

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON.

AUGUST 31, 1879.

PRACTICAL RELIGION.—Col. iii. 12-25.

EXPOSITION.

Verse 12.—put on, the continuation of a figure; borrowed from personal apparel, and applied to character, introduced in v. 8, 9, 10. Bleed, holy, beloved; within the inner circle of discipleship to Jesus; a circle composed of those who, having obeyed the heavenly calling, are separate from the world, consecrate to God, and actuated by the consciousness of God's love towards them and their own love to God. 1 Peter ii. 9; Phil. i. 1; 1 Thess. i. 4. Bonds of mercies; the significance of this and the following phrases is given in detail in the course of our Lesson. Verse 13.—even as Christ forgave you, compare ch. ii. 13; Ephes. iv. 32. Verse 14.—above all these things; love to all was thus to be the garb put on over all the other elements in the spiritual clothing; over all, holding all other in their places. Ver. 15.—the peace of God, Ephes. ii. 14; John xiv. 26; Phil. iv. 7. This peace is in this verse opposed to the hard, unloving, and unquiet spirit that mars the unity of the church. In one body; as ye were called as members of one body, so let there be one spirit animating the body. Be ye thankful; and to crown all, forget yourselves in thanksgiving towards God. Compare 1, 12, ii. 7. Verse 16.—the word of Christ; Christ is speaking to us whenever we hear or read the word of God, and we are to receive his words into the memory, the conscience, and the heart, 1 John ii. 14; Rom. vi. 9, 11. Then we shall know how to act ourselves, as well as how to instruct and help others. Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; the first of these words refers to inspired poetical compositions, sung to musical accompaniment. The psalms of the Old Testament are probably referred to. Old hymns are uninspired compositions devoted to praise and adoration; compare Luke i. 46-55, 68-79; Acts iv. 24. "Songs" or "odes" differ from hymns in not being so exclusively directed to the Divine Being, but treating of Christian subjects in general. The word is frequently found in the Book of Revelation, ch. v. 9, xiv. 3, xv. 3. Heart sincerity is the first necessity of acceptable song, Ephes. v. 19. Verse 18.—compare Ephes. v. 22, vi. 9; 1 Peter ii. 18, iii. 7; Titus ii. 1. Verse 20.—in all things. "The rule is stated absolutely, because the exceptions are so few that they may be disregarded." Verse 22.—these servants were "slaves," and the apostle's mind had been turned to their position by a circumstance which had occurred about this time, the conversion of Onesimus, the runaway slave of Philemon. Verse 24.—of the Lord. "However you may be treated by your earthly masters, you have still a Master who will recompense you," Eph. vi. 8. Every Christian servant is the Lord's free man and the heir of a glorious inheritance. 1 Cor. vii. 22; Gal. iv. 7. Verse 26.—he that doeth wrong; the reference is both to slave and master; both will be judged by One who is no respecter of persons, Ephes. vi. 9.

LESSON.

I. Beautiful Garments, v. 12-15. What is the first word in v. 12? That word suggests an apt illustration. We like to see people well dressed, in good taste as to colours and ornaments. Persons spend much time in the selection and arrangement of dress. But character is of more importance than personal appearance, and the Apostle now suggests the garments in which the character should be clothed and the care which should be used in their selection and use. What terms does he apply to Christians? These terms are in some degree applicable to Christian children. They are "called" by God's word and Spirit to be his children; they have been dedicated to God in baptism, and "beloved" of him who declared that little children were citizens of the kingdom of heaven. So the argument applies to them; they should seek to have a character such as becomes their position, advantages, and destiny. Rom. vi. 13; Ephes. i. 1-7. The beautiful garments of which the Apostle speaks are for every-day wear. The virtues which he enumerates pertain to our conduct towards men, Gal. v. 14; James i. 27. What is the first? The phrase signifies tender mercy, yearning pity, such as Joseph felt toward his brethren, Gen. xliii. 30: as the mother towards her child in the judgment-hall of Solomon, 1 Kings iii. 26. Compare Rom. xii. 5; Heb. xiii. 3. This mercy has regard to those in want, suffering, weakness, misery. It forbids exultation over another, insult or contempt. It teaches more than lip-pity, James ii. 26; it sets the hands in motion to help, and makes the feet swift to run; it turns boys and girls into ministering children. Kindness; mercy refers to the miserable, kindness has regard to all; it is easy to be entreated, and stands ready to be of service to any one. David had experience of a man of a very different character, 1 Sam. xxv. 3. Humbleness of mind; naturally we seek exaltation, as Herod in the presence of the mob, Acts xii. 13. Saul could not bear the priority given to David in the songs of the Israelitish maidens, 1 Sam. xviii. 7. A person graced with this virtue remembers his own faults, and marks the excellencies of another, Rom. xii. 16; Phil. iii. 2. Meekness; a settled and quiet disposition neither provokes nor will be provoked by insult or injury. This part of the Christian's robes is of great price in the sight of God, 1 Peter iii. 4; Jesus promises to give it, Matt. xi. 29; and it carries a rich inheritance within its folds, Matt. v. 5. Long-suffering is a degree of meekness, a fringe of the same garment, a quiet mind against frequent and long-continued provocation, Gal. v. 22; 1 Cor. xiii. 4; Prov. xv. 29, x. 18, xvi. 32. Now the Apostle proceeds to name occasions when this fringed robe of meekness and long-suffering will be in especial requisition, v. 13. Infirmities, failures, slowness, rashness, forwardness; defects of character and offensiveness of action mark human society, and makes a constant claim

on the resources of a meek and quiet spirit, forbearance. But long-suffering must have a tongue to speak as well as a heart to feel, and when opportunity offers, must frankly tell what the heart feels, forgiveness, Matt. xviii. 23. What example of such an exercise of grace does the Apostle advance? v. 13. What is the next grace of which the Apostle speaks? v. 14. The love of man for God's sake is the most beautiful, and should be the uppermost of the goodly garments of a Christian man. It will bind in unity all the other graces. What other passages illustrate this? Rom. xiii. 10; 1 Cor. xiii. This grace is the very sign of our discipleship, John xiii. 35. What is to be the ruling influence in the heart of a man who proposes to wear these robes? v. 15. This peace comes from God through Jesus, John xiv. 27; Phil. iv. 7; and shows itself in our dealings with men. This peace must be the empire in all disputes; anger, malice, and every evil passion must be repressed; every act forbidden inconsistent with its rule. Take now an inventory of a good man's wardrobe,—tender mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearance, forgiveness, love! Consider a man robed in a character thus composed, girded forth under the sovereignty of peace, and you see the standard after which every Christian will aspire, and to which every Christian child will look as the ideal of his future.

II. Special Duties.—Children—v. 20. What command is here given to children? The first step in obedience is the listening ear, swift to catch the slightest whisper of a father's command or of a mother's wish. The next step is the willing foot, making haste to do what has been spoken. What words indicate the absolute character of this command? Very few exceptions are likely to occur in the life of a child, and then they will be found in such commands as are plainly opposed to the will of God. Neither age, nor place, nor condition can release a child from this obligation. What motive does the apostle advance for the right discharge of it? This duty is the subject of the "first commandment with promise," Ephes. vi. 1-3; Exod. xx. 12. Compare also Prov. xxx. 17, i. 9, x. 1, xv. 20; Lev. xix. 3. Every child who seeks to "obey this law," may ever see before him the footsteps of Jesus, Luke ii. 51.

Servants, v. 22-25. The condition of those to whom St. Paul wrote these words was very different to that of the apprentices, errand boys, journeymen, craftsmen, domestic servants, and trade assistants who fill our Sunday Schools. They were slaves, the absolute property of their masters. The arguments the Apostle uses in reference to them has greater force in application to those who, though servants, are free. Compare on the entire passage, Ephes. vi. 7, 8; Titus ii. 9; 1 Peter ii. 18; 1 Tim. vi. 1. What kind of service is condemned? What kind is commanded? The servant of man is to carry himself as the servant of God. "Thy subjection to thy master on earth should be performed so religiously that it may be service to thy Master in heaven." What further is said about the spirit of this service? v. 23; see Light on the Golden Text. What motive does the Apostle adduce to persuade Christians to such a service? v. 24. Notice the word "inheritance," for an inheritance belongs and is given to children, and not to servants. Read 1 Cor. vii. 22; Gal. iii. 28. Believing servants are God's free men, God's children, and they shall share in that kingdom which was prepared for the children of the Father. A pious servant sows with labor, in a hard soil and small field, but God will see to it, that he shall reap an abundant crop. A warning is joined with the promise: what? v. 25. The Apostle elsewhere speaks strongly of the effect of such obedience in recommending the Gospel, Titus ii. 9, 10. A poor child that hath his sight may lead a man that is blind to a costly feast. So a good servant may lead a godless household to be guests of Jesus.

LIGHT ON THE GOLDEN TEXT.

COL. III. 23.—"And whatever ye do, do it heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men."

I. A motto for every one; the child at home, the scholar at his books, the apprentice in the shop, the servant in the kitchen; everybody who has anything to do.

II. True service is from the heart.—"Servants of Christ doing the will of God from the heart, with good will doing service," Ephes. vi. 6, 7. No sullen silence, as in the case of Job's servants, "I called my servant and he gave me no answer," Job xix. 16. Activity and diligence are employed, for we do with all our powers what we give our heart to. Jacob served Laban in the heat of the day and the cold of the night. "As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him," Prov. x. 26.

III. The secret of true service.—"To the Lord and not unto men." The true servant echoes the Psalmist's words: "I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved," Psalm xvi. 8. "Some servants will labour in their master's presence, but loiter in his absence, which is a clear sign they do not serve him out of conscience." "Servants who look no farther than their master's eye are men-pleasers; those only who set good ever before them, and thence are always diligent in their work, are God-pleasers."

HOW TO DO RIGHT THINGS.

COL. III. 23.—"And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as unto the Lord."

I. About Doing.—Our life is made up of our doings. How sad are the doings and the life of many. How blessed is the life, because of the blessed doings of others. A life of happiness can only come by well-doing. A life of disappointment, even of wretchedness, is the fruit of doing wrong. The prophet Isaiah said to Israel, "Put away the evil of your doings."

"Cease to do evil, learn to do well." God only can help us to do this. When it is done, the life is right; and it is for those who are living such a life, that this lesson is sent. Though we may do right things, yet the way of doing them may be wrong. We may do them for a wrong reason, or in a wrong manner. This verse teaches us—

II. How to do Right.—"Heartily." What does that mean? See the way in which things are done, which are unpleasing, and very much disliked. The unwillingness is shown by the manner. How wearily the days of Israel were driven on when the people of Israel were driven to their work in Egypt! And how poor the work itself must have been. How quickly was rebuilt the wall was rebuilt round Jerusalem in Nehemiah's time! He tells why this was. "The people had a mind to work." They put their heart into it, doing it heartily. This is how all work should be done. First see that the work is good and right, then do it heartily. "Whatsoever" the work is, this is the way to do it. Work at school, work at home, work for ourselves, work for others—it matters not of what kind—the way to do it is "heartily." The motive, or reason for doing it must be,—

III. "Unto the Lord."—remembering that He said it; doing it to please Him. A mother is pleased with the tiniest thing done by her little one for such a reason as this, and so also is our Heavenly Father. Jesus once said, that whosoever should give a cup of water only in his name, and for his sake, should not lose his reward. So, then, it is not what is done, but why it is done, and how, that is pleasing to him. If we do the best we can, whatever it be, though the service is a trifling one, God will accept it, and will give a blessing in return. This, then, is the way to bring a blessing upon our life, and to get the reward hereafter.

SECTION VI.—QUESTION 14.

Q. What does this new Commandment mean?

A. This new Commandment means that we should not only love our neighbor as ourselves; but that we should bear a particular affection for all those who, like ourselves, are the disciples of Christ, by whatever name they are called.

PREACHER'S NAMES.

MARITIME CONFERENCES.

Our Matthew, James, and Peters too, Keep the succession still in view, They walk along the Narraway, The Gospel Lane, from day to day. Midst great ones we have much delight, A King, a Prince, a Duke, a Knight; No papist in our ranks we hope, Yet still we esteem and love a Pope. England is here, and Colpitts deep, Goldsmiths, and Smiths and Steele we keep.

Hence oft a Bell our Chappells own, The hour of worship to make known. Smallwood and Prestwood never fails, To build our Church, aided by Mills. Colours to ornament appear, Good Black, deep Brown, and Dunn are here.

Love in our Hearts is ever found, 'Tis Wright that Moore should still abound. And other Haris we gladly own, Esteemed, beloved, wherever known. No shepherd, but a Shepherdson, Among the pastors counteth one. We represent the winged fowl, Dove, Swan, and Swallow; but no owl; Another Bird we also prize, A Hatcher too we recognize. A Fisher often throws the net, Or line and hook with gospel bait; Ensnared and takes the Phinney Pike, Whom Baker cooks just as you like, Weldon, yes, Crisp if you should wish, Pickles and Pepper in the dish. A gentle Lodge invites repose, No farmer, but a Heyfield grows; Also a Peach, not new, but sound, An unplucked Berrie too is found. A noble Nurse to tend the sick, To ease our Paine, strengthen the weak, Alcorn and Brewer utilize, To help humanity to rise. No betting, but still Betts we find, And greet a Bond uniting mind. Daniel eschews the Lion's den, As all do Coffin while they can. We love the English Shore to greet, No slaves, but Freeman here we meet, Our Gaets are open to the good, Not annexation understood. No unbelieving Thomas here, No darkness, Day is always clear; If clouds appear a luminous Reay, Scatters the gathering gloom away. Our Taylor, Tweedys, Paisley too, Are needed every season through, Our noble Stewart gives delight, And Payson makes finances right. Lockhart and Weddall, useful pair, Our union men, we cannot spare. Seller and Clark venture not here, The sale of men—they are too dear.

Nova Scotia ALPBA.

OLD BOOKS.

A London dealer gives an interesting account of how old books are bought and sold, and sometimes stolen in the great English metropolis. He says: "Old book-selling is still commonly resorted to by broken men with business qualities, who are not ashamed to begin at the beginning—with a stall in one of the thoroughfares. Such a man is sure to prosper, provided he sticks to his calling, and is fairly prudent, for the trade is very profitable. The prosperous among us are ready to help such a man by letting him have the weeding of our shelves at nominal prices, if he has proved himself trustworthy and efficient, by giving him credit on easy terms too. In too many cases, however, the old book-stall keeper never rises, or cares to rise, above the gutter in which he spends most of his time. "Efficiency in the craft is only to be acquired by practice. There are hundreds of thoroughfares in and about London where old books sell well; but every one of these places has its predominant taste, which must determine the quality of the mass of the stock, which may be theological in one place, historical in a second, and purely— which very often means impurely—amusing in a third. Then, while some quarters are content with out of date articles, published from fifty years to a century ago, and others with a book a generation or so old, there are people who will buy nothing—save what has issued recently from the press. Again the condition of a book is a matter to be considered. Here, as in age and literary value, insalubrious is merely a relative term. In rough mechanical quarters, volumes rough and soiled to any extent, will sell without stint, provided they are of the proper literary order. Here where boiler makers, metal-workers, and that sort of handicraftsmen resort, is just the place to dispose of scientific volumes which have been disfigured and mutilated in schools, public and private. Respectable people will meddle with nothing in the book way which does not bear a respectable appearance. A curious fact in the taste for old books, as shown by the trade done at stalls, is that second hand works in modern languages, especially novels, sell much better in low districts than elsewhere. The stall keeper requires six months at least to discover all this, as well as to become acquainted with the usages of the trade. That time passed, he can not thrive, if he cares to do so. Before long he will have a shop of his own, and cease to be an outsider of the trade. Instead of hanging on to three or four shopkeepers, he goes boldly into the craft as a principal, and acquires hangers-on of his own. Above all, he is allowed to take part in that institution peculiar to dealers in second hand articles, and one of their leading sources of profit—the 'knock-out' "In the knock-out a number of us crowd to an auction-room where a library is brought to the hammer, and buy every article. Here we all know one another, and each of us bid for the rest. There is, therefore, no advance on the first bid, unless an outsider interferes, when we soon run the price up beyond what he cares to give. This trick, repeated as may be necessary, disgusts the outsiders, and secures the whole stock for ourselves at far less than its real value. The public auction over we, the purchasers, retire to a neighboring tavern and repeat it among ourselves. This time the volumes go at a fair price, which allows the buyer forty per cent. for profit on his private business. All being sold, we cast up the totals of the two sales, subtract the smaller from the greater, and divide the remainder equally among those present. Thus a man may and often does gain good profits at a knock-out without making a single purchase. It is one of our customs to clear our shelves of the 'stickers' annually and send them to the auction-room, where they go through the usual process, knock-out included. Of course no more than two or three of us send books to the same sale; and as there are hundreds in the trade in London alone, there are quite enough of us to keep an auction going twice a week all the year round. There are certain books that never sell at all, and these return year after year to the auction-room, until they become old acquaintances of the trade. "We have a good many ways of enhancing the value of our wares. Celebrities of all sorts, who are as serviceable to us in the way about as described as those merely literary, are dying off every day, and their libraries disposed of. In these cases we look up from our stock all likely books, furnish them with sham book plates and autographs, and soon get rid of them at fancy prices. It is a fact that after Lord Macaulay's death thousands of volumes which he never saw were sold in this way as coming from his library. Thus we—we old-book-sellers—have made a good thing of every one of the revolutions on the Continent that have happened of late years. Again, if we get hold of a sixteenth-century work in fine condition, we pay a needy scholar, one of those frequenters of our shops who do a good deal of reading, therein and a good deal of gossip with ourselves and our customers, but only purchase now and then, to sell a few days later at a loss—we pay one of these people to write a few words in a suitable tongue (though, for the matter of that, Latin will always suffice) and a good sixteenth-century calligraphy on the title-page, with the addition of a name purporting to be the signature of some

sixteenth-century book-man, one of third-rate reputation—a semi-obscure specimen of vast erudition by preference—and the thing is done. This little trick secures that the volumes to which it is applied shall be brought up by the first book-hunter that drops in. An old volume of any century, but the further back the better, is of much additional value if the fly-leaves—always numerous in very old books—be those originally bound up with the volume. There is a great demand for manuscript documents of all kinds dating back into the past; and there are plenty of men in London who can simulate the familiar style of any celebrity of any period and country during the last three hundred years. Nearly all the more celebrated wrote by secretary, merely signing themselves; so all that is wanted is to have the body of the document in fair sixteenth-century calligraphy. Signatures of that date, being for the most part large, formal, and rigid, are very imitable. Old-book fly-leaves are often used for purposes much less innocent than deceiving a gatherer of varieties. They are the things on which to incribe forgeries intended to substantiate the claims of persons who pretend to belong to old families of rank and wealth. Such claims are often put forward out of sheer vanity by successful money-grabbers, but occasionally with a purpose more sinister. The trade is annoyed by book-thieves of various sorts, only two of which require special notice. First stand the men who make a living among us by hunting out volumes wanted to make a valuable but imperfect set, or to complete an order, and which we have no time to go in search of. Every day of the week finds every one of us in this predicament, therefore such agents are indispensable. These useful fellows are slippery too. We have to keep our eyes on them while they remain in the shop. But still the chances are that they will 'do' us in some way or other. They always come in with a heap of books under one arm, as well as with a lot in a bag. These are volumes all of which they would have us understand have been ordered, but some of which we know well are intended for exchange in a way peculiar to these people. One of them, we will say, has got an order for an odd volume, and wishes to acquire it by a method more pleasing than purchase. He knows where it is to be found, on a shelf of easy access, and he knows its size and general appearance. So he procures a comparatively worthless article of similar outside, and, being dexterous at such feats, he is pretty sure to substitute the one volume for the other before he takes his departure. We may surprise him in the act, or detect the exchange before he quits the shop, and so we obtain our own again; but that is all. The man is too servicable to be quarrelled with, and the act when detected is commonly passed off with a jest and a laugh on both sides. "The other sort of book-thieves to which I have alluded are those half-demented, well-to-do folk who seem to have no business in the world except to accumulate typographical rarities. They are of many kinds. Some 'go in' for rare books in general, and some for rare bindings in general; some make a particular printer or binder their hobby, and some set their hearts on a particular book. Then there are people who search out the books of certain eras, as all the French publications of the time of Francis I.; or one section of the literature of an era, as the political pamphlets of the reign of Anne. In fact, there is no end to the varieties of bibliomania. And it is a fact that an inveterate book-maniac, though the most respectable of men in all other respects, is sometimes unscrupulous and even knavish here. There is no trick to which he will not resort in order to possess himself of a coveted volume. He will wheedle you out of the treasure if you are at all easy-going; he will beg it, or borrow it, or buy it as the last resource. I have known a bibliomaniac purchase volumes which were not at all rare, and for which he had no earthly use, at a cost beyond that of the object of his desire, just to get an opportunity for putting the last in a sly way into one of his capacious pockets; Such gentlemen I do not care to watch closely; indeed, I would not offend one of them for the world. I can always tell when the furtive mood is upon them; and that same manner which carries them restlessly over the shop to bring them back fifty times to one favorite spot mostly indicates the article in danger. I wait until they disappear, when a glance at the shelf shows me what has been appropriated. Then I simply put the missing volume down on the bibliomaniac's bill, to have it paid for in due course. I am informed that a good many drapers do much the same thing with certain kleptomaniac customers. In conclusion, let me observe I take good care never to make the smallest remark about such transactions; and so do the bibliomaniacs."—Harper's Weekly.

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