

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON.

FOURTH QUARTER—STUDIES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

A. D. 93. LESSON VIII. THE GLORIFIED SAVIOUR; or, Christ Abiding with His Church. Rev. 1. 10-20. NOVEMBER 23.

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL.

Verse 10. In the Spirit.—In a state of trance, wherein connection with surrounding objects is suspended, and the mind is lifted up to a mysterious communion with the spirit world. The Lord's day. The first day of the week, kept by the early church sacred in honor of our Lord's resurrection. As of a trumpet. A loud, clear, penetrating tone in the characteristic of the trumpet-note. 1. "When Christ speaks to men it is with no uncertain sound."

11. I am Alpha and Omega.—The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet; used as emblems of the first and the last. But the clause is omitted by all the most ancient manuscripts, and doubtless should have no place in this verse. What thou seest. All that was to be revealed in the vision, the entire Apocalypse. In a book. Ancient books were made of papyrus, or from the prepared skins of animals, written upon with a pen, and rolled upon a roller. Seven churches. The message was sent to these as the leading churches, and as each a distinct type of church-life.

2. "Though Christ is in heaven, he has a deep interest in his church on the earth." In Asia. Not referring to the entire continent, nor even to the entire peninsula of Asia Minor, but to "proconsular Asia," a strip of territory on its western end, along the shore of the Egean sea. Ephesus. The largest city of the district, situated in Ionia, great in its commerce, celebrated for its wonderful temple of Diana, and having a flourishing church planted by the Apostle Paul. Smyrna. Forty miles north of Ephesus; and from the earliest Christian ages until the present, the seat of a church. It has now a population of one hundred and fifty thousand, and is the centre of extensive missionary influences. Pergamos. In the province of Mysia, once possessing a great temple to Asclepius, and one of the largest libraries of antiquity; now having a population of thirty thousand. Thyatira. In Lydia, a Macedonian colony, once celebrated for its purple dyes; still a considerable town, named Hk-hisar. Sardis. A famous city, anciently the capital of the Lydian kingdom of Croesus, situated by the river Pactolus, now in ruins, and containing a few miserable mud-huts. Philadelphia. In Lydia, about thirty miles south-east of Sardis; a considerable city, despite several destructions by earthquake. Laodicea. In Phrygia, between Colosse and Philadelphia. It was destroyed by an earthquake A. D. 62, but rebuilt. It was famous as a seat of the wool trade.

12, 13. Seven golden candlesticks.—Seven separate lamp-stands, emblematic of the church whose mission is to "hold forth the word of life." 3. "Note the unity and diversity of the church—seven lamps—yet one light." 4. "The church's business, that of the light-house, not to be the light, but to hold the light." 5. "The church's preciousness and loveliness in its Lord's sight, golden in all its parts." In the midst. 6. "Christ is among his churches, to nourish their lights and watch their works." Like unto the Son of man. A name that was applied in the early church to Christ alone, and indicating his human nature, and brotherhood with man. A garment. A long, flowing robe, such as was worn by the high-priest, pointing to his priestly relation to his church. Girt about his paps. Or around the breast. While certain people wore the girdle around the bosom. 7. "Thus Christ unites the priestly and the royal functions of his office as Redeemer."

14, 15, 16. His beard.—His forehead. White like wool. Not in material, but in color, is his hair compared to fine white wool. Eyes as a flame. Indicating his omniscience. His voice. Compared to the resounding waves of the ocean, which John must have often heard in his island-prison. Seven stars. Not as a bracelet, but held in his hand, the object of his care and possession. From verse 20 we learn that these represented the "angels" of the churches. 8. "God's ministers are his precious treasure." Out of his mouth. A sword. His word, the utterance of his lips, is compared to a sword, (2 Thess. 2, 8), as the weapon with which he conquers the world.

17, 16. I fell.—Th' invariable effect of the divine appearance before human eyes is alarm and terror. 9. "Not until we are like him, can we endure to see him as he is." He that liveth. "The living One," the one in whom all life originates and from whom eternal life proceeds. Was dead. The one who has passed through death, triumphing over it. Have the keys. The key is the emblem of authority. 10. "Christ alone has power to ransom from the grave." Hell. "Hades," meaning "the place of departed spirits," not that of the lost forever.

19, 20. Thou hast seen.—The vision just beheld. Which are. The present state of the churches when John wrote, revealed to him by inspiration. The mystery. The secret signification. Angels of the seven churches. Probably meaning the ministers in charge of them, and who stand as their representatives.

GOLDEN TEXT.—I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. Rev. 1, 8.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—Christ's present existence. The next lesson is Rev. 3, 1-13.

THE REFUGE OF PRAYER.

Poor heart, so weary, so burdened with care, Hast thou not sought it—the refuge of prayer? No wonder thou'rt tired and filled with doubt, Like an homeless ship tossed over about, O cease for a moment that plaintive strain; Glad would I ease it, that throbbing pain. List till I tell of the wondrous retreat, Thou'lt find it low kneeling as Jesus' feet, Thence coming with bosoms lightsome and glad. There too I have been and again will go, In joy or in gladness, in weal or woe. Life hath its joys, but so too hath its grief, Then faint to this refuge of prayer I would flee, Pleading merciful Jesus pity Thou me! Poor heart, I have tried it, and know what I say, That never one yet was sent empty away, From the life-giving streams of this bower of rest, O thither, come thither, and heart, and be blest. Oxford, Oct. 27th, 1879. J. J.

A STORY FOR YOUNG AND OLD.

TOM JONES.

The hero of my story was a man remarkable in many ways. His personal appearance was remarkable. He was for height like Saul among his fellows, broad shouldered withal, and humorous-looking, with a merry twinkle in his right eye and a green shade over his left, and as he walked his step was like the tread of an elephant. His powerful arms hung by his side like the leavers that carry a steam-hammer, and his huge hand, as it gripped you, made you feel as a child in the grasp of a giant. He was just the style of a man to knock down a bullock, or to fell a tree, or to handle a hot-tempered bucking colt, or to reduce a rowdy to order. Such was Tom Jones, Old Tom, or Mr. Jones, as he was respectively called by the circle in which he moved. Those who knew him best called him Old Tom, and those who had but slight acquaintance put the handle to his name and styled him Mr. Jones. But if he was noteworthy in body, he was no less so in mind. In this respect he was a diamond, but a diamond in the rough. Born amid the hop-gardens of Kent, of parents who were the mere serfs of labor, "dragged up" in a home where the iron law of necessity made work binding upon the young ones as well as upon the old ones, his education had been an education of the muscles rather than of the mind. To hoe turnips, to drive the plow, to hill up potatoes, to grub in ditches, to feed the pigs, with other kindred tasks, had been the labors of his boyhood; so that when he had grown to young manhood, he found himself, to use his own graphic style, "as dark as a Hotmetot." But if he owed little to schools, he owned much to nature. He had given him a good stock of common sense, a bright, genial temper, a rich fund of humor, which lubricated the wheels of his own life, and which often served to lubricate the wheels of others, and added to all a wit which often made his talk sparkle like the glancing and many-colored light of a prism. Tom, Old Tom, Mr. Jones was a character. There could be no two opinions on that point. And if any body, on a first acquaintance, took the measure of the man from the roughness of his coat, or the rusticity of his manners, or the comicality of the green patch over his eye, and tried "to take a rise" out of the huge farmer, they very soon repented of their folly. A smart joke, a witty thrust, or a crushing stroke in the way of repartee, made them feel as if they had burnt their fingers, and they dropped him as if he were hot iron.

His wife was a perfect contrast to himself. She was short in person, with a plain, kind face, and a voice that seemed in the gentleness of its tones to be the witness of a kind gentle heart. "Sairey," as her fond spouse used to call her, pursued the even tenor of her way with quiet goodness, and formed the chief joy of her life in the pleasures that she both gave and gathered in the circle at home. She had feared God from her youth, and the peace of heaven, like an atmosphere of summer, gave to her character much mellowness and beauty. Unobtrusive though she was, there was a good deal of decision of character about her, which she kept like a reserve fund to be used as occasion demanded. Often her more impulsive partner found it acting like a brake upon the wheel of his impetuous nature and though sometimes the friction generated by that repression made him feel rather hot and impatient, as a general rule, his good sense came to his help and he found that wisdom and safety lay in submission. She had an obscure station, and a rough, prosaic slab-hut for her dwelling, but she lived in it a life so true and noble, that it became a very center of sweetness and light, and the satisfaction of duty done came to bless it day by day with perpetual benediction.

In the early days of their wedded life things had not gone so smoothly. Tom was then young and foolish. His social nature, his merry turn, made him a pleasant companion; and often the quips and pranks and laughter which he reeled off without limit, under the inspiration of wit and wine, made him the magnet of his circle, who courted his society because, by common consent, he was pronounced to be a "right down jolly good fellow." The wayside inn, with a winsome sign of the "Traveller's Rest" was his favorite resort, and the trying-place of his companions of the cup, who loved a good joke and a good song. In the little parlor of mine host, the merry crew often gathered with Tom as their hero, who played the part of clown so well that he kept the company in high good humor. The "b'hoys" from "ould Ireland" loved to hear him sing in his mellowest tones, the song of "The Minstrel Boy," and "The Harp that once thro' Tara's Halls." The lads from the land o' cakes hung with admiration on his strains

as he gave forth the patriotic air of "Scots, wha' hae w' Wallace bled," throwing into it all the fervor of a genuine Caledonian—or, as he turned their thoughts into a more pathetic mode by the song, "Ye banks and braes o' Bonnie Doon." For the Englishman he would reserve his favorite air of "Home, Sweet Home," because it brought back to him so vividly a vision of the blossoming hedgerows and bright green fields of old England; and as he sang the tears that would gather in his own eyes would start the tears in others, until they all got sentimental together. And then, as a grand finale he would swing the company into another temper by rolling out "Rule Britannia," until the place rang again with their uproariousness, and all the glasses jingled and danced as the heated feeling of the group came down to crashing strokes upon the table, as they thundered out the chorus. These amusements inside were occasionally varied, by diversions outside, and a running match, a horse race, or a few rounds with the gloves, for Tom was a good boxer—wasted time which might have been put to better account, and wasted also the substance which might have gone to increase the comforts of home, and the character which might have been a spared such prodigal misuse of its best gifts and opportunities.

At this point in his history Tom first heard of the "Methodys." Away in the quietness of the Australian bush the settlers know little of religious ordinances. The Sabbath—that comes to the weary and the toil-worn in busy town or crowded city like a blessed respite from the work and the worry of life, when all the air, so filled in the restless week with the noise and din of trade, seems hushed into quietness, and when there breaks forth through the stillness the joyous music of church bells inviting to work and worship—has little to mark it off from the common hours of life to the remote uplands and sequestered valleys of this great land. But the enterprise of a Methodist local preacher had invaded the religious wilderness of "The Meadows" and already many had been lifted up from the earthliness and sensuality of their life to the pursuit and enjoyment of the best things. The fame of Steve Hart, the Methodist revivalist, had swept through the district like a bush fire in midsummer. Some laughed, some swore, some denounced the impudence of this canting, psalm-singing, sniveling fellow, who had come to "convart" the district. And some vowed that they would put their foot on the whole business and kill it out right with as much satisfaction as they would a brown snake.

"Tom" said Dick Swivel, "we'll go and sling 'em down. We'll drown 'em straight with such a hurly-burly of noise that they'll go down before it like the old dead logs that go sweeping down over the falls at Nacks Nacks."

"And if that went do for 'em you can preach 'em down," chimed in Hiram Whitlock. "You can reel off your chatter, Tom, as you do at the 'Travellers Rest'; and if that don't put an end to the folks jabber, you can fling some of your best jokes at his head and they'll knock him over as if he were hit by the stroke of a boomerang."

"Ay, boys," said Tom, "and if the worst comes, I can polish him off with a stroke of this," holding up his great horny hand, and clenched his fist, and brought it down with a thud that made the seat upon which he sat quiver with the force of the blow.

The plan of action arranged, they mustered on the next meeting-night at the home-stead under the hill. A chain of noble mountains spread like an engirdling wall around the lovely valley in which the preaching place stood, their sharp, clear outline standing out with the utmost distinctness against the starless sky that rose above them. The moon almost at the full had risen above the eastern hills, and a flood of silvery brightness lighted up the ranges, and swept down over the undulating tract beneath, covering broad reaches with a softened beauty which made the deep shadows that filled in the picture all the more fascinating. All overhead the silent stars, thick down throughout the clear heavens, looked down with a rare splendor that is not seen in the denser atmosphere of more northern climes. There was a dewy freshness about that was all the more welcome for the roasting heat of the day that had just closed. Altogether there was something in the scene that appealed to all that was best in the human heart, for the sublime beautiful were there, and over all a sense of the infinite brooded, as if to hush the clamor and abate the pride and still the passion of man. The weird cry of the curlew came sweeping up the flat, and as they topped the rise that looked down upon the spot which was the goal, they heard the voice of singing, and so they pricked their steeds into a canter and hurried up.

The building in which the settlers were gathered for worship was of the rudest kind. Slab sides, a bark roof, an earthen floor, a few rough-hewn seats without backs, and a very primitive-looking table for the preacher's stand, with legs that had more substance than shape, constituted this bush meeting-house. Persons of very fine aesthetic sensibility would have seen in it little to admire and much to condemn. And yet many a time it had been filled with the glory of God, and from it, as from the stone pillow on which Jacob lay down to sleep, there was a ladder on which the angels came and went on ministries of mercy.

Hitching their horses up to the fence, Tom and his party drew near to the only window

which the place boasted, and began their observations. The first figure that caught their eye was that of the preacher. His compact and well knit form hardened by labor was gently swaying from side to side, as his manner was, keeping time to the music. His broad, honest face was bright with the radiance of his happy soul, and the clear eyes, as they looked up to the dingy roof overhead, seemed to go far beyond into the heavenly places, and flashed with the brightness of the vision. At his right was Aunt Dinah, with her silver hair and her placid countenance, that told you she was walking through the Beulah Land, and saw the city on the other side of the river where she was to rest. Uncle Joe was on the left of the preacher, almost as poor as Lazarus, but as happy as a king. Looking round upon the rest of the company, they saw rough-bearded men, and mothers with a good sprinkling of babies, a fair proportion of braw lads and winsome lasses, all seemingly absorbed in the business which engaged their attention. The little company were singing one of the grandest hymns that ever stirred human feeling to an odd old tune, that wriggled in and out and ran up and down as in a strange fantasy, in which one part seemed to be chasing another part, all meeting together at length, and rushing in with a glorious sweep of song, in which all joined with the greatest gusto. So the party at the window listened, their hard and bitter thoughts melted like ice in the sun, and their courage in a bad cause seemed to steal away. When the worshipping group reached the last stanza, and Steve's rich voice—that was as clear as a bell, and as tuneful as the music of a harp—gave forth the tenor, while the rest carried on the air, the words and the music moved Tom as by a spell. Fond of singing as he was, he was touched by the melody—he felt a strange quivering at the heart, and as they repeated the last two lines according to our old custom—

His blood can make the foulest clean, His blood avails for me. He said: "Boys, I am not going to stand here looking down the chimney. I am going in by the fire." The magnetism of his example, which in so many instances had led others in a wrong direction, was in this case powerful to lead them in a right. They followed.

The text was in keeping with the hymn. It was the assurance which has dried up so many a mourner's tears, and brought hope into so many a despairing breast: "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Catching the spirit of the passage Steve talked to the people in a strain of such overpowering tenderness that few could resist it. He was not a preacher, only an exhorter, as he often laughingly said. Yet preacher or no preacher, he had a wonderful faculty of opening out the meaning of the blessed gospel. Of logic he was as ignorant as he was of logarithms, but his heart was a fountain that had been filled to the brim from another fountain, the infinite mercy of a loving Saviour. In the course of his talk he would break every rule of syntax, but he would talk straight to the heart, and reach it, too, despite bad grammar. He was fond of pictures, especially of God's pictures, as they were spread out in the world around him; and the mountains and the valleys, the forest and the glen, the rivers and the lake, the peeping flowers and the burning stars, all things bright and beautiful and glorious, came to him with messages from his Father which he knew full well how to interpret as he stood before the people. He was a warm-hearted Northumbrian, who had served a rough apprenticeship in the mines of his native moors, whose talk had about it an aroma which did not please every body, but which was to common folks as the scent of wild flowers. The parables of Jesus were to him a very mine of wealth, in which he dug as for hid treasures; and to-night he is in one of his best moods. He has enlargement, he has deliverance, he has caught the spirit of his home, and is bathed in it. His tones tremble with a simple pathos that is irresistible as he speaks of the lost, and the bright eyes are veiled in a mist of tears. And as he advances in his subject to speak of that tender, pitying, suffering, dying love which gathers to its embrace the vilest sinner, many a face quivered, many a silent tear fell, and the feelings of that little company were shaken by the preacher's word as the leaves of the forest are shaken by the blast. Among those who were so deeply moved was Tom Jones. In the prayer-meeting which followed, Steve, wrought up into a state of high excitement, pleaded with his hearers in an intensity of feeling which made his very frame tremble. "Coom noo," he said, while his voice went through the place like a blast of a trumpet. "Coom noo to Jesus. There's sin behind ye, and death before ye, and ruin beneath ye, and Christ beside ye, waitin' to save. Ye're fire doomed; flee to the escape ladder. Ye're storm-driven, and the ragin' tempest, and the black rocks, and the surges are greedy to devour ye; tak' to the life-boat. Ye're wastin', sinkin', dyin'; there's fever in the blood, and the cold death sweat on yer brow; but here's the balm that will heal ye. Tak' it! tak' it! tak' it! tak' it!"

There was a pause. Tom's greatest had heaved during this last appeal with the deepest emotions; still he struggled against his feelings, and strove to keep back his tears; but it was all in vain. And so, while yet the words of the preacher were ringing on the ear, lifting up his huge arms, and staggering forward under the burden of a new, strange grief, he cried out, "Blessed Jesus! I am coming, I am coming!" "Halleluia!" shout-

ed Steve. "Amen!" said Aunt Dinah; while Uncle Joe laughed with such gladness as makes joy among the angles when they sweep their harps to a higher strain over sinners as they turn to God. Meanwhile Tom continued in the struggle for deliverance. Kneeling down at the front seat he lifted up his pleading face in prayer, and, as he rolled to and fro in his anguish, weeping and struggling for peace, he seemed like the patriarch, when, under the load of his midnight bitterness, he wrested with the angel. The conflict was a long one and a bitter one. All the past rose up before him as he knelt—the songs, the oaths, the revells—all the folly and all the wrong of his life started up to rebuke and to mock him, until he groaned out, in sobs and broken words, the confession of his guiltiness. At length the glimmer of the dawn seemed to break upon him. Steve Hart was whispering in his ear the message which so often has changed midnight into morning: "He was wounded for your transgressions, he was bruised for your iniquities; the chastisement of your peace was upon him; and with his stripes you are healed;" and with that there came the first streak of light that heralded the day. This was followed by singing. They had reached the verse—

Stung by the scorpion sin, My poor expiring soul, The balmy sound drunks in, And is at once made whole. When Tom got a vision of the cross and the crucified One, and as they extolingly sung the last couplet, his faith, inspired by the glorious truth which it breathed, laid hold of the Saviour, and, mounting to his feet, with a full heart he joined in the strain—

See there my Lord upon the tree, I hear, I feel, he died for me. "Yes!" he shouted, "for me, for me—for the double-dyed sinner, Tom Jones!" and as he shouted, he leaped in the ecstasy of a joy which was to him as life from the dead. There was a great calm, and with the calm a great brightness. As when the blackness of a stormy night gives place to the glowing light that comes forth from the gates of a cloudless morning, and howling winds are hushed to rest, so was it here. He rejoiced with a joy unspeakable and full of glory. His was a "powerful conversion," as he used to call it. "Sairey," said he, when he reached his home. "I am richer than a prince; I am as happy as an angel. I have found Jesus." And Sarah hung upon his neck and wept, for was not this the answer to her prayers?

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115 Grafton Street, Halifax, N.S. August 26th, 1879. In February last I had a severe attack of Lumbago or Rheumatism which completely disabled me—the pain in my back was so severe that I could scarce walk or move; I had also pains in my head and all parts of my body. Nothing that I used did me any good until I tried GRAMM'S PAIN ERADICATOR. A few applications of my back took the pain from it, but the pain still remained in my feet and other parts of my body until I met the proprietor of that Medicine and found I had not used it right. Under his direction I used his ROYAL DIAMOND CONSTITUTIONAL REMEDY, internally, and applied the PAIN ERADICATOR to the back, head and spine. They combined use soon cured me, and I did not use quite a bottle of each. I believe that no one need fear or suffer from Rheumatism or Neuralgia if these two Medicines are properly used. C. F. F. SCORPES

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