

The Sunday School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON XXXVII.

Sept. 14. } THE CHRISTIAN IN THE WORLD. { 1 Tim. vi. 1879. } 6-16.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"They are of the world, even as I am not of the world."—John xvii. 16.

HOME STUDIES.

- M. 1 Tim. iv. 1-16 Godliness profitable.
 C. Luke xii. 13-21 Beware of covetousness.
 W. Luke xii. 22-34 Treasures in heaven.
 Th. Matt. vi. 19-34 God and mammon.
 F. 1 Tim. vi. 6-16 The Christian in the world.
 S. John xvii. 9-26 Not of the world.
 S. 1 John ii. 15-29 Love not the world.

HELPS TO STUDY.

It is supposed that Paul wrote this First Epistle to Timothy, from Macedonia, about A. D. 67, after his release from his first imprisonment; but of the exact time and place there is no certainty. Timothy was at that time bishop, or pastor of the church at Ephesus, which position he continued to hold—if tradition speaks truly—for many years after Paul's death, till, at last, he died the death of a Christian martyr in the reign of Domitian or Nerva. In the beginning of the letter (i. 2), Paul calls Timothy "my own son in the faith." He was a native of Lystra or Derbe, the son of a Greek father and a Jewish mother, Eunice (2 Tim. i. 5), who appears to have instructed him from his childhood in a knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures (2 Tim. iii. 15), which course of early instruction specially fitted him to communicate to others that gospel which came to his own heart with saving efficacy, under the preaching of Paul, probably during his first missionary journey. Much of the matter contained in this epistle has reference specially to pastoral work, and to the duties and responsibilities of an office-bearer; but the passage which forms the subject of our lesson is applicable to Christians in general. The topics are, (1) A Profitable Combination, (2) A Good Fight, (3) A Solemn Charge.

I. A PROFITABLE COMBINATION.—VERS. 6-11.

Taking eternal as well as temporal interests into account, it is very evident that Godliness with contentment is great gain—"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" (Mark viii. 36); but in our lesson the reference is to temporal interests alone, as is evident from the seventh and eighth verses. In this same epistle (iv. 8), we are told that "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come;" the wise man (Prov. xv. 16) says that "better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith;" and the Psalmist (Psalm xxxvii. 16) sings:

"A little that a just man hath
 Is more and better far
 Than is the wealth of many such
 As lewd and wicked are."

Godliness means Godlikeness, piety, love for God and delight in His service. Contentment means satisfaction with one's lot, a contented state of mind. The word means "sufficiency," and is spoken here of the mind, not of material possessions. Is great gain, i. e., the gain is in the very fact of possessing piety along with contentment. The reference is not to future, but present profit, and not to outward material wealth, but riches of heart. The Godly are not exempt from trouble and trial and affliction in this world, but they escape many of the evils which the ungodly bring upon themselves by their sins; and the life that the Christian is taught to lead is just the life that is most conducive to health and happiness—the best sort of life for the body as well as for the soul. For we brought nothing into this world and it is certain that we can carry nothing out:

"Naked as from the earth we came,
 And entered life at first;
 Naked we to the earth return,
 And mix with kindred dust."

The richest as well as the poorest have only the use of the things which they possess, and a sufficiency will yield as much enjoyment as vast possessions. A heathen who wrote many hundreds of years ago addresses a rich man in words which may be thus translated: "Though your threshing-floor should yield a hundred thousand bushels of grain, you cannot on that account eat more than I can." Food and raiment is all that a person can extract from the wealth of this world; "Give us, this day our daily bread" (Matt. vi. 11); "Give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me" (Prov. xxx. 8). When a servant-lad complained to George the Third that he got nothing for his work but his food and clothing, "That," said the King, "is all I get."

In contrast with the benefits of contentment the apostle places the great evil and danger of covetousness: But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, etc. One, writing on this passage, says: "The imagery suggested is that of trapping wild beasts by means of pitfalls, whose false coverings concealed the deadly, sharpened stakes in the pit beneath. Over such a snare of the devil those are incautiously rushing who are determined to be rich at whatever cost. Not contented with a mere competency, there are many who are insane with a desire to be known as enormously rich. Such a desire is rarely

accompanied by a strict integrity. It stops at no fraud except that which might meet with speedy retribution. It dares even that oftentimes. For it is not merely exposed, but falls into temptation. It finds its way where unconvicted honesty would never lead a man. It is tempted to speculate with other people's funds. The man for a time may win, but when the tide turns, and loss after loss throws the shadow of the coming disgrace deeper and deeper upon his soul, it is then too late. He is snared—impaled on the stakes that the devil carefully and chucklingly set for him. But not only does he fall into snares and temptations with regard to money itself, but 'into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.' Many a young man is led astray, not because of the love of money itself, but for the love of that which money will bring. He is snared with the love of dress, of high living, of ease, of costly equipage, and of many other lusts that are not only foolish, but hurtful. They are foolish because they never satisfy, and they are hurtful because they destroy both for time and for eternity. They 'drown men in destruction and perdition.' The apostle wrote as if he had an eye upon the present times. Who can count the number of men who have gone down in the whirlpools of gambling and of speculation, who might have had good careers if only they had been contented with ordinary living, and had been willing to earn it in honest and legitimate ways. They might have left records of which their descendants would have been proud, instead of that which causes them to hide their heads in shame."

The tenth verse is often misquoted and made to say that money is the root of all evil. Money is not the root of evil, neither is it an evil at all, if properly used. But the love of money is the root of all evil; money being put for every kind of earthly possession. It just amounts to this: that covetousness—the desire of acquiring some fancied good which does not, of right, belong to us—is the root of all evil. It was this that led to the commission of the first sin, and the tenth commandment was the first that was broken. It is this same covetousness, or improper desire of acquisition that still lies at the root of all other evils in human character and conduct.

II. A GOOD FIGHT—VERS. 11-12.

The Christian life is a conflict (recall lesson xxxiii). In departing from evil and following that which is good the believer must use all the wisdom and all the strength that he has, or that he can get from God by asking for them. The writer already quoted says: "Paul's directions to his son in the gospel are few but comprehensive. 1. Flee these things: the love of money with all its attendant evils and lusts. It is better not to parley with temptation. He is safe who shuns all possibilities of being led astray. No man has the right to pray: 'Lead us not into temptation' with the hope of being 'delivered from evil,' and then immediately walk within the circle of its influence himself. 2. Follow after righteousness, etc.: It is not enough to simply flee from temptation. One must do something positive. Safety lies in being actively in pursuit of something better. And the apostle mentions the true riches for which a man of God should be striving. 3. Fight the good fight of faith: The metaphor refers to the ancient Grecian games, where contestants ran for a laurel crown. 'Fight' is used in the sense of 'strive.' It is the 'fight of faith;' for faith only leads one to enter for the heavenly race. 'Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God.' 4. Lay hold on eternal life: Eternal life is the crown, or garland, with which the victor is rewarded. Whereunto thou art (rather, wast) called: He was 'called' by the Spirit of God. And hast professed before many witnesses. Some think that the profession or rather the confession, that is here referred to was the one that he made at his baptism, but it probably has reference to the one that he made at the time of his ordination. In either case, however, there must have been many witnesses, who would have testified against him had he done aught unfaithful to the pledge that he made on either occasion. And by how great a cloud of witnesses are we all surrounded—witnesses hostile and witnesses friendly! 'Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses let us lay aside every weight,' etc.

III. A SOLEMN CHARGE—VERS. 13-16.

This charge, to the faithful to their profession, to keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, is given to Timothy and all other Christians with the greatest possible solemnity; in the sight of God—in His very presence, before His face, as the Greek signifies; and before Jesus Christ, keeping in memory His own bright example in witnessing a good confession before Pontius Pilate. The word "this," was inserted by the translators. Probably it ought to be the commandment—referring to no special command, but to the whole Gospel (including the moral law) as a rule of life. The lesson concludes with a grand psalm of praise to Christ the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

FATHER HYACINTHE publicly announces that he neither seeks to found a new religion, nor to introduce Protestantism into Catholicism. He seeks only to purify the Catholic Church from its corruptions. He thus formulates the reforms which he desires to be made: 1. Rejection of the infallibility of the Pope. 2. Election of bishops by the clergy and believers. 3. Preaching of the Bible and general services in the national language. 4. Liberty of marriage to the priest. 5. Liberty and morality in the confessional.

HISTORICAL FICTION.

Nobody, perhaps, disputes that in its higher or poetical form historical fiction includes most of the immortal work of the human imagination; and it might be thought superfluous to mention the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid*, the *Book of Job* and the *Nibelungen Lied*, and the principal pieces of all the greatest dramatists. But even prose historical fiction, at its very best, most outrank the cleverest pictures of contemporary manners, for it bespeaks in the writer a more difficult exercise of a less common order of faculties. The fame of Walter Scott is only now beginning to emerge from those rising mists that are apt to cloud a great reputation during the first generation or two of its posthumous being; but even we, the children and grandchildren of those who watched open-mouthed for the *Waverleys* as they came, can shrewdly guess that his work will last in the very form which he gave it, as will not, for example, that of the well-beloved Anthony Trollope, so like Scott in the easy simplicity of his methods and the prevailing sweetness of his humour. Thackeray touches his highest level in *Henry Esmond*; Dickens in the serious portions of the *Tale of Two Cities*; Charles Kingsley in *Hypatia* and *Amyas Leigh*; while George Eliot's *Romola* and Schefel's *Ekkehard*, over and above their æsthetic value, are monuments of the unflinching application to this branch of literary art of the sternest and most labour-exacting principles of modern historical research. The German, for a wonder, disguises his learning more gracefully than the English writer. It is rather with Schefel, in his beautiful romance, as it ought always to be in such a case, the sunken, yet all the more impreachable foundation of a romantic superstructure; but either of these memorable books is a better help to the comprehension of a bygone epoch than the blind and pompous histories of the eighteenth century; quite as much so as any of the preeminently picturesque histories of our own time, like Carlyle's and Macaulay's and Prescott's; little less so than the massive and legitimately splendid work of any of the long list of so-called "brilliant" contemporary historians, Kinglake, Motley, Taue, Froude, and the rest. No one of these men would have deigned to apply for material to anything short of those "original documents" of which we hear so much; but the moment they pass beyond mere transcription and compilation, the moment they begin to select and fuse and recast, the element of the historian's personality enters in, and his work becomes, in a degree, one of the imagination. No two men can even read the same record any more than two can see the same picture.—*September Atlantic*.

NOW, OR NEVER.

But as for all those theories which fell the sinner that if he dies in his sins he shall have another opportunity; which forget the grandeur and awfulness of God's moral government; which undertake to know more than Christ dared to teach about the Father's tenderness; which insist that the divine justice exhausts itself in merely reformatory discipline, and which tend to exclude from legislation as well as from theology, the very idea of punishment—I have no fellowship with them, and if I had a pulpit, no preacher of those theories should stand in it with my consent. Behold! now is the accepted time, and now or never is the deep undertone of the gospel in its call to repentance and its offer of salvation.—*Rev. Dr. Leonard Bacon*.

There is no morrow. Though before our face
 The shadow named so stretches, we always
 Fail to overtake it, hasten as we may;
 God only gives one island inch of space
 Betwixt the eternities, as standing place
 Where each may work—th' inexorable to-day.

—Margaret J. Preston.

DIFFICULTY is the nurse of greatness, a harsh nurse, who roughly rocks her foster-children into strength and athletic proportions. The mind, grappling with great aims and wrestling with mighty impediments, grows by a certain necessity to their stature. Scarce anything so convinces me of the capacity of the human intellect for indefinite expansion in the different stages of its being, as this power of enlarging itself to the height and compass of surrounding emergencies.—*Bryant*.

Official Notices.

THE annual meeting of the St. Francis Association will be held with the Church and Pastor at Fitch Bay, on the second Tuesday in September (9th day), at 4 o'clock p.m. Rev. R. K. Blach, of Granby, preacher; Rev. B. W. Day, alternate. Subjects re-assigned to Revs. W. W. Smith, L. P. Adams and A. Duff, and to H. Hubbard, Esq. Essays: "On War." Rev. Wm. McIntosh; "On Pastoral Visitation," Rev. G. Purkis, and on "—," by Rev. J. G. Sanderson. Plans by all on 1. Cor. xv. 29. The stage leaves Smith's Hills for Fitch Bay on the arrival of the morning train from Sherbrooke. A. DUFF, Scribe.
 Sherbrooke, August 23, 1879.

Births, Marriages and Deaths.

MARRIED.

At the residence of the bride's mother, 21 Brunswick Avenue, Toronto, on the 25th of August, by the Rev. J. R. Silcox, Mr. Frederick Bull, to Miss Annie Weir, both of Toronto.