

oblivable means to obtain the money had been tried, and yielded only twenty-five hundred dollars. The day came when the note fell due. With a heavy heart he started for his office. On the way the thought flashed into his mind, "If God should place this balance in my hands in some wholly unexpected way, will I believe that He cares for me in everything?" Almost in agony of soul he cried, "Yes, Lord, I will believe." Stopping at the post-office he received a letter which, when opened, was found to contain a large order for lumber for a new mill, sent by an entire stranger, who did not want a stick of the timber for three months, but who had enclosed an advance payment of five-hundred dollars, the precise amount that no effort had been able to secure. Such an order was never received by him before nor since. There was no apparent reason why the advance payment should have been made at all, for the lumber if not in stock was quickly obtainable. The coincidence almost overpowered him. Some may call it only a coincidence; but sensible men will see in it the hand of God, and infer from it that His efficient presence though not always so plain is none the less real.

FOR THE SABBATH SCHOOL

International S. S. Lesson.

LESSON XII.—CHRISTIAN SELF RESTRAINT.—MARCH 21.

(Cor. ix. 19-27.)

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things."—1 Cor. ix. 25.

TIME.—A. D. 59.

INTRODUCTION.—In our regular course of lessons in the Acts of the Apostles we had reached the point at which Saul of Tarsus, who was afterwards called Paul the Apostle, was converted, and began to preach the gospel of Christ; the most bitter persecutor of the Church, being from this time its most able and zealous defender. It is appropriate that at this point we should have as the last lesson of the quarter a lesson setting forth in the words of Paul himself, written twenty-five years after his conversion, the spirit of devotion and self sacrifice which controlled him in his life in the service of Christ. The passage has been chosen as a temperance lesson, inasmuch as it points out so clearly in the last verse the principles of Christian self-denial.

VERSE BY VERSE.—V. 19. "I."—Paul the Apostle, who wrote the Epistle to the Corinthians. "Free from all men."—Not under their control or authority. "Made myself servant."—By voluntarily seeking to do them service. "Might gain."—Gain them as disciples of Christ.

V. 20. "Became as a Jew."—Conformed to their views and feelings, and as a Jew observed Jewish rites and ceremonies. "Under the law."—Those who professed allegiance to the ceremonial law of Moses. This simply repeats in another form the thought of the preceding clause.

V. 21. "Them that are without law."—The Gentiles who did not receive the law of Moses. "As without law."—He did not insist that Gentile Christians should keep the Mosaic law.

V. 22. "To the weak."—The weak in faith, the ignorant. "Became I as weak."—He accommodated himself to their weakness so far as was right. "I am made all things to all men."—He adapted himself to them in all things permitted by conscience.

V. 23. "For the gospel's sake."—That it may be advanced. "Partaker thereof."—Sharing its blessing.

V. 24. "Run in a race."—The reference is to well-known athletic games of the time. "One receiveth a prize."—The one who surpasses all others, while in the Christian race all who strive rightly receive a prize.

V. 25. "Striveth for the mastery."—Whether in the race, wrestling, or any athletic contest. "Is temperate in all things."—Practicing abstinence in everything that would diminish physical strength or vigor. "A corruptible crown."—The prize in the ancient games was ordinarily a garland, or wreath, that would quickly fade and perish. "But we."—Who run the Christian race. "An incorruptible."—That is, an unfading crown—the crown of life.

V. 26. "I therefore."—The apostle uses his own case as an example.—"So run."—With such abstinence and self-denial. "Not as uncertainly."—As having any doubt of final success. "So fight I."—The reference is to the pugilists, or boxers, of the Grecian games. "Not as one that beateth the air."—It is no mimic fight, but a real contest.

V. 27. "Keep under my body."—Restraining all appetites and passions that would hinder success. "A castaway."—That is, lest I should fail of success in the contest.

THOUGHTS.—A man-pleasing spirit, when it is without sin unto edification, is a blessed grace. (Rom. xv. 2, 7.) "A pious man may be many-sided; for nothing is more manifold than the ways

and means of divine wisdom, in the execution of its designs. But there is a great difference between the noble, legitimate accommodation of the Christian and the slippery by-ways of worldly cunning." Paul so lived that he could say he had a conscience void of offence toward God and man. No minister can live below that experience, and be clear. It must be the study of every teacher to first, himself, be what he would teach others to be. No one has a greater responsibility than the man who is called to the leadership of God's people, yet no man is in a better position to be all God wants him to be than is he. The duties and responsibilities resting upon the ministers of the gospel tend to bring him to the "full measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Paul gave himself to the work of saving souls. He not only renounced his rights to support, and endured much toil and sacrifice for the welfare of others, but he entered into the narrowness and weaknesses of others, and accommodated himself to their spiritual defects and necessities, and conformed to their ways by speaking with them in their own language, as it were; with children, in a childlike manner, and with adults according to their understanding. He stepped down to them to help them step up with him into higher and richer spiritual attainments. This marked his character as noble and Christlike.

A contest is never without spectators. Friends and relatives look with interest upon those who enter the race-course, or engage in the game of boxing. Every soul who enters the race-course to glory attracts the attention of God and the angels, while men look with eager, wondering eyes to see how the Christian outstrips his difficulties and runs on. "Standing and running both belong to the true Christian—standing, as opposed to falling; running, as opposed to idleness and standing still, and to unfaithfulness in falling back. Entering this race includes the turning from sin, the turning to God, the exercise of the powers in the obedience of faith, and the refraining from all hindrances, such as the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. A Christian is bound to refrain from whatever obstructs his course, and to use all means for increasing his spiritual strength. The lack of earnestness, disregard for the prize, and the neglect of means, accounts for so small a number of Christians." Provision is made for the success of every Christian. A reward is in store for every faithful one.

The eternal reward for the faithful suggests to us the importance which God puts upon our efforts to gain heaven. The great price paid for our salvation convinces us that it is no small thing to be redeemed through the power of Christ. All this should engage the soul to strive for the mastery. The divine help promised to the Christian secures him from failure, if he will lay hold upon it. There are no hindrances too hard for grace to overcome. Our enemy is weaker than our Friend. The path of the just is as a shining light, which groweth brighter and brighter unto perfect day. The way leads upwards all through the journey. The conflicts increase in number and severity, but the grace abounds more and more until the race is run, the conflict over. Then the crown of glory which fadeth not away, is given. Earthly woes will be forgotten in the joys of everlasting rest.

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR.

DAILY READINGS.

First Day—The Liberty of the Gospel—Gal. v. 1-26.

Second Day—"Christ Hath Made Me Free"—Rom. viii. 1-15.

Third Day—"Not to Please Ourselves"—Rom. xv. 1-13.

Fourth Day—Lawful Things Not all Expedient—1 Cor. x. 23-33.

Fifth Day—"Lest I Make My Brother to Offend."—1 Cor. viii. 1-13.

Sixth Day—"Let Us Lay Aside Every Weight"—Heb. xii. 1-13.

PRAYER MEETING TOPIC.—March 21—HOW OUR BODIES INFLUENCE OUR SOULS.—Dan. i. S-21.

CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE RESOLVE.

BY LILLIAN F. LEWIS.

This the vow of my endeavor:
Nothing must from Christ disavow;
Total abstinence forever
From all form of liquor drinking,
And what evils interlinking,
Lead astray.

This is my plan of reformation:
Through His grace, regeneration;
Through the law, removed temptation;
For the God-bought, gospel mission;
For the grog-shop, prohibition—
Work and pray!