

The Sunday School

BIBLE LESSON.

Adapted from Hurlbut's Notes.

Third Quarter.

Lesson VII.—Aug. 15. 1 Cor. 8, 1-13. ABSTAINING FOR THE SAKE OF OTHERS.

[Read chapters 8, 9 and 10.] GOLDEN TEXT.

For none of us liveth to himself. Rom. 14, 7.

I. KNOWLEDGE. VERSES 1-6.

1. WE KNOW THAT WE ALL HAVE KNOWLEDGE—As Christians we may be supposed to know that an idol is nothing, and that meat offered to it is in no sense sacred. KNOWLEDGE PUFFETH UP—Mere knowledge, without the Christian spirit, fills with pride of opinion and leads astray. CHARITY—Deep, dominating love to God and our fellow-men. EDIFIEETH—Literally, "builds up."

2. IF ANY MAN THINK THAT HE KNOWETH ANYTHING—If he be self-conceited. HE KNOWETH NOTHING YET AS HE OUGHT—He who has not learned the wisdom of the heart which cometh from love knows not the alphabet of Christian experience. The heart will learn faster than the intellect can.

3. LOVE GOD, . . . KNOWN OF HIM—He who loves God and enjoys communion with him will have guidance from God. "He that loveth not knoweth not God." No high attainments in knowledge can otherwise be made. We cannot really know any friend until we love him; knowledge grows with love.

4. THEREFORE—Paul's "therefore" are always important; this is to show that in the subject before us we are to seek for the guidance, not only of knowledge, but also of love. WE KNOW—Here is what "we know;" in verse 9 we shall see to what conclusions love leads us. AN IDOL IS NOTHING—That is, the person or divinity represented by the image has no real existence, and hence has no power in any way to make better or worse. Thus in one sentence the intelligent Christian sets aside the entire system of worship which held control over the human race. NONE OTHER GOD BUT ONE—This was the fundamental doctrine which made Judaism immeasurably superior to every heathen religion.

5. THOUGH THERE BE—In the opinion of men, not in reality. THAT ARE CALLED GODS—"So-called gods;" with a shade of contempt for such conceptions. IN HEAVEN—As the sun, moon and stars, deified; or Jupiter and his court, supposed to live above the sky. OR IN EARTH—The ancients deified the powers of nature; and their fancy peopled every brook and tree with its own gods.

6. TO US THERE IS BUT ONE GOD—Paul keeps this truth in view in order that his advice to abstain from the idol meats may not be construed into a recognition of idol worship. THE FATHER—Our Father, the loving source of our being, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The expression brings out prominently the contrast between the standpoints of the heathen and the Christian; for the heathen had no divine father in this sense. WE IN HIM—"We unto him." Created for his glory and living for his service. ONE LORD JESUS CHRIST—The sense would be plainer if "Jesus Christ" were in parenthesis: We have one Lord (Jesus Christ) in contrast with the many lords of heathendom. WE BY HIM—Redeemed by him; glorified through him; a doctrine which Paul always triumphantly proclaimed.

II. LIBERTY. VERSES 7-9.

7. NOT IN EVERY MAN THAT KNOWLEDGE—There were some disciples not entirely freed from their heathen conceptions. SOME WITH CONSCIENCE OF THE IDOL—Feelings whenever they looked at the statue that a sort of demon leered back at them and shouted, "This is my meat, killed at my altar; eat it, and you honor me." EAT IT AS A THING OFFERED—While the Christian who has never been an idolater eats it as meat only. CONSCIENCE BEING WEAK—Not strong enough to grasp firmly the great truth that an idol is nothing, but able to see that the worship of idols is a sin. IS DEFILED—They have violated their conscience and done wrong, and have thus taken a step backward toward idolatry.

8. BUT MEAT COMMENDETH US NOT—In itself, eating meat or abstaining from it cannot make us either better or worse. NEITHER, IF WE EAT, ARE WE THE BETTER—We do not get nearer to God by eating.

9. BUT TAKE HEED—Beware how you use your Christian liberty. It has its limits. We are bound to respect the scruples of the conscientious though perhaps weak or unenlightened man. BROMEC A STUMBLING-BLOCK—By tempting others to act contrary to their own conscience.

III. SELF-DENIAL. VERSES 10-13.

10. IF ANY MAN—Whether the "weak brother" scarcely freed from the shackles of idolatry, or the heathen inquiring after light. SEE THERE—The enlightened Christian, to whom the meat is only meat and an idol is nothing. IN THE IDOL'S TEMPLE—Where the feasts were generally held and attended by thousands of people. BE EMBOLDENED—Literally, "be built up," the same word translated "edifieth" in verse 1. There we saw how love builds up a right character; here we see how knowledge without love builds up a wrong one. TO EAT THOSE THINGS—The weak disciple might say, "If it is right for him it is right for me."

11. THROUGH THY KNOWLEDGE—For by the higher knowledge of the enlightened disciple the weaker one is led astray. BROTHER PERISH—That is, he is placed in the way which will lead to his perishing. Tendencies are sure to realize themselves in facts sooner or later. FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED—Christ was willing to die for that soul, weak as he is; but his fellow-Christian will let him perish rather than abridge his own unimportant rights.

12. YE SIN SO AGAINST THE BRETHREN—By leading them into sin you violate the law of love to your brethren, and thus sin against them. How contemptible would he be who would strike an invalid! But a weak Christian is an invalid Christian; and a moral offense done to that soul is like the wound of a weapon. YE SIN AGAINST CHRIST—In what way this is done is shown in the previous clauses. It thwarts the ends of the Saviour's death.

13. WHEREFORE—Summing up the whole argument. IF MEAT—Not the idol meat only, but any kind of food. MAKE MY BROTHER TO OFFEND—"To stumble;" that is, to do wrong. I WILL—See how delicately Paul presents this duty, not as theirs, but as his own. "You may use your liberty if you will, but I, for my part, will abstain." EAT NO FLESH—The true basis of the doctrine of total abstinence.

The Cabbage-Root Maggot.

The white maggot in cabbage roots is the larva of a two-winged fly which closely resembles the common house-fly except that it is smaller. The flies appear in April and early May and lay eggs at the base of newly set cabbage plants. These eggs hatch in about a week. The maggots begin work in the young roots and finally the stem. In two or three weeks the maggots are full grown and proceed to pupate. After some days the next brood of flies emerges. There are about three such broods.

The best treatment to avoid this maggot is to put cabbage in ground where turnips, radishes, or cabbage were not grown the previous year. There is no satisfactory remedy to destroy the maggots and save the cabbage, but the best is the use of carbon bisulphide. Inject a teaspoonful just under the plant when the maggots are first discovered in May. It would not be safe to replant the same ground with cabbage either this or next season.

THROUGH PEACE TO LIGHT.

I do not ask, O Lord, that life may be A pleasant road; I do not ask that Thou wouldst take from me Aught of its load; I do not ask that flowers should always spring Beneath my feet; I know too well the poison and the sting Of things too sweet. For one thing only, Lord, dear Lord, I plead— Lead me aright; Tho' strength should falter, and tho' the heart should bleed, Through Peace to Light. I do not ask, O Lord, that Thou shouldst shed Full radiance here; Give but a ray of peace, that I may tread Without a fear. I do not ask my cross to understand, My way to see— Better in darkness just to feel Thy hand And follow Thee. Joy is like restless day, but peace divine Like quiet night; Lead me, O Lord, till perfect day shall shine, Through Peace to Light. —Adelaide Procter.

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