



BENEVOLENCE IN THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

(By a Teacher.)

The great cry of the Christian Church to-day is for money. The great demand on every field is for money. Almost frantic are the appeals which go with increasing frequency throughout God's Zion for additional means to carry on the work of the kingdom. Why all this worry and hurry to secure sufficient 'sinews of war' to fight the battles of our King? No one has ever yet lisp'd the thought that God's people did not have the money. We all know better. We would never dare to plead our poverty as an excuse for the barrenness of the Lord's treasury. The great question that confronts the leaders in Christian enterprises is not how to create new sources of supply, but how to obtain even a legitimate proportion of the means which God has already placed in the hands of His people. The solution of this problem may be found in the Sunday-school.

Childhood is preëminently the time for moulding and shaping character. As a rule, early impressions sink deeper and last longer. Statistics tell us that the large majority of conversions take place before the age of twenty. The mind and heart of the child are pliable and easily influenced; and if right principles are ever inculcated it must be before habits become fixed and character becomes rigid.

Now we believe it is just as practicable to teach the children right giving on Christian principles as it is to teach them right living. As we try to save their souls, let us seek also to save their pocket-books. Many parents instruct their children to lay up their pennies, and it is certainly admirable to teach them to be saving and economical, but who shall say that much of the greedy, grasping spirit which is manifested in so many to-day was not learned in the very nursery by that policy, directed no doubt in all kindness and sincerity, which taught the child to hoard, but never give? With such a start, a man's whole life has been spent in the school of covetousness. He never has been educated to give. He never has known the blessedness and the duty of Christian benevolence—and he never will. Nothing short of a stupendous miracle will make him open his hand in liberal giving after he has cultivated for many years the miserly spirit.

A professing Christian man, in good standing in his church, as rich as Croesus and as stingy as Dives, may have benevolence preached to him every week-day and twice on Sunday, and the only result will be to make him mad and more stingy than ever; or he may be like the brother of whom we once heard who was wealthy, but exceedingly close-fisted. His pastor prepared and preached a strong sermon for this brother's special benefit. Immediately at the close of the sermon the brother rushed towards his pastor, and grasping his hand, said earnestly, 'Pastor, that was a grand sermon, but I didn't take a word of it; but it was just what they needed.' That little boy was wiser than he knew who, when asked, as he was passing a large, deformed tree, what caused its peculiar shape, promptly responded: 'Guess some one trod on it when it was little.' The crooked sticks in the world and in the Church, out of harmony with every person and every thing, were bent and crooked in youth; and the deformity has become fixed and more prominent and ugly; it cannot be altered. But the young twig can be straightened, and the child can be trained up in the way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it.

We would not only urge that contributions be taken systematically, but that the scholars should understand definitely the object for which they are contributing. It will be very easy for officers and teachers to arouse the personal interest of the children in the various branches of Christian work, and soon they will come to look forward with eagerness to the Sundays on which they can contribute for these benevolent objects, and their young, sympathetic hearts will be glad at the thought that they can do something for the destitute and the perishing, in the

name and for the sake of Jesus, their Saviour.

Then teach the children to give; the ground of giving; the work for which they give; the blessedness and the rewards of giving. They will soon learn to give from principle; the spirit of true benevolence will be born in their hearts, nevermore to die away; they will always love to lend a helping hand to every righteous and Christian enterprise. Christianize the boys and girls of to-day, and the coming generation will be Christian. Make liberal-hearted and benevolent from principle—not impulse—the youth of the present, and they will become the princely givers of the future. Educate the children to give 'as God doth prosper them,' and ere long they will gladly lay their rich and bounteous gifts upon His altar; every department of Christian endeavor will receive a mighty onward impulse; and there will be 'enough and to spare' in the treasury of the Lord.—Evangelical Sunday-School Teacher.

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

LESSON III.—Oct. 18, 1896.

1. Kings 4: 25-34.

SOLOMON'S WEALTH AND WISDOM.

Commit to Memory Vs. 29, 30.

GOLDEN TEXT

Them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.—1 Sam. 2: 30.

LESSON OUTLINE.

- I. The Riches of Solomon. Vs. 25-28.
- II. The Wisdom of Solomon. Vs. 29-31.
- III. The Words of Solomon. Vs. 32-34.

HOME READINGS.

- M. 1 Kings 4: 1-19—Solomon's Princes and Officers.
- T. 1 Kings 4: 20-34—Solomon's Wealth and Wisdom.
- W. Matt. 6: 19-34—Seek ye First the Kingdom of God.
- Th. Prov. 2: 1-9—The Lord Giveth Wisdom.
- F. Prov. 4: 1-13—Wisdom the Principal Thing.
- S. Prov. 4: 14-27—The Path of the Just.
- S. Matt. 19: 16-30—The Danger of Wealth.
- Time.—B. C. 1014.
- Place.—Jerusalem.

HINTS AND HELPS IN STUDY.

The chapter from which our lesson is taken describes the glory and magnificence of Solomon's kingdom during its most flourishing years. The description opens with lists of his princes and officers. Vs. 1-19. Then follows a picture of the prosperity of the people, the great extent of Solomon's empire, and the immense provision made for his household and stables. Vs. 20-28. An account of his world-famed wisdom closes the chapter. 'Under his vine and under his fig tree' (v. 25) was a proverbial expression descriptive of peaceful prosperity. 'From Dan even to Beer-sheba' meant the whole extent of the territory occupied by the twelve tribes, as we would say 'From Maine to Texas.' Solomon's dominion, however, extended far beyond these boundaries, to surrounding lands which were tributary to his kingdom. 'Those officers' (v. 27) refers to the 'twelve officers' mentioned in verse 7, who were stationed in different parts of the empire, and each of whom, in his month, had to gather from his district provision for the royal household. 'Largeness of heart.' V. 29. A mind able to comprehend the knowledge of many and difficult subjects. Solomon was a poet, a philosopher, and a naturalist. Vs. 32, 33. Thus God answered his prayer for wisdom, and far exceeded it, making Solomon the most glorious and honored sovereign of his time.

QUESTIONS.

Of what does 1 Kings, ch. 4, give an account? What are given in vs. 1-19? Where were the 'twelve officers' (vs. 7) stationed? What was their duty? How is the prosperity of the people described? Vs. 20, 25. What is said of Solomon's wisdom? Vs. 29, 30. Of his fame? Vs. 31, 34. How did he show his wisdom? Vs. 32, 33.

WHAT THE LESSON TEACHES.

- 1. God's blessing on a country brings peace and prosperity.
- 2. When we choose right things God adds other blessings.

3. It is God from whom comes the wisdom we need.

4. Those whom God teaches are prepared to teach others also.

5. A greater than Solomon is here asking our heart's honor.—Westminster Lesson Book.

THE LESSON STORY.

Solomon asked wisdom of the Lord and he gave it to him. He gave him, too, what he did not ask, great riches and honor.

It was a time of great peace and prosperity in all Israel. Solomon had not asked wisdom for his sake, but for the sake of his people, that he might be able to rule them wisely and well. He ruled them so well that there was peace in all the land. The nation grew in numbers, and the people had plenty and dwelt safely without fear. This lasted all the time of Solomon's reign, and throughout all the land of Israel.

Solomon's court was a very rich and generous one. Thousands ate at his table each day. He had forty thousand horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen. There was plenty for all, for Solomon used his great riches as well as his wisdom to help and bless others.

But his wisdom was more and greater than his riches. God gave it to him, and he gave him a large heart so that he might know how to use all his great gifts. Solomon's wisdom was more than any other man's; he spoke three thousand proverbs, and besides these he wrote many songs. People came from far away to hear the wisdom of Solomon because it was so great.—Berean Lesson Book.

ILLUSTRATION.

Wealth. Solomon and his servants 'lacked nothing.' V. 27. God's anointed ones never lack. Their song is always Ps. 23: 1; Gen. 22: 14. Marg. A gentleman once met a poor London waif singing lustily 'Glory to God.' He stopped the boy, whose appearance indicated that he had known suffering and want, and asked, 'What are you shouting "Glory" for?' 'Cause I am happy, sir.'

'Happy! What do you mean?' 'I gave my heart to God, sir, and I'm happy. I was a great sinner; but Jesus died on the cross for me; his blood washed away all my sin, and now I'm happy.' The lad's earnest, simple faith touched the man's heart, his eyes grew moist as he asked, 'How long have you been happy?' 'Only a month, sir.'

'Where were you converted?' 'In the Lake-Road Mission Hall.'

'Where Mrs. Booth preaches?'

'Yes; I gave myself up to God there one night, and I don't want for anything now. I pray to God, and he sends me jobs.'

'What business are you in, my boy?' 'I ain't in no regular business, I'm an errand boy; but I pray to God, and he sends me jobs. I have no job to-day yet, but God will send me one. I never want now.'

If your life does not correspond with that of the psalmist, or of the little Salvation Army waif, there is something wrong. Either you have not, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving made your request known, Phil. 4: 6, 7; or you have not by faith taken what God is holding out to you, 1 John 5: 14, 15; or you have misunderstood your real need, or your hour of need is not fully come. Once in our Missionary Institute we were out of coal and money. We told our 'want' to the Lord, asking him to 'supply' all our 'need,' expecting the coal would come immediately, Phil. 4: 19. But two days went by and neither coal nor money were donated. We found by having our ashes sifted there was plenty of cinders for the small stoves, and we had an abundance of hard wood for the larger stoves. The lessons we learned in those two days of patience, economy and sympathy for the poor were our real 'need' and not the coal. Abundantly God fulfilled his word and supplied the real need and still fulfilled his promise, 'There is no want to them that fear him.'—Arnold's Practical Commentary.

C. E. PRAYER MEETING TOPICS AND DAILY READINGS.

OUR BEST.

- The lookout committee. 2 Cor. 5: 16-21.
- The prayer meeting committee. 2 Chron. 7: 13-22.
- The social committee. Neh. 8: 9-18.
- The music committee. Ps. 66: 1-8.
- The flower committee. 1 Chron. 16: 23-29.
- The executive committee. 1 Cor. 14: 23-30, 40.
- Oct. 18.—Are we doing our best?—Mat. 5: 13-16; 25: 14-30.