

this husband could not sell his memorandum, sponges, and pencils in the streets. His wife seldom went out, for she was very retired in her habits. One Sunday she did go out; it came on to rain, and the rain drove her into a passage. As she stood there she heard a voice, and walking up the passage she pushed open a door and found herself in the House of God for the first time. She was then forty-four years of age. I had just finished my sermon and sat down. Then I rose and said, 'Next Tuesday I shall open here a lending library, where you may have interesting books, and if you like to come at seven o'clock, I shall be glad to lend you any book out of the library.' She went away, and said to herself, 'Ah, I shall go back to that gentleman and ask him to lend me "Uncle Tom's Cabin."' If you provide lending libraries for the poor, take care you get interesting books for them; 'Pilgrim's Progress,' if you like, and fifty more of the same class, but take care you add other books for the working men, their wives, and children. I have no patience when I look over the catalogue of books provided for the poor. Don't you read 'Pickwick,' 'John Halifax,' many an interesting story, many a charming biography, or fascinating book of travel yourselves? provide such books for the poor (who ought to have such books). Many years ago a lady taught me a lesson. I was weak enough to ask my lady friends if they would give me some books for this library. Blessings on them, they did, only the books were of no use when they came. One sent me a parcel of books. I opened it with care, and took up the first book; it was a fusty copy of 'Simpson's Mathematics.' Next, 'Magazine of Magazines, 1796,' a great, big, fat book. Next, 'Every Man his own Farrier.' Next, 'How to Improve the Breed of Horses.' I confess I had a tender feeling for that lady, but after that I lost it. I could not swallow 'Every Man his own Farrier.' If you send books to missionaries and Bible women choose choice books; remember they are books you give God, and you ought to give Him the best, and not the worst.

On Tuesday night up came this woman to apply for a book. 'What book would you like?' She was trying to form her mouth to ask for 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' when God interposed, and she said, 'Well, sir, I—I—I should like a Bible.' 'I have not a Bible in the library, but you shall have one.' I got her a Bible, and that book converted her soul. My friend became the first Bible woman in St. Giles's.

The above is a part of a speech delivered fourteen years ago by the Rev. Mr. M'Cree, a man of remarkable activity and powers as a Missionary among the heathen of the great Metropolis. Mr. M'Cree has been known for many years as the Bishop of St. Giles—the famous seven dials being the scene of much of his labours a quarter of a century ago. So successful has he been in winning men and hearts that there are few in that densely populated quarter of London who would not protect him from insult, and thus the measure of good he has accomplished is incalculable.

#### PRAYER.

Prayer is balsam, comfort, peace,  
The loss of self in Deity;  
The harmony of human souls  
With heaven's eternal melody.

Prayer is freedom, loss of all  
That binds the soul to this poor clod;  
So that no words, nor forms, nor thoughts  
Stand darkening between her and God.

Mysterious, and yet so bright,  
It bears the soul to heaven away;  
'Tis like a slumbering at the source,  
And yet a waking into day.

—Nicolaus Lenau.

#### SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSON XIII.

SEPTEMBER 25, 1881.

(From the National Sunday-School Teacher.)

NOTE.—This being one of the Sundays not provided for by the International Lesson Committee, the lesson chosen is one of those agreed upon by the principal publishers of notes to fill the vacancy.

THE RACE AND THE PRIZE.—1 Cor. ix. 22-27.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things."

LESSON TOPIC.—Striving for the mastery.

#### LESSON NOTES.

PRELIMINARY.—This Epistle was probably written from Ephesus, during the third and last year of Paul's stay in that city. In it the apostle seeks to correct many abuses which had arisen in the Corinthian church. Nearly all of these evils had arisen out of their former habits of immorality, incited by the low moral tastes of society about them, and all were peculiarly "the lusts of the flesh." The state of society in Corinth was so notorious that the very expression "to Corinthianise" was understood to mean "to play the wanton," and the bad reputation of the city became proverbial. This Epistle is directed therefore to show the evil of those practices which were so common in their city, and the unceasing effort necessary on the part of Christians to overcome the temptations which surrounded them. Our lesson to-day especially emphasizes this thought, and the apostle uses a familiar illustration from the Isthmian games to show the need of self-denial and earnest effort on the part of those who have entered the race for eternal life. This lesson is selected as one from which to teach the value of temperance and the danger of giving way to evil desires and appetites, and surely it ought to be a powerful argument in the mouth of every earnest teacher.

STRIVING FOR SOULS (22, 23).—In these verses we have set forth the chief aim of every true Christian worker. By all means save some. This object is never to be lost sight of, and we live, we work, we strive, we deny self, we bear reproach, discouragement, suffering, we give time, money, life, to accomplish this object. And the life of Paul, next to the life of our Lord himself, is perhaps the best illustration we could have of the intensity with which he strove to accomplish his mission. (See chap. iv. 10-13; 2 Cor. xi. 23-28.) And yet he says (Acts xx. 24) none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry (or service) which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And I do all things for the gospel's sake, i.e., my only desire is to make known the glad tidings of God, and whatever I have to do, or bear, or suffer I gladly do in order that men may hear this glad tidings. And we must not forget that this "all things" included *life itself*, and that the apostle gave his life willingly (2 Tim. iv. 6.) as he had given all else. How like was this to the Master himself, whose path of humility led Him down the depth of suffering to the shameful death of the cross. Phil. ii. 8. This lesson is of intense interest to every Sunday-school teacher for two reasons: 1. If we do not show the same eager desire to *save souls*, our scholars may fairly question whether we are true followers of Jesus or of Paul. 2. If we do not show this interest we need not expect our scholars to be interested in the subject of salvation. One reason that "the old, old story" has such mighty power over human hearts is, that it reveals the deepest interest of God in our salvation; and unless our scholars see that we are moved by a like desire to save them our teaching will fail to do them good, while our indifference may

result in making them indifferent also and thus hinder their salvation. But if we are impelled by the spirit of Christ eagerly to *strive for their souls*, we can then hold up this example and exhortation of Paul, and urge them to show a like interest in this great salvation. And let us now strive to incite them to such a desire for the salvation of others that they will be willing to do all things and become all things for the sake of saving some.

STRIVING FOR CROWN (24, 25).—But we have a reward set before us in addition to the joy which comes from doing good. An inheritance (1 Pet. i. 4), a crown of glory (1 Pet. v. 4), a kingdom (Luke xxii. 29), and a throne (Rev. iii. 21), we shall share with the redeemed in their joy; we shall also share with the Redeemer in His glory. But for this also we must *strive*: First, to *enter* the race (Luke xiii. 24); second, to *gain* the crown (v. 24). And the illustration here used shows that we must put forth every effort for this also. These Grecian wrestlers and racers gave themselves wholly up to the accomplishment of the object before them; practising all manner of self-denial, undergoing the severest exercise, taxing their strength and endurance to the utmost in order to gain a crown "of fading leaves," and the applause of men which would die as soon as the next champion should appear. And this they did knowing that but *one* could gain the prize and all others must fail. What wonder then that the apostle should so earnestly exhort us to "lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us and—run with patience the race set before us." Heb. xii. 1-1. For *we may be sure* of the prize if we so run; and that prize not a corruptible one, but "incorruptible—and that fadeth not away." Nor shall the applause of that "great cloud of witnesses" be the thoughtless cheers of an indifferent multitude, but the everlasting joy of those who have likewise come up through great tribulations; of fathers and mothers and pastors and teachers who have loved and prayed and laboured and watched for us, or of brothers and sisters and classmates and friends whom we have won for Christ and brought into His kingdom.

STRIVING AGAINST THE BODY (26, 27).

—Our enemy is not where we naturally think he is. Often during the war the enemy would make what seemed to be a terrific attack on some point of our lines for the purpose of drawing the attention of our officers to that point, when in fact the main attack was made in a directly opposite direction. They hoped our forces would be drawn away from their real point of attack, and thus enable them to win a victory where we were unprepared and unable to meet them. So it often is in the contest for eternal life. Our great enemy, the wicked one, is wiser than all earthly generals, and we should not be ignorant of his devices. One of these devices by which he often succeeds in overthrowing us, is in making us believe that our chief enemy is *outside* instead of *inside* of us, and of this we are warned in our lesson to-day. Paul was an old soldier; a veteran, indeed, who had met the mighty enemy of souls a thousand times, and we will do well to heed his words. He says the stronghold of the evil one is *in our bodies*, and *he made the fight right there*. He did not fight as one beating the air. *I. e.*, he did not waste his strength, nor was it misdirected, but knowing where the enemy was, he says, I buffet my body, "beating it with heavy blows," and "lead it about as a slave." We are too ready to lay the blame of our sins upon others or upon our surroundings. Our first parents were fair representatives of our race, and their children have followed closely in their steps. Adam's excuse was, "The woman—she gave me of the tree;" Eve said, "The serpent beguiled me;" and we are always seeking to lay

our sins upon some one else. It is true that "evil communications corrupt good manners," and we are warned not to go "with a multitude to do evil," but we have the privilege of choosing our own company, and we must bear the blame if we choose the wrong kind. God's word says, "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God," and we are to be judged by *our own words* and *our own works* and out of *our own hearts*. The seeds of each man's sin lie within his own heart, and if we could root them all out we would be safer. My heart is like an impregnable fortress, which can not be taken from without, but a few traitors within may betray the strongest fortress into the hands of the enemy. And *the traitors are there*, and must be kept in chains, "led about as slaves," to do our bidding. God says, "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." These evil desires, passions, and appetites must be "crushed with heavy blows" and kept under, or they will betray and overthrow us. And let us remember this warfare is a *personal* one. Paul says: I so run—I fight—I buffet my body. *No one else can do my fighting or win the crown for me*. If every other scholar in the class is temperate, that will not save me from the curse of drink; if every other one is a Christian, I may be lost; if every other wins a crown, I may be overcome; and I certainly will be unless I also run and fight, and watch and pray. But I must remember that though the battle is a personal one, I can not and need not fight alone. There is One who will stand with me in the fire of temptation and affliction so I shall not be burned; One who will go with me through the waters and bear me up; One who will stand by my side in the day of battle and give me strength—if I desire and ask and expect him to do so. He who said, "Lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the end," also said, "Without me eye can do nothing," and He it was upon whom Paul depended when he said "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." But I must *enter* the race for myself, and be willing to deny self, and bend every effort to overcome the enemy within me. "I must work as if everything depends upon myself and I must pray as if everything depends upon Christ." For every one who does this there awaits a crown of righteousness, a crown of glory, a crown of life.

—We should act with as much energy as those who expect everything for themselves; and we should pray with as much earnestness as those who expect everything from God.

—Few women have better deserved the title of heroine than Mrs. Smith, widow of the band-master of the Ninety-fourth British Regiment. During the war in the Transvaal, she and her little daughter, who is but three years of age, were with the regiment, and they were present at the battle of Brunter's Spruite where Band-master Smith was shot dead, whilst both mother and daughter were wounded. Men were falling on all sides from the enemy's bullets, and the circumstances were such as to appal any woman. But Mrs. Smith displayed a truly heroic spirit. Men were down in all directions, some badly wounded and some dead. Leaving the dead body of her husband, and whispering a word of comfort to her wounded child, she set to work to relieve the wounded. She brought them water to drink, and tore up her skirts to supply bandages for their wounds. Long after the din of battle had ceased, this brave woman moved about among the wounded, easing the pangs of the dying and relieving the sufferings of those whose injuries were not mortal. The new order of St. Catherine is to be conferred upon her, but she ought to receive some more substantial mark of approbation.