

longer audible. With this school of rose-water ministers the theology of law is voted obsolete and barbarous; the world is to be tamed and sweetened and sanctified entirely by a theology of love. They preach a one-sided God—all mercy and no justice—with one-half of His glorious attributes put under eclipse. Even sinners are not to be warned, with tears and entreaties, to flee from the wrath to come. They are to be coaxed into holiness by a magical process which makes nothing of repentance, and simply requires a "faith" which costs no more labour than the snap of a finger. This shallow system may produce long rolls of converts, but it does not produce solid, subsoiled Christians.—*Dr. Cuyler.*

**BELIEF IN ONE'S WORK.**

Successful workers will generally be found to be those who believe the most intensely. Even in speech, the effectiveness of an utterance may often be measured by the force of the conviction that prompted it. Much more is it true of work, that its results depend largely upon the faith with which we pursue it. So of a man's moral convictions; if they are feeble, his moral life will be feeble also. If he utters a truth, it will carry the impression that he is in some doubt about it; and even the most palpable truism might be taken from his lips at a discount.

Apply the principle to a man in business. Let him believe thoroughly in his work, that it is honourable and may be made profitable, and he will be likely to pursue it more enthusiastically and earnestly, and if there are either dollars or honours in it he will be pretty sure to gain them. A brickmaker with a firm conviction that there is a fortune in his bank of clay would be much more likely to realize it than the owner of a gold mine who doubted the success of working it.

Only let one's convictions be strong enough to stand alone, and there need be few fears but they will make their way. Their intensity will overcome not only one's own doubts, but those of other people. They will laugh at clouds, and come bounding into port on the crest of the very wave that croakers said would overwhelm them.

Of course it is essential that the convictions be wholesome and rightly aimed. The hunter does not hit the bird in the air who aims at its image in the water. Much less, if his gun be loaded with sand. Let truth be in the heart, and it will aspire upward instead of downward—provided a downward aspiration were possible. Then its beats will be blows, and every blow will drive falseness further back. The person with even a limited experience doesn't need to be told that weak opinions beget sickly offspring, and that all vagabond morals are born of doubt.—*Morning Star.*

**YOUR HEART.**

God wants not money alone. The silver and the gold are His; but He wants your heart, your feelings, your time, your anxiety. He curseth these mere money charities, making them engender poverty in far greater abundance than they annihilate it, and scourging them with the means of those who grudgingly bestow. The mere mammon-worketh mammon's work; divine charity worketh God's work. A Christian man may as well give over his faith into the hands of a public body, and believe what they appoint to be believed, as cast his charity over to a public body—yea, or to a private individual—and think that he thereby satisfieth God. Our right hand is not to know what our left hand doeth. It is with the heart, and soul, and mind, and strength that He is to be worshipped and served.—*Edward Irving.*

A WICKED messenger falleth into mischief; but a faithful ambassador is health. Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction, but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured.—*Proverbs xiii : 17, 18.*

THE habit of whispering in company, so often indulged in by young ladies in the presence of friends or strangers, savours strongly of rudeness, if not of gross ignorance. The vainest being or the most perfect suffers alike under that emancipation from the government of true politeness. We cannot help, though perfect we imagine ourselves, to consider our humble self the theme of a merry whisper, and the pain rankling in our wounded self-love leaves a thorn which sooner or later will sting the aggressors and prove a thorn to them. Whispering in the presence of strangers, without some apology, is therefore entirely out of place, and ought to be avoided, cost what it may.

**MAKE CHILDHOOD SWEET.**

Wait not till the little hands are at rest  
Ere you fill them full of flowers;  
Wait not for the crowning tuberose  
To make sweet the last sad hours;  
But while in the busy household band  
Your darlings still need your guiding hand;  
O! fill their lives with sweetness.

Wait not till the little hearts are still  
For the loving look and phrase;  
But while you gently chide a fault,  
The good deed kindly praise  
The word you would speak beside the bier,  
Falls sweeter far on the living ear;  
Oh! fill young lives with sweetness.

Ah! what are kisses on the clay-cold lips  
To the rosy mouth we press,  
When our wee one flies to her mother's arms  
For love's tenderest caress!  
Let never a worldly babble keep  
Your heart from the joy each day should reap,  
Clinging young lives with sweetness.

Give thanks each morn for the sturdy boys,  
Give thanks for the fairy girls;  
With a dower of wealth like this at home,  
Would you rife the earth for pearls?  
Wait not for death to gem life's crown,  
But daily shower life's blessings down,  
And fill young hearts with sweetness.

Remember the home where the light has fled  
Where the rose has faded away;  
And the love that glows in youthful hearts,  
Oh! cherish it while you may!  
And make your home a garden of flowers,  
Where joy shall bloom through childhood's hours,  
And fill young lives with sweetness.

**The Sunday School.**

**INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.**

**LESSON XXXIV.**

Aug. 27, } *THE COVENANT WITH ABRAM.* } Gen. xv.  
1880. } 1-18.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"Abram believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."—Rom. iv. 3.

**HOME STUDIES.**

- M. Gen. xv. 1-21... Covenant with Abram.
- Tu. Rom. iv. 1-18... Righteousness of Faith.
- W. Rom. v. 1-11... Justified by Faith.
- Th. Gal. iii. 10-29... Heirs according to the Promise.
- F. Ps. xxxii. 1-11... Sin Covered.
- S. Rom. x. 1-21... Christ our Righteousness.
- Sab. James ii. 1-26... Faith without Works.

**HELPS TO STUDY.**

In this lesson we take up the Bible narrative, unbroken, at the point at which our last lesson left it, viz., Abram's return from the slaughter of the eastern kings and the rescue of Lot.

The promise made to Abram some eight or ten years before we now find repeated, in more definite terms, and taking the form of a covenant, ratified on the part of Abram by offering sacrifice, and on that of God by sending down the fire of acceptance.

The following are the principal topics: (1) *Abram's Encouragement*, (2) *Abram's Complaint*, (3) *Promise of Descendants and Inheritance Repeated*, (4) *Justified by Faith*, (5) *Sacrifice and Vision*, (6) *Egyptian Bondage and Return therefrom foretold*.

**I. ABRAM'S ENCOURAGEMENT.**—Ver. 1. Here we have but a particular instance of the interest which God always takes in the welfare of His faithful people, and of the support which in one way or another He affords them in the struggles and trials of life.

After these things: that is, after Abram's victory over the eastern kings and his interviews with Melchizedek and the king of Sodom as recorded in the preceding chapter; the narrative now confines itself once more to the personal biography of Abram in its connection with the history of redemption.

The word of the Lord came. This phrase, so common throughout the prophetic books of the Bible, occurs here for the first time. These special revelations were made in the absence of the written Word, of which they now form part, helping to render fresh revelations unnecessary.

Fear not. Even Abram had his periods of fear and despondency, and of anxiety regarding the future. The particular cause of his fears on this occasion may have been that the recently vanquished enemies should return in greater force and avenge their discomfiture. The "fear nots" of the Bible are many, and full of promise to the believer. See Ex. xiv. 13; xx. 20; Isai. xxxv. 4; xlii. 1; Matt. x. 31; xxviii. 5; Luke ii. 10; v. 10; John xii. 15; Rev. i. 17.

I am thy shield. Compare Psalm iii. 3; lxxiv. 11; Prov. xxx. 5. Could not He who had already given Abram the victory over his enemies defend him from their future attacks? See Psalm xxvii. 1.

Thy exceeding great reward. God is the rewarder of those who seek Him, and their highest reward is to find Him. Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. He Himself, greater than all His other gifts, is the portion of His people. These words of encouragement, addressed to the father of the faithful, are the inheritance of his spiritual children in all ages.

**II. ABRAM'S COMPLAINT.**—Vers. 2, 3. The following striking application of this part of the lesson is from the "S. S. Times":

"Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless. Abram didn't see how the Lord could make good all of his promises to him. The obstacles in the way seemed absolutely insurmountable. And that is what is the trouble with most of us in our doubting. The promises are plain enough; but how can God fulfil them, with things just as they are? If we have no money to pay the baker, how can God see that we have our daily bread? . . . With all the enemies who are about us, and with all the misleading appearances which give colour to their slanders, how can God shield our good name from dishonour? With that child's peculiar disposition indulged as it has been until now, what can God do that will give him a useful life, or make him a blessing to others? With things as we see them in our own case, or in the case of those about us, how is it possible for God to do as He has promised to do, and as we wish to have Him do? 'Yes, I know that God says so; but just look at the case as it is. How can God bring things out as He has promised when they have come to their present pass?'

"Look now toward heaven. Ah! that is it. You may be hemmed in on every side; but you are not hemmed in overhead. If you cannot see a great way before you, or on either hand, you can see far enough straight up. When you question what God can do, look above and see what God has done. This looking at obstacles, fixing our eyes on the hills or the bogs, on the lions or the bad men in our pathway, is discouraging business. It makes us believe that there is no way out of our difficulties. But to look up into the clear sky, and to see the moon and the stars in their beauty, inspires us to the feeling that there are no difficulties out of which God cannot find the way for us. What is it that has discouraged you? Is it your empty purse; or your dreary 'profit and loss' account; or the business outlook of the times; or the parched fields; or your wayward boy; or the suspicious looks of those who used to trust you? Whatever it is that has made you hopeless, 'look now toward heaven': there is nothing discouraging in that direction. If the Lord who made the heavens, and keeps the moon and the stars in their places, has given you a promise, you may be sure that He can make that promise good."

**III. PROMISE OF DESCENDANTS AND INHERITANCE REPEATED.**—Vers. 5-7. Abram's paradox was solved by a definite intimation that a son should be born to him in his old age, whose descendants, in accordance with the terms of the original promise, should be very numerous and inherit the Land of Canaan. See Deut. x., Heb. xi. 12. The "Westminster Teacher" says that the comparison of Abram's seed to the stars "relates emphatically to his spiritual seed, who 'shall shine as stars, for ever and ever' (Dan. xii. 3)."

**IV. ABRAM JUSTIFIED BY FAITH.**—Ver. 6. Compare Rom. iv. He believed the promise, and the promise contained the hope of salvation. Abram and all the other Old Testament saints lived and died in the faith—more or less clear—of a Saviour to come. Without Christ and His atoning sacrifice, the animal sacrifices of the old dispensation would be utterly meaningless. It is faith in Jesus Christ that in all ages puts the penitent sinner in possession of a righteousness that acquits him before the divine law which he has broken, and secures his eternal happiness—this is justification; but the salvation thus appropriated by faith partly, and mainly, consists in being freed from sin and made personally holy—this is Sanctification. These two go together. Who would have it otherwise? Certainly not those who have really accepted the terms of the Covenant of Grace.

**V. SACRIFICE AND VISION.**—Vers. 8-12. In answer to Abram's request for a sign, God directs him to prepare a sacrifice and, over it, makes with him a solemn covenant.

Take me an heifer, etc. Regarding this mode of covenanting the "National S. S. Teacher" says: "The animals mentioned are those that in ascertimes were specially ordained for sacrificial offerings. The age chosen was one that marked their full first maturity and vigour. An allusion is made to this method of covenanting in Jer. xxxiv. 18. The covenant was made according to an ancient custom, by which the animals were divided lengthwise along the spine, the birds being undivided, and the separated parts were put over against each other in their natural order, a path being left between them through which the covenanting parties could pass. The ceremonial of the covenant of old consisted in the contracting parties passing between the dead animals with the imprecation that, in case of a breach in the covenant, it might be done to them as to these animals."

**VI. EGYPTIAN BONDAGE AND RETURN THEREFROM FORETOLD.**—Vers. 13-18. The want of exactness in the number of years during which the bondage in Egypt was to continue is rather in favour of the truth of the Bible than against it. An impostor, inventing this prophecy after its fulfilment would probably have been careful to give the exact number, four hundred and thirty, as in Ex. xii. 40, whereas it was only the round number, four hundred years, or as we would say, four centuries, that was communicated to Abram.