

## FOR THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

## International S. S. Lesson.

## LESSON VI.—CHRIST AND THE CHILDREN.—FEB. 10.

Matt. xviii : 1-14.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“It is not the will of your Father which is in Heaven that one of these little ones should perish.”—Matt. xviii. 14.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—The Children of Christ.

Becoming as a CHILD. v. 1-5.

ANALYSIS.—Helping and Hindering a CHILD. v. 6-10.

God's Love for the CHILD. v. 11-14.

HARMONY.—Mark ix. 33-50, Luke ix 46-50.

TIME AND PLACE.—In the early autumn of A. D. 29, in Capernaum.

INTRODUCTORY.—After the transfiguration on the mount, Christ with the three, descended to the plain and rejoined the other disciples. Here His first act was to heal a demoniac, after which He journeyed south to Capernaum talking again on the way of His approaching death and resurrection. At Capernaum He paid the tribute money, and probable while in the house of Peter (Mk. ix. 33) gave the reply to the disciples' questioning, which is contained in the passage before us.

BECOMING AS A CHILD, v. 1-5.—On the way down to Capernaum the disciples had been disputing this question of relative greatness in the Kingdom of Heaven. Perhaps the privileged position of Peter, James and John on the mountain had awakened their pride and emulation, or perhaps it was the giving of the keys into the hands of Peter on the occasion of his confession, that first gave rise to this somewhat unprofitable discussion. When they reached the house of Peter in Capernaum, the Master asked them, “What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?” but at first they held their peace, and made no reply; then Peter at Christ's command went out and caught a fish, from the mouth of which he took the money to pay the tribute. While Peter was away, or immediately after his return, the disciples thinking better of their silence, came to Jesus with the problem that perplexed them, “who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?” In reply the Master summoned the twelve about Him, and beckoning to one of the children in the house, probably one of Peter's little boys, set him in the midst, and drew from his childlike innocence and simplicity the lesson these materially blinded men so much required. “Verily I say unto you except ye turn and become as little children ye shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven,” these are the Master's words of rebuke and instruction. “Except ye turn,” so reads the R. V. “Converted” here means to turn about and face in the other direction; to the disciples it meant, “unless you cease your self-seeking, and turn away from it altogether, you cannot even enter the kingdom, apart from attaining a high position in it. So become as little children, means to assume that position of humility, trust and dependence, toward your Heavenly Father which you so delight to see in your children towards yourselves. No lesson perhaps is so much needed, and so hard to learn, by Christians as this. “Whosoever therefore shall humble himself like this little child, the same is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven,” such is the measure of God aristocracy. O, world, how far hast thou wandered from the ways of God!

HELPING AND HINDERING A CHILD, v. 6-10.—The Master proceeds to emphasize the beauty of the child character in comparing it with His own. “Whosoever, recognizing the simplicity and weakness of one of these little ones, receives him in kindly help and loving care for my sake, receiveth Me.” Parents, teachers, elder brothers and sisters, hear these words of the Saviour. Would you show your love for Christ? You need not do great things, or await great opportunities. Begin with the little one in your class or your home. For His sake be patient, be tender, be sympathetic, be full of love; lead gently, wisely, softly the little heart and mind to the feet of Jesus. What a reward is yours; all done to one of the least of these His little ones, is accounted as done to Him. But listen yet again. There is another side to this question. “Whosoever shall cause one of these little ones who believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea;” what awful words of warning are these! Take heed teachers in day school or Sabbath school how you hinder the progress of the little ones, by inconsistent lives, mistaken teaching, or hasty and unjust action. Take heed parents how your lives mould the futures of your children. You with the decanter on your tables, beware lest the serpent steal from its raby depths and bury its fangs in their budding lives. You who vent your little quarrels in the presence of your boys and girls, wonder not if the dissension thus shown enters their lives and wrecks the home. You, who in thoughtless mood make promises that are never kept, blame not upon your children their lack of truthfulness and integrity in future years. The responsibility lies on you. Legislators and rulers, God will not hold you guiltless. There are sources of stumbling and offence on many of our street corners that should be swept from the land. In the name of God's love for the children, in fear of His just displeasure away with the saloon! There are but a few of the many obstacles over which our children stumble.

GOD'S LOVE FOR THE CHILD, v. 11-14.—How beautiful is this description of God's love for the children. “Be careful,” says the Saviour, “How ye think lightly of these little ones, for in Heaven their angels are ever in the Father's presence.” It is then

no fanciful thought, that our loved ones have a guardian angel, messenger of the Father's love, to guide their their steps and keep them when in danger. I would that we might dwell upon the beautiful picture that closes our lesson. It is not only one wee lamb that has wandered from the fold; there are many, many, many, whose absence causes the loving Shepherd weary journeys into the bleak mountains and wildernesses of sin. Brother, sister what are you doing to help reclaim them? What are you doing to prevent their straying?

## Application and Illustration.

## WHAT CAN I DO?

BE HUMBLE, v. 4.—“The higher a spire rises toward heaven the smaller it becomes, and thus the more elevated are our spirits the less shall we be in our esteem. Great thoughts of self and great grace never go together. He who overvalues himself undervalues his Saviour. He who abounds in piety is sure to be filled with humility. When we begin to talk of our perfection, our imperfection is getting the upper hand.”—Spurgeon.

RECEIVE THE CHILDREN, v. 5.—An interesting incident is recorded of Francis Xavier, the Jesuit missionary. Once, on some field of labor where hundreds came with their needs, their questions, and their heart hungers, he was worn almost to utter exhaustion by days and nights of serving. At last he said to his attendant, “I must sleep! I must sleep! If I do not I shall die. If any one comes— whoever comes—awaken me not. I must sleep.” He then retired into his tent, and his faithful servant began his watch. It was not long, however, till a pallid face appeared at the door. Xavier beckoned eagerly to the watcher and said in a solemn tone, “I made a mistake. If a little child comes, waken me.” There is something in this weirdly like the Master, who was never so weary but the coming of a little child awoke all his love.—Westminster Teacher.

## CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR.

## Like Little Children.

First Day—In innocenc—Ps. li. 1-7.

Second Day—In faith—1 Tim. iv. 12-16.

Third Day—In hope—Ps. xlii. 5-11.

Fourth Day—In obedience—1 Sam. iii. 1-10.

Fifth Day—In trust—2 Sam. xxii. 1-7.

Sixth Day—In cheerfulness—Matt. xxv. 19-23.

PRAYER MEETING TOPIC, Feb. 10.—“Becoming as Little Children,” Luke xviii. 15-17; Matt. xi. 25, 26. (Union meeting with the Juniors suggested, to be led by the Junior superintendent.) Greatly do we wish that every Society in the land could carry out the above suggestion in connection with this meeting; but many can't because they have no Junior Society. There are in Canada, according to the latest statistics, 2,054 Young Peoples' Societies of C. E., and only 266 Junior societies, or about one in every ten. This is not as it should be. Any Y. P. S. C. E. is missing much that is not working among the children. You who are lacking in this respect, take this opportunity to supply the defect. If you cannot hold a union meeting, hold an inception meeting. Make it the birthday of a junior society. It is Christ's work, and work that will surprise you in the blessing it will bring to yourselves, and to the boys and girls. If you are interested in the future of your society, you should be moulding material for it to-day. Beside all this, you are responsible for your little brothers and sisters. It is the duty and privilege of you who have grown up, and on whose lives no doubt are left the scars of many a temptation, many a sin, to use your experience in Christian Endeavor to save the little ones from these same things. The child heart needs Christ, as much as does yours, and to you it looks for a revelation of His love and character. What are you doing to give it a true conception of the beauty of its Saviour? Come now, why is not there a junior society in your church? You who read this are the one to begin it. Will you do so? Write and tell us all about it, and if you need any help we will be only too glad to give it if we can.

## Juniors' Rally!

To-morrow evening at 7:30 in Bond street Congregational Church, the Junior Endeavor societies east of Yonge street, will hold a grand rally. A programme of a kind most interesting has been prepared, and with the hearty singing always characteristic of juniors, the meeting should be very successful. Master Blight, of Agnes street Methodist Church, will be in the chair, and the Rev. O. C. S. Wallace of Bloor street Baptist Church, will deliver an address. The rally song of the Church of the Covenant Junior Society, written by Mr. S. J. Duncan-Clark will be sung in the opening exercises.

CLOSE THE SALOONS EARLY.—Cooke's church Y. P. S. C. E., have decided to circulate a petition in favor of the early closing of the saloons, as proposed in Ald. Lamb's notice of motion in the council. Let every other city society take this up. There is no doubt a widely signed petition of rate payers could be secured with a little effort, and might have a most salutary effect in bringing some of the most recalcitrant aldermen to time. Take action at once. Get the signatures of your churchmembers, the people in your neighborhood, your companions in business, then forward the lists of names to the society at Cooke's church, or direct to the City Council. But whatever you do, do it at once.