



LESSON XII.—June 20.

Personal Responsibility.

Romans xiv., 10-21. Commf vs. 19-21.
(MAY BE USED AS A TEMPERANCE
LESSON.)

GOLDEN TEXT.

'It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth.'—Rom. xiv., 21.

Home Readings.

- M. Luke vi., 37-49.—'Judge not, and ye shall not be judged.'
T. Matt. xxv., 31-46.—The Judgment Seat of Christ.
W. Rom. xiv., 1-9.—'None of us Liveth to Himself.'
Th. Rom. xiv., 10-23.—Personal Responsibility.
F. Rom. xv., 1-13.—The Strong Should Help the Weak.
S. I. Cor. viii., 1-13.—We should Regard Others' Consciences.
S. Phil. ii., 1-16.—'Holding forth the Word of Life.'

Lesson Story.

Paul writes to the church at Rome concerning the ceremonials of religion. Questions naturally arose between the Jews and the Gentiles about the right and wrong of things, the Jews were forbidden by the rabbinical laws to eat flesh prepared by heathen butchers or to drink wine from the vineyards of heathen. For this reason many Jews in foreign cities lived on vegetables and herbs, making the observance of these laws part of their religion. These held that since their conduct was right, any conduct different from theirs would be wrong. The Jews also still kept the seventh day as the Sabbath, and the Christians kept the first day of the week, the day on which our Lord rose from the dead.

These questions had led to disputes and quarrels, each man thinking his own way best and the strong minded becoming stumbling blocks to the weak. Paul counsels them not to judge each other, but to let each man quietly do what he thinks best about these matters not essential to salvation. Above all they must not put stumbling blocks in the way of the weaker brethren, they must be willing to give up their deepest prejudices for the sake of winning souls to Christ. Since eating meat would be a sin to those who thought it wrong to do so—those who thought otherwise should be willing to give up those things that appeared to them simply as innocent indulgences, for the sake of harmony and peace. Surely this is little to ask from those who should be willing to 'lay down their lives for the brethren.' (1: John iii., 16.)

Lesson Hymn.

Say, is your lamp burning, my brother?
I pray you look quickly and see,
For if it were burning, then surely
Some beams would fall bright upon me.
Straight, straight is the road, but I falter,
And oft I fall out by the way;
Then lift your lamp higher, my brother,
Lest I should make fatal delay.

There are many and many around you,
Who follow wherever you go;
If you thought they would walk in the shadow,
Your lamp would burn brighter, I know.
Upon the dark mountains they stumble,
They are bruised on the rocks where they lie,
With their white, pleading faces turned upward,
To the clouds and the pitying sky.

If once all the lamps that are lighted,
Should steadily blaze in a line;
Wide over the land and the ocean,
What a girdle of glory would shine!
How all the dark places would brighten!
How the mist would roll up and away!
How the earth would laugh out in her gladness,
To hail the millennial day!

Lesson Hints.

This epistle was written in the spring of A.D. 58, as Paul was returning from his third missionary journey. It was dictated by Paul and written down by Tertius in the house of a Corinthian Christian. The letter was carried by Phebe, a 'deacon' or 'minister' of the church, to Rome. It was written in Greek, as that language was the most classical and correct, and understood by most people. There were a great many Jews in Rome and the church there had probably been formed by those who had been converted in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost and returned to Rome.

This lesson is not about questions of conduct already settled, every one knows that it is wrong to steal and lie, and those questions do not need to be discussed. But there are many questions which frequently come up about which people have different views. Take, for instance, the question of dancing—now, while it may appear to be no harm for you to dance, still you know that many people have been injured in character by ball room associates. Now if those persons to whom dancing means ruin can quote you as an example—can say 'It must be right to dance because so and so does it, and he (or she) is a member of the church'—it puts you in an awkward position. 'Destroy not him for whom Christ died,' by using privileges which, though innocent to you, to him means sin.

It is the spirit of the law by which we must go, not the letter. Every one agrees that it is a great sin to kill a man's body, yet how much greater in the sight of God must be the sin of killing a man both body and soul by tempting him to begin that course which leads to his destruction. We are not afraid of these things because we can use them moderately, we are strong, but the weak brother who tries to follow our moderate use gets caught in the power of the tempter and whirled on to ruin. Vainly he pleads that we who have lead him into trouble will lead him out, we are not able. Yet we are able in the first place to keep out of these things ourselves and to work to banish the temptation from our weaker brethren. The heart filled with the love of Jesus does not need to seek for pleasure in the ball-room or at the card-table, or at the theatre, or in the wine cup.

'Why dost thou judge thy brother?'—that is, imputing to him the worst of motives. You know nothing of his temptations and inward conflicts, he may be living up to his light: You may not seem to him any better than he seems to you. 'All stand before the judgment seat of Christ'—To give account of our own deeds and misdeeds, not of our neighbor's. 'A stumbling block'—Standing in the way of others when we ought to be helping them into the Kingdom of Heaven. 'Grieved'—If his conscience be injured. 'Not charitably'—Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

'The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink'—(Matt. xv., 17-20.) 'Righteousness and peace and joy'—Such as the world cannot give. 'Approved of men'—The world has an ideal of what a Christian ought to do and be. 'For meat'—Or anything questionable. 'Destroy not the work of God'—Every true Christian should rather give up everything questionable and spend his time trying to build up the work of righteousness.

Search Questions.

By what name were the people called who refrained from strong drink, in Old Testament times?

Primary Lesson.

First we should be willing to serve God, then we should try to be strong, wise people, the kind that can serve God well. Can a crazy person serve God? No. Then we should not drink things that make people crazy. Should we have good brains or weak ones to serve God well? We should have good strong brains if we can. Then we must not smoke, for tobacco is very bad for

little boys' brains, and bodies, too. God wants us to be careful of ourselves and always say no when some one asks us to do what would hurt the nice body he has given us.

Say 'No, I won't,' if a boy asks you to smoke. Run away as fast as you can if others try to make you do wrong. That is the truly brave thing to do, just to 'trust in God and do the right.' It is more manly to do right than to do wrong. The bible says 'Add to your faith manliness, and knowledge and temperance.' Manliness and knowledge are what children need, to make them good temperance boys and girls. You are manly when you are strong enough to do right. Knowledge of what is right and what is wrong is very necessary, too. If you are not sure that a thing is right it is better to leave it quite alone. Often you would find that your father or mother or Sunday-school teacher would tell you just what you want to know about the right and wrong if you asked seriously. In the meantime here are a few words about the right care of our bodies and brains. It is not temperate to eat so much that you have a pain after dinner. It is not temperate for any child to smoke at all, or to drink any liquor. It is not temperate to read bad stories.

SUGGESTED HYMNS.

'Have courage my boy, to say no,' 'Hark the Temperance bells,' 'Yield not to temptation,' 'In the secret of his presence,' 'Jesus my Saviour,' 'I know I love thee better, Lord.'

Practical Points.

A. H. CAMERON.

Were a view of the last great day stereotyped on our minds, probably many an unkind word and many an ungenerous deed would be nipped in the bud. (verses 10-12.)

Our brother's infirmity should be our opportunity for exhibiting brotherly love. (verses 13-15.)

The worldling lives to eat, drink and enjoy himself. The consecrated Christian eats to live, and lives to glorify God and enjoy him forever. (verses 16-18.)

Paul's law of love is on a far higher plane than the ceremonial law of Moses. Which law is our guide? (verses 18-21.)

Tiverton, Ont.

Christian Endeavor Topic.

June 13.—The best way to study the bible.—Ps. xix., 7-14.

Junior Prayer-Meeting Topic.

June 13.—What good comes from reading the bible?—Ps. xix., 7-11.

Taking Care of the Lambs.

A gentleman was walking over his farm with a friend, exhibiting his crops, herds of cattle and flocks of sheep. His friend was highly pleased with everything that was shown him, but with nothing so much as with his fine looking sheep. He had seen the same breed before, but he had never seen such noble specimens, and with great earnestness he asked how he succeeded in producing such flocks. The simple answer of the farmer was, 'I take care of my lambs, sir.'

Here was the whole secret of his large, heavy-fleeced, fat sheep; he took care of them when they were lambs. Here is an apt illustration for Sunday-school teachers. If our churches of the future are to be full of spiritual life and energy, there must be proper care taken of the lambs. We can think of nothing of greater importance than the proper instruction and fostering of the children in our Sunday-schools. 'Feed my lambs,' is as emphatic a duty to-day as when spoken by the risen Lord to the penitent Peter. In this work of feeding the lambs the work of the Sunday-school teacher is to supplement the efforts of the pastor. The lambs are to be fed. The instruction is to be wholesome. It is to supply a want in their youthful natures which nothing else in this wide world can supply.

If the lambs are properly fed they will grow up with well-knit frames, ready and able to do the work committed to the Church of Christ, and able to brest the storms that will inevitably be encountered. Faithful work in the Sunday-school will be seen in the strong Christian men and women of the years that are coming.—'Living Epistle.'