

Sabbath School.

BIBLE LESSONS.

Lesson IX. May 28. Prov. 31: 10-31. THE EXCELLENT WOMAN.

GOLDEN TEXT. "Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised." - Prov. 31: 30.

EXPLANATORY. The expression combines the ideas of moral goodness and bodily vigor and activity. Who can find? Implying the difficulty of finding, as of finding precious stones. The very best and most perfect are rare, but there are found many precious stones, of real purity, beauty and worth, and there were never so many as to-day, "In ancient Jerusalem, when one was married, they were wont to ask, 'Has he found? For her price is far above rubies.'"

11. The heart of her husband trusteth in her. She is his natural confidante and counsellor; her advice is more valuable than that of most cleverer people, because it is so absolutely disinterested. One may often observe in an ideal marriage, though the husband seems to be the stronger and the more self-reliant, the wife is really the pillar of strength. He shall have no lack of gain. The A. V. has "need of spoil," that is, profit, gain of all kinds, though the word originally meant spoil taken from an enemy. With such a wife he is sure to be prosperous.

13. She seeketh wool and flax (from which linen is made), as materials for clothing and domestic uses. And worketh willingly. Cheerfully, of her own accord. There were no factories, and the clothing made by women being home-made. Hence ver. 19, She layeth her hands to the distaff, i. e. the staff to which is tied the bunch of flax from which the spinning-wheel draws the thread. To this she applies her hand; she deftly performs the work of spinning her flax into thread. The spinning-wheel is a German invention of the 16th century, but the spindle and the wheel are more ancient. And her hands hold the spindle, i. e. cylindrical wood on which the thread winds itself as it spins.

14. She is like the merchant-ships. With an enterprising spirit she goes out beyond the nearest circle; she descends also distant opportunities of advantage, and she is ready for the exchange, and brings in from a distance what is necessary for the supply of her house.

16. She riseth also while it is yet night, and poreth out, and saith, as to and different circumstances from ours. There was not much variety of work for evenings. Few books, no newspapers, poor light, and hence early sleep, which permitted early rising. In our day there is more danger of too little sleep instead of too much.

16. She considereth a field. She studies and knows the value of the field, and then buys it, and makes a vineyard of it. With the fruit of her hands, she makes money she has earned by her industry.

17. She girdeth her loins with strength. The phrase is metaphorically expressive of the energy and force with which she prepares herself for her work.

18. She perceiveth an occasion and by observation. She understands her business. She is wise in business methods. Her lamp goeth not out by night. She works evenings as well as daytime, spinning at home (ver. 19), which she cannot see to her fields and merchandise.

20. She spreadeth out her hand to the poor. She extends her hands in sympathy and readiness to help. With all her industry, she is not narrow and selfish and grasping, but of a large and loving heart. It is in this which saves industry from worldliness. Among all the noble and Christlike offices of woman this is the one which most directly connects her with the human life of our Lord. Man is apt to relieve the poor by the laws of political economy, without emotion and by measure; he makes a Poor Law which produces the evil it intends to relieve.

21. She is not afraid of the snow. Occasionally seen in Palestine (two winters out of three in Jerusalem). "She has no fears concerning the comfort and health of her family, even in the severest winter. For all her household are clothed with scarlet; with warm garments."

22. She maketh for herself. Not for her own bed, but she herself prepares them for her family. Carpets. Rather cushions, mattresses in well made. Her making is fine linen. Of fine texture, white and costly. And purple. The richest and most beautiful colors.

23. Her husband is known in the gates, where the business of the city is transacted. Her influence exalts her husband in character and influence; and her skill arrays him with clothing worthy of his position. Among the elders. The chief men.

24. She maketh linen garments. . . girdles. Necessary to her in the flowing robes of the East. "Some of them are of linen, curiously worked in gold and silver thread and studded with jewels and gold." And selleth them. Her industry and business qualities are again referred to.

25. Strength and dignity are her clothing. Her character is worthy of her position. She laugheth at the time to come. She has no fears for the future. Her preparation is well founded. The fruits of her life must be good. Note how much is said of strength. The girls of our day may learn a lesson in the care of their health, and training in a sound body as well as bright mind.

26. She openeth her mouth with wisdom. She has gained wisdom, so that "when she speaks, it is not gossip, or slander, or idle talk, that she utters, but sentences of prudence and sound sense." And the law of her tongue is her tongue. She is no scold; she is not made hard and ungracious by her duties and cares.

27. She looketh well to the ways of her household. She is a family woman, training up her children in religion and in virtue.

Eschmoren cures colds and coughs.

B. Y. P. U.

(Correspondents to this department should address their communications to J. H. MACDONALD, Editor, N. B.)

Prayer Meeting Topics. FROM JUNE 4 TO DECEMBER 31.

June 4.—SABBATH KEEPING. "And I commanded the Levites, that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should sanctify the Sabbath day." Neh. 13: 22.

June 11.—THE TEMPERANCE LAW OF CHRIST. "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." 1 Cor. 8: 13.

June 18.—ENDEAVOR WHAT ARE YOU BUYING? "For ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Cor. 6: 20.

June 25.—CONQUEST MEETING. India for Christ.

July 2.—RELIGIOUS LIBERTY, ITS PRIVILEGE AND RESPONSIBILITY. "And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues that He is the Son of God." Acts 9: 20.

July 9.—SINGING FOR JESUS. "Serve the Lord with gladness; come before His presence with singing." Ps. 100: 2.

July 16.—THE LORD'S DAY—HOW SHALL WE KEEP IT? "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Ex. 20: 8. "Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days." Matt. 12: 12.

July 23.—THE UNION ANNIVERSARY. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy." Acts 2: 17.

July 30.—CONQUEST MEETING. America for Christ.

Aug. 6.—OUR FOUNDATION. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 3: 11.

Aug. 13.—THE WAGES OF IMPENITENCE. "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank." Dan. 1: 8.

Aug. 20.—THE FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH—ITS CONVERTS. "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Acts 2: 47.

Aug. 27.—CONQUEST MEETING. Burma for Christ.

Sept. 3.—FOR HIS SAKE. "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake." Matt. 5: 11.

Sept. 10.—HELPING OUR PASTOR. "And Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on one side, and the other on the other side." Exod. 17: 12.

Sept. 17.—THE FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH—ITS ORDINANCES. "Then it became known by his works, and his righteousness." Matt. 3: 15. "This do in remembrance of Me." 1 Cor. 11: 24.

Sept. 24.—CONQUEST MEETING. China in America for Christ.

Oct. 1.—HOW CHRIST HAS HELPED ME. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits." Ps. 103: 2.

Oct. 8.—THE FIRST FOREIGN MISSIONARIES. "Therefore, they that were scattered abroad, went everywhere preaching the Word." Acts 8: 4.

Oct. 15.—THE IMPORTANCE OF LITTLE THINGS. "Then the disciples look him by night and set him down by the wall in a basket." Acts 9: 25.

Oct. 22.—COME AND SEE. "He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw; where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day." John 1: 39.

Oct. 29.—CONQUEST MEETING. Our own State or Province for Christ.

How to Decide.

That was a perplexing question tangling those Corinthian Christians.

In Corinth, and in heathen cities like it, the meat which had been laid upon the altars in heathen temples in the way of sacrifice was, such portions of it as had not been consumed, afterwards exposed for sale in the public markets. Such meats were sold to the dealers by the heathen priests, the profits going priestwards, and then by these dealers the meats were sold to whoever chose to buy. Of course these meats were the choicest cuts, and were bought eagerly. So a Christian might unknowingly eat of such food in the house of a friend; might knowingly purchase it himself in the public markets.

Some of these Corinthian Christians felt an scruple as to the matter. They said, an idol is nothing; the mere fact that the meat has been offered in a heathen temple does not hurt it; more, some of them were quite ostentatious about the matter, and in order to show how completely they were disentangled from all heathen superstitions, would even join in feasts held in the outer court of a heathen temple where the meat was certainly bought and sold, and saved from sacrifice. But others of these Corinthian Christians were anxious with scruple about the matter.

They felt, and they said—such free copies had been given to them, and of heathenism was being rendered a sort of Christian countenance to idolatry, was not severe and protesting separation from the evil. Especially those who had been Jews before they became Christians were emphatic about this. All their ancestral hatred of idolatry gathered itself for scorn and denunciation against those other Christians who would allow themselves in such careless freedom.

Well, in their trouble, these divided and discussing Corinthian Christians write to the apostle Paul about the matter. And the apostle's reply, in effect, is this: This matter of eating meat which has been previously used in heathen altars, O Corinthians, belongs to the realm casuistical; circumstances must decide it; sometimes it would be right, and sometimes it would be wrong.

But some of you are wrong in thinking that the consciences of those of the brethren who are in such a meat-eating are in no wise to be taken account of. "For some with conscience of the idol, unto this hour, eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled." "Take heed to yourselves, that you do not eat of those things which are offered to idols"—this ability of yours to be unstained yourself in conscience though you do partake of meat which has been laid upon an idol's altar.

"Do not eat of things which are offered to idols, lest you become stumbling block to them that are weak." "For, when you so sin against the brethren and wound their weak conscience—ye sin against Christ." As for me, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to stumble. "Whatever is sold in the shambles, that eat—saying no question for conscience sake—do not eat, lest you be entangled in the snare of him that eateth it; but ye must eat it, as a general rule, without exact questioning as to what may have been the fate of the meat, but ye are to be guided by the principle, 'If any of them that believe not, if any of those of your friends still heathen, bid you to a feast and ye be disposed to go, whatsoever is set before you eat, asking no questions for conscience sake, lest you be entangled in the snare of him that eateth it; but ye must eat it, as a general rule, without exact questioning as to what may have been the fate of the meat, but ye are to be guided by the principle, 'If any of them that believe not, if any of those of your friends still heathen, bid you to a feast and ye be disposed to go, whatsoever is set before you eat, asking no questions for conscience sake, lest you be entangled in the snare of him that eateth it; but ye must eat it, as a general rule, without exact questioning as to what may have been the fate of the meat, but ye are to be guided by the principle, 'If any of them that believe not, if any of those of your friends still heathen, bid you to a feast and ye be disposed to go, whatsoever is set before you eat, asking no questions for conscience sake, lest you be entangled in the snare of him that eateth it; 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