

The Quiet Hour.

Christian Self-Control.

S.S. Lesson. Feb. 13; 1 Cor. 8 : 1-13.

Golden Text—Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace.—Rom. 14 : 19.

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We know, v. 1. Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge. v. 7. A great deal has been gained in the interests of peace and harmony in any neighborhood or church or home, when the fact is fairly faced that, wherever any number of persons are gathered together, there must be differences of opinion on many subjects. So long as we expect people to think just as we do on all subjects, there will be fret and worry and bad temper. Boys and girls at school know how much trouble can be made by one who always wants his favorite game to be played, or who constantly insists on having for himself the part in the game which he likes best. Things move smoothly only when each of us is willing to allow others the same right to their opinions, that he claims for himself.

To us there is but one God, v. 6. We should not allow our regard for the feelings of others to move us a single inch from a position which we believe to be right. Paul knew that God the Father, and not a senseless idol, was the true object of worship. He knew that there was but one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the universe had been created and man redeemed. He would not yield these beliefs or abate in the least his boldness in declaring them, to please others, or win them over to his side. From his example we learn to stand firm as a rock for principle, while at the same time we give way to others as far as conscience will permit.

Their conscience being weak, v. 7. Conscience may show its weakness in various ways. There is such a thing as a Sabbath conscience. Sometimes it becomes so exhausted when the Sabbath is past that it is quite unable to keep us right in our daily business. The conscience of some people is strong enough to keep them from stealing their neighbor's purse or sowing evil weeds in his field, but too weak to prevent their robbing him of his good name by careless or ill-natured speech or planting seeds of discord which will bear bitter fruit for many a generation. The conscience may be so weak that it cannot induce a man to change a wrong decision. There are people who think themselves very conscientious, because when they once pass their word, they always stick to what they have said. But a promise to do wrong is a wrong promise, and should be broken as quickly as possible. A conscience that does not lead to this is a weak conscience.

The Father, of whom are all things, v. 6. Here is the sovereign remedy for fear and anxiety. All things in the great universe belong to our heavenly Father. The son of a millionaire would laugh at the thought of being in want. But earthly riches often "make themselves wings" and "fly away." It is not so with the riches which belong to the Maker of the worlds. They are unfailing, and are placed freely at the disposal of the humblest child of God. Those for whom the Lord provides need not dread the lack of anything that is a real good.

Conscience is defiled, v. 7. Our clocks and watches sometimes go wrong and

need to be regulated. Conscience, too, may be mistaken and require to be corrected according to the teaching of God's word. The conscience of Paul, for example, was in error when it made him a persecutor of Christians. But a guide that is not always right is better than no guide at all. If we disobey conscience once, the next time it will speak less clearly, and if we constantly disregard it, we shall at last cease to hear it.

This liberty of yours, v. 9. Imagine a company of Arctic voyagers who have been frozen up during the winter. Spring has come and one of the number is strong enough to take advantage of the first opportunity of escape. But the rest are weakened by the long strain and must wait until strength comes back to them. What would we think of the man who would look out only for his own safety, with no thought or effort for his fellow sufferers? It may be that we are able to drink in moderation without danger, though this is very doubtful; but it is certain that many around us would be ruined, body and soul, if they once began to use strong drink. Our liberty should be used, not to set them an example which will lead to their destruction if they follow it, but to guide them in the path of safety.

For whom Christ died, v. 11. As long as we are in Paul's company, we can never get far from the cross. All his thinking centres in the death of Christ; and it is this death of Christ which is to control our conduct in relation to others. Christ died for that weak brother; then, the spirit of Christ in us requires that we do nothing to endanger his welfare.

I will eat no flesh, v. 13. The only gain, if I can drink wine and be safe, is a certain animal pleasure. The loss, if I am not safe, is loss of means, honor, happiness, life itself, and not the body only, but also the soul. Oh, the folly and sin of taking such a risk and leading others to take it after our example!

A Prayer.

Almighty God, our fathers trusted in thee and were not ashamed. In their day with their small means they wrought a great work because they were inspired with faith in and faithfulness to thee, and thou didst bless them. May we study their work that we may learn their secret. We would walk in their steps and follow them as they followed thee. Help us to remember the former things of old that we may learn lessons from the past and come under its inspiration and carry its work forward to greater heights of attainment. We would appreciate our inheritance and possess and develop it more fully. Open our eyes that we may see in what pleasant places our lines are fallen and how richly thou hast blessed us. May we know that for all these things we shall give account; and as our fathers served thee in their generation, so may we serve thee in our day. By our service and sacrifice may we contribute to the growth of human welfare and to the glory of God. Lord, may thy kingdom come and thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. May we have this kingdom within us in a pure and peaceful and patient spirit that will enable us to live under thy rule and to radiate righteousness among men. This we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

Reading Shanties and Camp Schools.

BY REV ALFRED FITZPATRICK.

Possessing the conviction that the days of slavery ought to be passed in reality as well as in name, and that even men usually treated as mere "hewers of wood and drawers of water" have a mental and moral nature, I determined, three seasons ago, to show that reading shanties and camp schools at lumbering, mining and railway construction camps were feasible. Not being able to get employers to go to the expense of providing the buildings for the experiment, I built three shanties at my own expense—one at each of three separate camps in the district of Algoma—and supplied these with stoves, chairs, games, books, current newspapers in French and English and small organs. These were appreciated, and last season the employers began to realize the practicability of the work, and put up the buildings at their own expense. The Provincial Government also set apart a sum of money for the purpose, and now supplies books. There are now about thirty reading camps. So far as the employees are concerned we could have twice that number, but we are unable to undertake the expense of supervision, instruction, current literature, etc., we thought it better to move slowly. Besides three of the largest operators of the lumbering industry in the province opposed the movement on the ground of illiteracy of the men, and contended that it was useless to send books to men who could neither read nor write. However these men appreciated the effort, and two of them showed their appreciation by giving me handsome cheques to defray my personal expenses.

Out of deference to the judgement of these experienced lumbermen I resolved not to add materially to the number of reading camps, but to develop along the line of education, and aim at placing a competent instructor in charge of every reading camp. Owing to the extra expense incurred we were unable to employ more than eight teachers, and were forced to ask these to work in the woods during the day and thus earn part of their salaries from their employers.

This however has not been an unmixed evil. If it has brought the teaching profession down to the level of the manual laborer, it has also dignified the latter, and has brought the teacher and taught into a sympathetic relationship indispensable to successful progress in the operation of camp schools. It has thus been a blessing to the lonely toilers of the forest, and has helped the students to a first hand understanding of the labour problem. It is manual training for teachers of a more practical type than that obtained in the manual training schools.

I have had the pleasure of a recent interview with only one of the gentlemen in question, and he at least is more favourably disposed to the camp school idea than the reading pure and simple. I have reason to hope that the others will also approve of development along this line.

Work of this kind is in harmony with the spirit of the age. The growth of correspondence schools is phenomenal. One such school has nearly twelve thousand young men in Canada receiving daily instruction. If young men in the mining camps can be induced to take up courses of study with teachers two thousand miles away, surely young men in the lumbering camps, under the direct inspiration and incentive of an instructor, will make some effort in acquiring at least an elementary education,