

Classroom and Hall.

International S.S. Lesson.

LESSON IX.—NOVEMBER 26.—COL. iii. 12-25.

Colossians is the companion to Ephesians, written about the same time and sent by the same messenger Eph. vi. 21; Col. iv. 7.

Epaphras, the probable founder of the Church at Colosse, i. 7, had told Paul that the Church was in danger from false teaching. The letter is to warn against the new teacher and his philosophy, ii. 8-23, which robs Christ of His glory and believers of their completeness in Him, ii. 9-15; also, to establish them in faith and practice, iii. 1-25; iv. 1-6, especially emphasizing family duties, those of husband and wife, parent and child, master and slave, iii. 18-25; iv. 1.

The theme in both is the saints "in Christ." In Ephesians we are "one with him," in Colossians "complete in him," ii. 10. But there are points of difference. In Ephesians we are Christ's fulness, Eph. i. 23, in Colossians He is our fulness, ii. 10; in Ephesians we are in Him, Eph. i. 3, in Colossians He is in us, i. 27.

The last of Colossians, personal information and greetings, is wholly wanting in the companion letter, iv. 9-17.

GOLDEN TEXT ILLUSTRATED.—"I will walk within my house with a perfect heart," Psalm ci. 2.

The best place to study a man's character is in his own home. There we see him without his company manners on. Surely we should be most pleasant and agreeable with those who love us best. God is a Father and can sympathize with parents. Jesus having been tempted in all points as we, is able to comfort and help us. Wonderful is the responsibility resting upon parents. They are leading their children up into an eternal heaven or down toward an eternal hell. It is hard to understand how one can be a parent and not be saved. The little eyes of my darling babe seem to say to me, "Papa, you must now live as God would have you, for I'm going to follow in your footsteps." Is your life such that the unsaved ones in your home think that you have a wonderful Saviour? Unconscious teaching makes the deepest impression. A half hour of family devotion can't make the children forget a whole day of worldliness and irritability. The parents are the family bible that is most read. Don't teach one way and live another. The children are going the way you go. If parents eat sour grapes the children's teeth will be set on edge. A great deal of family discipline is too impulsive to be impressive. If you promise your child either candy or a whipping, keep your word. God pity the mothers and sisters who send the boys off to attend the devil's night-school, for fear if they remain some bric-a-brackish trash may be destroyed. There is something radically wrong with the father who takes pains to tie up his dog at night and lets his boy run loose on the streets. The one thing necessary to make home happy, pure and grand, is to throw the doors and windows open to the Holy Spirit, that He may fill every nook and corner, as does the atmosphere.

CENTRAL THOUGHT—SINGLENESS OF PURPOSE.—Concentration of mind and energy is the secret of power, moral, intellectual and material. Few are eminent in many ways. The famous motto of the great apostle, "I press toward the mark" has been the watchword of all unique careers. Occasionally some myriad-natured person arises who seems to hold the universe within the compass of his being, but they are so rare that they loom up solitary and grand, separated by the landmarks of centuries. We frequently see some one strong enough to stir the world were his powers applied in a single direction; but spreading himself over vast areas he becomes thin and forceless. The vapour diffused in space lies like a bridal veil across the sky, beautiful but ineffectual; but when focused upon the piston it turns the giant wheels of traffic. The electric fluid dissipated through the expanses of space is intangible and evasive, but driven along the wire it belts the earth with energy, carrying gratulations underneath the seas. God has endowed the elements with forces, yet they must be guided. He has equipped man with faculties, genius,

reason, and intrinsic graces to give these setting and direction, yet he must use them judiciously. Genius has often been wrecked through its very indifference. One who might ornament the pulpit, the senate or the counting-house fails from sheer lack of orderliness and oneness of purpose. Talent is prone to rest in its innate wealth while mediocrity, more industrious, wins in the race. Here lies the danger of hyper-confidence, that one may depend upon endowment rather than application.

OBJECT LESSONS FOR PRIMARY TEACHERS.—Show a pair of shears. Point to the rivet and ask what this little thing is that holds the blades of the shears together. Yes, it is called a rivet. The blades of the shears are of no account unless they have the little rivet to hold them together. It holds them so that they can be useful. A tender, loving heart is like that little rivet. It binds together and makes happiness and good fast friends.

Love in the home is like a little rivet. It binds the members together and makes them happy. In the first family, in which Cain quarreled with his brother Abel, this little rivet of love was gone. If he had loved his brother he would not have been angry at him or jealous of him.

In King David's family this little rivet of love was lost. So Absalom began to fight against his father and brought so many troubles on David and the family, and finally young Absalom lost his life, and it was all because this little rivet of love had been lost. I wonder if this little rivet is in your family, and binds your heart to the heart of all the other members of the household? If you love father or mother or brother or sister, and any other member of the household, I am sure that you will live happily together.

The best things we can have in our homes is not beautiful furniture and good food and clothing, and plenty of money, but this little rivet of love.

In the next place, among our associates and playmates love is like the little rivet which holds the two blades of the shears together. Do you not remember how it was with young David and Jonathan? It says that "the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David." Jonathan loved him as his own soul. Through all the trouble which David had to pass because the father of Jonathan tried to kill David, Jonathan clung to his friend. The two young hearts were knit together, and they stood by each other as long as they lived. That little rivet of love held them both together, and both the boys were very much better because they loved each other so.

It always makes us better if we have some friend that we love very much, as Jonathan loved David. Sometimes boys and girls are not naturally very loving, but love will grow if you try. Just try to be kind and loving to others, and it will make love grow in your heart. Try to do loving things and helping things, and then it will become more natural, and the little rivet of love will become stronger and stronger.

Love is the little rivet that holds us to Jesus. Nothing can separate us from Him because His love binds us to Him.

PRACTICAL POINTS.

Love binds all other graces, verse 14.

Not passion but peace should rule the Christian, v. 15.

The unity of the body is a strong argument for peace, v. 15.

Christ's work must be done in Christ's spirit, v. 17.

Every house must have a head, v. 18.

Not a despot, but a loving husband and kind father, vs. 19, 21.

The rod must not be the substitute for reason, v. 21.

Ennoble the meanest work with the deepest motive and the highest aim, v. 23.

The lowliest life here may fit for the loftiest life hereafter, v. 24.

Reward denied by men shall be given by God, v. 24.

With God "position" is nothing, "heart" is everything, v. 25.

The slave is the Lord's freeman; the master is Christ's servant; both master and slave are brethren. IV. 1.