

The Sunday School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON XLVI.

Nov. 16, } THE LOVE OF THE FATHER. } John iv.
1879. } 7-16.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"We love Him, because He first loved us."—1 John iv. 19.

HOME STUDIES.

M. 1 John ii. 1-29. Brotherly love.
T. 1 John iii. 1-24. Sons of God.
W. 1 John iv. 1-21. The love of the Father.
Th. 1 John v. 1-21. Eternal life.
F. 2 John i. 1-13. Walking in truth.
S. 3 John i. 1-14. Fellow-helpers to the truth.
Sab. Isa. xii. 1-6. God our salvation.

HELPS TO STUDY.

In the introduction to the last lesson it was stated that "love" is the main subject of the First Epistle of John. We find a spirit of Christian love breathing throughout the writings of this Apostle, although he is most energetic in denouncing sin and ungodliness.

In his Gospel he several times calls himself "the disciple whom Jesus loved"—as if the most remarkable thing that he could find about himself was the fact that Jesus loved him—and it is very evident that he loved Jesus in return; he shewed his love to his God and Saviour by spending his life in "labours of love" for the welfare of his fellow men.

Our present lesson begins with an exhortation to Christians to love one another, and in enforcing this exhortation he sets before us, (1) God, the source of love, (2) The Manifestation of God's Love, (3) The Proof of our Love to God.

I. GOD THE SOURCE OF LOVE.—vers. 7, 8.

Love—benevolence—is the motive that prompts to the doing of good. Only those actions which proceed from love are really good. A being who always does good must be always actuated by love.

God is love, for love is the sum of goodness, and God is good.

We can see that love is the sum of human goodness, for all human morality is comprehended in the Ten Commandments, and the sum of the Ten Commandments is to love God and to love our neighbour; and we are taught in this passage—whether we could infer as much by our own reason or not—that love is also the aggregate of divine goodness, the sum of all the qualities that make up the character of God.

Does God hate anything? Yes, He hates sin; that is the only thing He hates; and it is just because God is love that He hates sin; for the same love that induces any being to do good also prompts that being to oppose evil. Opposition to evil is one of the ways in which good may be done. The more God loves and pities the sinner the more He must hate the sin which is destroying that sinner.

Love is of God: God is the source and author of the love that prompts to the doing of good. It is implanted by Him in regeneration. Those who have it are born of God. It is not the natural growth of the human heart. The natural man, actuated by selfishness, knoweth not God; differs from God in first principles, and cannot in the smallest degree understand Him—entertains wrong views of His character and actions.

II. THE MANIFESTATION OF GOD'S LOVE.—vers. 9, 10.

Can the fact that "God is love," and the fact that He "will by no means clear the guilty" (Ex. xxxiv. 7) be reconciled? Yes, a being who made no distinction between good and evil would not be a holy being; and the love that did not include holiness and justice would be imperfect. God will spare no one who confronts His justice with guilt resting upon him—He spared not His own Son when guilt (although it was the guilt of others) was imputed to Him—but He manifests His love to us in postponing the day of reckoning, thus giving time for repentance; and in devising a way in which guilt may be removed, so that there is no valid reason why any human being should meet God in judgment with his guilt resting upon his own head.

This admirable scheme of redemption, into which "the angels desire to look"—one says that the contemplation of it may possibly be a means of preserving them in their state of holiness—this wonderful plan of salvation, manifests the wisdom and the justice of God; but what is it that stands behind these attributes urging them both to action? It is love. Love prompted wisdom to devise the plan, and love urged justice to smite the shepherd that the sheep might go free.

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. This is the greatest manifestation of the love of God to man that ever was given; and it is also the greatest that could have been given: "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?" (Isaiah v. 4).

No pardon was extended to the Saviour. He endured the punishment of all the guilt he bore. The words, "He saved others, Himself He cannot save" (Mark xv. 31) contain a meaning which those who uttered them in derision could not perceive. God is just; His justice is not in opposition to His love, but in full harmony with it; we cannot appeal from God's justice to His love; if His justice is against us His love is against us also; and when a sin is pardoned it is solely because the punishment of that sin has already been borne by the Saviour. That is what the preacher meant who, to arrest the attention of his hearers, uttered the terri-

ble words, "God never pardons sin!" Every sin that ever was, or that ever will be, committed by a human being, either has been punished or else shall be punished. If his sins are pardoned to the believer, they were not pardoned to the Saviour.

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His son to be the propitiation for our sins: From this verse it is quite evident that it is unscriptural to represent the death of Christ as procuring or purchasing the love of God for men. "He loved us, and—because he loved us—sent His son." On this point, the "Westminster Teacher" says: "Christ's death did not secure God's love, but it secured His pardoning mercy, and in respect to our sins, it made His mercy prevail instead of His wrath." It is equally unscriptural to speak of the love of God to us as being originated by our love to Him: "Not that we loved God, but that He loved us." The convert may possibly experience love to God in his own heart before he realizes the love of God to him; but when he examines the matter he finds that if God had not loved him first, he would never have loved God.

III. THE PROOF OF OUR LOVE TO GOD.—vers. 11-16.

The love spoken of all through this lesson is no mere sentiment, but an active principle that always prompts to beneficence. It is so on the part of God; it is so also on the part of the Christian. The application of the lesson is: Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. Personally God is infinitely above being in need of our beneficence, and we cannot in any way conduce to His welfare. He directs us then to shew our love to Him by putting forth efforts for the welfare of our fellow men—especially those of them who are His people. If we love God we will also love those who are His.

No man hath seen God at any time: God is a spirit and not visible to the eye of sense; and although Christ shewed himself on earth, He is not visible here now. But we can see the people of God on earth; we can see our fellow beings; we can see that many of them are in need of our good offices; and Christ says: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Mt. xxv. 40).

THE TEACHER IN HIS STUDY AND IN THE CLASS ROOM.

This was the subject of Dr. Macviear's address before the recent meeting of the Quebec Protestant Teachers' Provincial Association at Quebec. It is scarcely necessary for us to say that the theme was ably handled. Below we reproduce his eloquent peroration as reported by the "Morning Chronicle":

"What we need now for still greater national strength and progress are certain things in the moral category. Shall I say a higher sense of honour among all classes, including our public men, and a supreme regard for truthfulness. It is easily seen that defects in these respects must touch and deteriorate our national life at every point, they will influence domestic relations and public transactions, affect our buying and selling, the entire trade or traffic of the country, they must taint our judicial processes and pervert the decisions of our courts; they will pervade our daily literature and render almost worthless and even pernicious the utterances of our press. And is it not a lamentable fact, as recently declared by a leading statesman, that in order to get an approximately correct view of the doings and utterances of any public man you must read the accounts given by the paper which favours him and the paper which opposes him, and even then, you may fail to reach the truth. Now, it is in the power of our schools and institutions of learning to brand with deserved infamy this detestable vice of lying, and to stamp it out of existence by calling it by its right name and making it bear its proper burden of dishonour and disgrace, and by holding up before our youth a true standard of truthfulness and integrity. This is what is needed to purify our commerce and bring back business to a safe and healthy state, and the only sort of National Policy that can ensure permanent prosperity. We suffer much from, and hear a good deal about, *hard times*, but we are slow to take in the thought that *hard dealings* must bring on *hard times* in the most productive and highly favoured countries under heaven. If men will have double prices for their goods and force their clerks to lie, and force on trade by unlawful competition, and buy and sell on credit with no rational prospects of meeting their engagements; if young men will rush into business and set up domestic establishments the very first year surpassing or at least equalling in extravagance those of persons who have made their fortunes; if wealthy men, eager to become more so, will found superfluous banks and then press hard upon each other while encouraging reckless adventures—if men will make up their minds to over-reach, and cheat, and lie in business, there is no difficulty in seeing how hard times must inevitably overtake them. And the remedy is to be sought in persistent, universal, thorough moral culture. The vices hinted at are not to be cured in a few months or years. They grow slowly and they die hard. Great, tall, rank plants of iniquity do not grow up like Jonah's gourd in a single night. Giant swindlers undergo a long and hard process of education, and when a multitude of them infest a country it may require a generation or even more to drive them out, and there must be many a crash and exposure in business and in public life before they take their leave. It is manifest that the true way of dealing with these evils, in so far as they affect us, is to teach, and speak, and preach, and work against them. They will not disappear by being left alone. Silence respecting them is criminal. Froude, the historian, justly complained that during thirty years of church-going he never heard a sermon on common honesty,

on those primitive commandments, 'Thou shalt not lie,' and 'Thou shalt not steal.' Perhaps his experience is not unique. But we need more than sermons on these questions. We need to permeate our whole educational system with ethical training—we need ten thousand daily lessons in our school-rooms and in our homes on the elements of morals, on the principles of truth, and right, and law, and purity, and frugality, and self-control and general government. These are the principles with which to permeate our whole system of education, and our whole country. Let reverence for truth and right reign supreme, then

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control, These three alone lead life to sovereign power; Yet not for power (for power of herself would Come uncalled for) but to live by law, Acting the law we live by without fear; And because right is right, to follow right were wisdom In scorn of consequences."

CONSUMPTION CURED.

An old physician, retired from practice, having had placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy for the speedy and permanent cure for Consumption, Bronchitis, Catarrh, Asthma, and all Throat, and Lung Affections, also a positive and radical cure for Nervous Debility and all Nervous Complaints, after having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, has felt it his duty to make it known to his suffering fellows. Actuated by this motive and a desire to relieve human suffering, I will send free of charge to all who desire it, this recipe, in German, French, or English, with full directions for preparing and using. Sent by mail by addressing with stamp, naming this paper, W. W. SHERAR, 149 Powers' Block, Rochester, N. Y.

Around the Table.

THE FORTUNA'S LAST FREIGHT.

THREE schooners were anchored in a New England seaport, one Sabbath morning. They were laden for Boston, but had been detained by foul weather.

"If it clears a bit, I'll be out o' this!" said Job Kittery, captain of the "Fortuna."

Luke, his deformed son, whose isolated and painful life had brought him very near the Saviour, seemed greatly disturbed at his father's words.

"I hoped you wouldn't start to-day," he said, in a rich, pathetic voice. "I have been listening to the church bells and wishing we could go."

"A man can't wait for the Sabbath when he has bread to earn," replied Job, testily. "You and your mother wouldn't get no clothes to wear to meetin', or meat to give ye strength to get there, if 'twant for your wicked old father!" adding, "I don't see no harm in startin' to-day."

"No good ever comes o' disobeying God," said the boy earnestly. "Whenever you've ventured out on the Sabbath, mother and I have prayed that you might be kept from harm. I know God heard us, for you came back safe. But something will happen if you keep on breakin' the Lord's day."

Job sneered, but his hand shook as he lit his pipe. Luke's upright life and fearless utterances often woke the old man's sleeping conscience.

"Sailors obey only wind and tide," he said gruffly. "I never bothered about Sunday, and look at my success! I own the fastest sailing craft on the coast, a cottage on shore, and buy ye piles o' books. Now what's aboard that head o' yours?" more kindly, as the boy's lip trembled.

"I was wishing I could take my turn at the