new advance.

In each class the lesson of the day should be opened with a few moments of similar work. If the superintendent has already put things just as they should be, then this class review will serve to make them clearer, and to fix them more firmly. But, in all probability, each thoughtful teacher will prefer a little different adjustment at the outset, so as better to serve his special purpose in the work which follows. For this he needs these moments of review; and a few moments only should be thus used. This may be called the teachers' opening review.

Practical duties or important doctrines may be discovered as the lesson-study goes on, and these should be emphasized as they appear. They should also form the final impression of the teaching service. To correct the views and to improve the life of the pupils is the great aim. But shall these duties and doctrines, upon the remembrance and adoption of which the attainment of this end depends, be left to the chances of remembrance from a single presentation? By no means. Gather them up in a closing class-review, noticing the grounds on which they were found to rest, and the considerations by which they were enforced. This work is the teachers' closing review.

But shall the effort rest here? It had better unless superintendent and teachers are in such intelligent accord that he can enforce what has been done. But if in some cases this work has been ill done in the classes, then he can do something to make amends for the defect. And if he be a competent superintendent, he can in any case add to the impression for good already made in the class. To do this, however, he must not be diffuse, so that he shall bury in a flood of words the points that should stand out as mountain peaks. Nor should he be out of harmony with the drift of work agreed upon in the teachers' meeting, else he will multiply points, or so modify points that scholars will become confused, and will see nothing clearly. By a very few well-formed questions he may draw from the school the doctrines and duties they have learned, and then, by sanctified tact, he can fasten these, and so the superintendent's closing review will be well done.

If stress is laid in the school upon titles, topics, outlines, golden texts, etc., the proper time for reviewing them is in the opening exercises. They form part of the path already trodden, and the last addition each Sabbath should be these elements pertaining to that day. There is no good reason for reviewing these at the close of the teaching. They must then serve to divert attention from the new truths gained in the fresh work of the day.

The chief doctrines and duties of every lesson already studied naturally come in for mention in the superintendent's opening review on each Sabbath. So do the topics and other permanent appendages. How easy it is, therefore, for knowledge to be kept fresh Sabbath after Sabbath through the quarter, and how easy on this plan a quarterly review becomes. Without weekly reviews continued through the quarter, a review at its end must drag; but where superintendent and teacher hold to the true method, quarterly reviews run themselves; and reviews covering two or three quarters are by no means difficult; while an annual review becomes, not a possibility merely, but an absolute pleasure.—*Rev. G. A. Pelts in National Sunday School Teacher.*

## CONSUMPTION CURED.

An old physician, retired from practice, having had placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy for the speedy and permanent cure for Consumption, Bronchitis, Catarrh, Asthma, and all Throat and Lung Affections, also a positive and radical cure for Nervous Debility and all Nervous Complaints, after having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, has felt it his duty to make it known to his suffering fellows. Actuated by this motive and a desire to relieve human suffering, I will send free of charge to all who desire it, this recipe, in German, French, or English, with full directions for preparing and using. Sent by mail by addressing with stamp, naming this paper, W. W. SHEPARD, 149 Powers' Block, Rochester, N. Y.

## Around the Table.

## IN DEBT.

BROWNING M— is not at all *brown*, but very fair, with blue eyes, and the most flaxen of tresses. Neither is he one of the imaginary beings sometimes so called, but a real live boy, eight years old, with all a boy's fondness for fun and frolic.

One evening his father noticed a very sober look on his son's face usually so careless and merry.

"What is the matter, my son?" he asked, as the boy hung around him with a wistful, persevering air, which said as plainly as words