



LESSON XIV.—SEPTEMBER 30, 1906.

Temperance Lesson.

Gal. v., 15-26; vi., 7, 8.

Golden Text.

Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging.—Prov. xx., 1.

Home Readings.

Monday, September 24.—Gal. v., 15-26; vi., 7, 8.

Tuesday, September 25.—Eph. v., 11-21.

Wednesday, September 26.—I. Cor. viii., 1-13.

Thursday, September 27.—I. Cor. ix., 13-27.

Friday, September 28.—Prov. iii., 1-17.

Saturday, September 29.—Phil. ii., 1-13.

Sunday, September 30.—Col. iii., 1-14.

(By Davis W. Clark)

St. Paul's 'veins ran lightning.' Two millenniums afterwards, we yet feel the shock of it. That he is both illuminative and dynamic, the Epistle to the Galatians is evidence. It can never be a literary curio, shelved in the oblivion of a library. It is living and potent still. It is highly condensed, but in its terse terms contains the whole of religion, its very sum and substance.

The apostles' converts in Galatia had been tampered with. Warm-hearted and enthusiastic, so devoted to their spiritual Father that they were ready to pluck out their eyes for Him, yet in His absence they had allowed themselves to be bewitched and removed to another gospel. In order to recover them, St. Paul writes one of the most polemic and hortatory epistles that ever came from his pen. Incidentally it is also photographic of himself, and in its spirit and conclusion wholesomely practical.

The heresy to be combatted was the affirmation of the survival and obligation of the ceremonial law. A little leaven of this had leavened the whole of the Galatian Church. The genuineness of St. Paul's apostleship had been discounted in order that the authority of his teaching might be destroyed. Under the spell of this new gospel, which was no gospel, Gentile converts were submitting to circumcision, and all were observing 'days and months and times and years.'

St. Paul's argument is invincible; his method persuasive. His first note unequivocally challenges the course and conduct of his converts. He then enters into a minute account of his relation to the doctrine of Christ and to the other apostles, showing the genuineness and equality of his apostleship and consequently his authority as a Christian teacher.

He affirms the office of the ceremonial law to be that of the special slave who brings the child to the schoolmaster. When once the law has brought one to Christ, the Master-Teacher, it has no further function. It vanishes away. To hunt up the law again and magnify it is to desert and be disloyal to Christ. It is to exchange liberty for weak and beggarly elements and bondage. He invades the territory of the Judaizers themselves, when he affirms that Abraham was justified by faith and not by works, as he lived before the institution of the ceremonial law, and therefore could not have been justified by it. All, therefore, who are justified by faith, whether Jews or Gentiles, have Abraham as their father. In his allegorical reference to the two Jerusalems, he surpasses even himself. Those who persist in following the ceremonial law prove themselves descendants of the bondswoman

Agar, who answers to Jerusalem, which is in bondage with her children; but those who assert their independence from the ceremonial law are the true descendants, not of Agar, the bondswoman, but of Sarah the free. And Sarah stands for that Jerusalem, which is superior to the literal Jerusalem. She is free and the mother of the free.

The Epistle to the Galatians is pre-eminently the Epistle of Freedom. Eleven times this word 'liberty' rings out like a bugle-blast to the soul. The apostle will not brook the idea of his converts going into servitude to the ceremonial law. Having begun in the Spirit, he will not supinely witness their futile effort to finish in the 'flesh.' He warns, entreats, admonishes. 'Stand fast in liberty,' 'Be not entangled with the yoke!' 'Ye have been called unto liberty!' 'Walk in the Spirit!' 'Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything!'

ANALYSIS AND KEY.

1. St. Paul. Dynamic. Epistle to Galatians illustrative. Still potent.
2. Cause of Writing. Galatian converts perverted. Epistle written to recover them.
3. Heresy—Survival and Obligation of the Ceremonial Law.
4. Argument. Course of converts challenged. Apostleship established.
5. Temporary and Subordinate Use of Ceremonial Law. Designed to guide to Christ. Accomplished. Law to vanish. Magnifying law disloyalty to Christ.
6. Abraham justified by faith. Ceremonial law subsequent to his day. Abraham father of faithful.
7. The two Jerusalems. Agar, Sinai, Jerusalem. Sarah, Jerusalem above. Law gendereth to bondage. Faith gendereth to freedom.
8. Conclusion. Exhortation.

THE TEACHER'S LANTERN.

The paragraph assigned contains the whole epistle in epitome. It illustrates its style and spirit, and holds the substance of its thought.

Liberty is not to be degraded into license. It is no cloak to cover selfish and fleshly deeds. On the contrary it is to be used as means of unselfish service of others.

The glory of religion is that its substance is not meat or drink, the externalities of sacrifice or oblation, but in righteousness, a subjective condition which will express itself in right conduct.

That this subjective condition is evolved painfully by courses of intelligent self-denial and discipline, the apostle here teaches under the figure of a contest between 'flesh' and 'spirit.'

There is a ceaseless battle of the 'T's,' the ethical ego and the sensuous ego, which St. Paul pictures minutely in the seventh chapter of Romans.

Temperance, in the ultimate analysis, is the ascendancy of the ethical and spiritual ego over the sensuous ego. It is the soul in the saddle. It is the subjection of all animal instincts to the rule of the spirit, so

that they will never be gratified selfishly, to the harm of others, and with an intrusion upon the rights of others.

St. Paul gives a hideous catalogue of the effects of the supremacy of the sensuous ego. They are 'manifest.' They can no more be denied than they can be ignored. The list is not scientifically formulated. The enumeration is not proposed to be technical because the terms are not mutually exclusive. It is for practical purposes.

The result of the ascendancy of the spiritual ego is just as manifest. One is discord, the other is harmony; one is night, the other is day; one is hell, the other heaven.

The reign of law is not more universal and inviolable in nature than it is in human nature. Ascendancy of the spiritual ego will ultimately evolve the saint. Ascendancy of the sensuous ego will make a devil. There can be no switching or cross-cutting by which the sensuous ego shall shun hell and glide into heaven. 'Be not deceived. God is not mocked!'

C. E. Topic.

Sunday, Sept. 30.—Topic—Gilmour, and missions in China. Isa. xlix., 6-12.

Junior C. E. Topic.**MISSIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA.**

Monday, September 24.—All nations shall worship. Ps. lxxxvi., 9.

Tuesday, September 25.—All flesh shall see. Isa. xl., 5.

Wednesday, September 26.—All the earth. Ps. lvi., 4.

Thursday, September 27.—The uttermost parts. Ps. ii., 8.

Friday, September 28.—The ends of the world. Ps. xxii., 27, 28.

Saturday, September 29.—Hands stretched out to God. Ps. lxxviii., 31.

Sunday, September 30.—Topic—In South Africa. Matt. xxviii., 19, 20.

Lending to the Lord.

'Mother,' said Johnnie, 'haven't you a pie that you would like to lend to the Lord?'

'Why, Johnnie, what do you mean?' she asked, for she thought at first that it was a joke.

'Don't you remember,' he said, 'that the Bible says that he that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord? I don't believe that old Betsy has had a pie for a long time, and I thought that perhaps you would like to have me take one to her. Then you would be lending to the Lord, you know.'

Little worker, are you lending to the Lord? if so, what have you loaned him? Was it a penny or a dime to help send the Gospel 'over the seas'? If so, then be sure He will recompense you.—Selected.

A Noble Sentiment.

After Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown, Washington said to his army: 'My brave fellows, let no sensation of satisfaction for the triumphs you have gained induce you to insult your fallen enemy. Let no shouting, no clamorous huzzas increase their mortification. It is sufficient for us that we witness their humiliation. Posterity will huzza for us.'—Selected.

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