



LESSON IX.—May 30.

Christian Faith Leads to Good Works.

James ii., 14-23. Commit vs. 14-17.

GOLDEN TEXT.

'I will shew thee my faith by my works.'—
Jas. ii., 18.

Home Readings.

- M. James i., 1-15.—'That ye may be Perfect and Entire.'
T. James i., 16-27.—'Be ye doers of the Word.'
W. James ii., 1-13.—'Love is the Royal Law.'
Th. James ii., 14-26.—'Christian Faith Leads to Good Works.'
F. 1 John iii., 1-24.—'He that doeth Righteousness is Righteous.'
S. Col. i., 1-29.—'Being Fruitful in Every Good Work.'
S. Luke vi., 37-49.—'The Tree Known by its Fruits.'

Lesson Story.

Our lesson is taken from the Epistle of James, the brother of our Lord. This epistle is full of good practical advice and warning against every kind of sham and hypocrisy. 'What doth it profit, though a man say he hath faith?' he asks, and the word 'say' is emphasized to denote the worthlessness of professions which are belied by character. If a man have true faith or love to God that love can not help manifesting itself in kindness to all men. If we see a fellow creature in want and give to him only good wishes, when we have the means ourselves to fulfil those wishes—our sympathy is not real. If a man truly love God he will seek to show his love to man and to treat him as God does. (1 John iii., 16-18; iv., 19-21.)

Abraham believed God but he had to show his trust by implicit obedience. Rahab believed in God but she had to show her belief by kindness to the spies—conduct which would have endangered her life had her people known of it. Faith consists not in words, but in deeds.

Lesson Hymn.

You're longing to work for the Master—
Yet waiting for something to do;
You think that the future is holding
Some wonderful mission for you.

But while you are waiting the moments
Are rapidly passing away;
Oh, brother, awake from thy dreaming!—
Do something for Jesus to-day.

Go sing happy songs of rejoicing
With those who no sorrows have known;
Go weep with the heart-broken mourner,
Go comfort the sad and the lone.

From pitfalls and snares of the tempter
Go rescue the thoughtless and wild;
Go win from the pale lips a 'God bless you,'
Go brighten the life of a child.

Be earning your stars of rejoicing
While earth-life is passing away,
Win some one to meet you in glory,—
Do something for Jesus to-day.

Lesson Hints.

The Epistle of James should be read through at one sitting and the most striking verses committed to memory. When we receive a letter from a dear friend we hasten to read it through no matter how long it is, and often we read it over and over until almost every word is impressed on our memory. We would not think of laying it

on the table and just once in a while reading a line or two of it. If we did not understand it all we would carefully study it or write to the friend for an explanation. Now we may take these letters as written to us and read them with interest; those things which we do not understand we may ask Jesus about, for he has promised us 'another Comforter' who shall teach us all things, (John xiv., 26).

We should know something about the writer of the letter. He was called 'James the Just' on account of his strict impartiality and observance of the law. He was a person of great distinction and influence in the Church, looked up to by all. He was martyred at the age of about sixty-three, by stoning, according to Josephus. Another historian puts his death seven years later, saying that James was thrown from a pinnacle of the temple and despatched with a club while on his knees praying for his enemies. A. D. 69.

'What doth it profit?'—What is the use of saying a thing which your life proves false? 'The devils also believe'—the demons or evil spirits know that there is one God and their faith moves them to evil works. Faith must have some effect, for 'faith without works is dead.' That is, we may have had a living faith to begin with, but if we shut it up in a stony heart it can not grow and bear fruit so it dies away.

Yet this lesson is not meant to teach 'indiscriminate charity,' for as true faith without works is impossible, so good works, even 'the best of charities,' are unprofitable without faith. Works without faith are like artificial fruit and flowers tied on to a dead tree to make a fine appearance.

Experience proves that indiscriminate almsgiving leads to great evils. Heavenly wisdom is needed in attempting to help others by gifts lest more harm than good should be done.

Search Questions.

Show how this passage is in perfect harmony with the doctrine of justification by faith.

Primary Lesson.

Do you know what it is to be sincere? Honest, frank, true, hearty and pure are all words that might be used to explain it. If you have a sincere friendship for any one it will have all those qualities. God said to Abraham, 'Walk before me; and be thou sincere,' (Gen. xvii., 1, margin). That meant that he was never to pretend anything to God. If God told him to do anything he must not pretend not to hear or not to understand, for if he did such things he could not be the sincere friend that God wanted, for God hates shams. We cannot hide anything from him, for he knows all things, but he hates to have us try to hide things.

We learn in our lesson to-day 'Abraham believed God,' and 'he was called the Friend of God.' Abraham showed his faith by doing what God told him. We can show our faith and love by being obedient, and if we are sincere and loving, I am sure he will call us, too, his friend, for Jesus said—'Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.'

SUGGESTED HYMNS.

'There are lonely hearts,' 'Scatter the sunshine,' 'Faith is the victory,' 'Work for the night is coming,' 'To the work.'

Christian Endeavor Topic.

May 23.—Peace—when to seek it, and how.—Gen. xiii., 5-18.

Junior Prayer-Meeting Topic.

May 23.—How can we be true, through and through?—Prov. xii., 5; xvii., 22.

The Infant Class.

The infant class, as a rule, is a large class—large numerically. Every child in the church, as soon as it can walk and talk, is considered a member of this class. And what a variety of little heads and hearts! What opportunities! What a receptive soil! They are all eye and ear. Of course they are a restless and noisy company. Undeveloped, untrained, untaught, often shy and peevish, nevertheless they all are the blessed Saviour's jewels.

But who shall teach the infant class? 'Oh anybody can instruct these innocent know-nothings,' some will say. Slowly,

my friend; have you tried it? I have, and found it a tremendous task. I'd rather teach a class of grown-up folks, or a bible-class, even, any day. Some gentlemen may have the necessary qualifications, yet I think they ought to have a lady teacher. Give them probably a young woman yet in her teens; she may be able to control and rightly direct them into the way of God. Perhaps she may, and perhaps not. Some of these young women need a good bit of training yet themselves, which is only too often apparent in the secular schools. Of course there are grand exceptions. The best teacher for the little folks is the mother who understands their needs and ways, who has had more or less experience in the home circle, who can sympathize with them in their troubles and patiently attend to their desires. If the teacher has a separate room it will be a great advantage. Undisturbed she can keep better order and attention and go through the programme for the day. Singing ought to be a principal part of the exercises. Special books are at hand for this purpose. They love to sing.

The lesson chart should not be wanting. Nothing can take the place of a good illustration. The picture takes the child's attention. It makes the lesson plain and impresses it upon the mind. It is simple truths they need, and these they will remember. To do this it takes good preparation on the part of the teacher. In addition to this, the child's paper is a valuable help to keep them interested in the Sunday-school. They somehow look for something when they come to the class. But they should also know, though taught in a separate apartment, that they belong to the school as a whole and should be recognized by the superintendent.

Do not forget the collection. They bring their pennies with a cheerful heart. In this way they are trained for the good work of missions. A word on this line is well spoken. Their sympathy is awakened for the poor heathen and a fire kindled that will in later years have its good results.

In all the exercises, interesting as they may be, tell them above all things the simple story of Jesus. It is he whom they need, and he wants them. They are his. In this way they are led into the fold and the church. If you meet them outside the class-room remember their little eyes always see you. They expect a smile.—'Evangelical S.S. Teacher.'

Winning Souls.

'Mr. Tracy,' I said one Sabbath morning, 'I wish you would speak to Lottie Cameron about coming to Christ. I think she is anxious about her soul.'

'You are mistaken. I gave her an opportunity at the Sunday-school excursion to talk to me, and if she had been interested in religious things she would have said so. We stood along side of each other for some time on the beach at Atlantic City, but Lottie never asked me a single question. You see, I am right, you are entirely mistaken.'

I said no more, but I had to bite my lips to keep back the words. I thought how hard it would have been for the poor ignorant mill girl, who was naturally shy and easily embarrassed to have commenced a conversation about her religious feelings with a cultured wealthy gentleman like Lawyer Tracy, even if he were her Sunday-school teacher. As I turned almost unconsciously, I murmured: 'He that winneth souls is wise.'

I cannot tell you all my efforts to gain Lottie Cameron's confidence, but I succeeded at last, and one Saturday afternoon she said to me:

'O, Miss, I often wished I was good, but no one seemed to care what I did, and now I want so bad to turn round, and I do not know how to go about it.'

Sitting down by her side, I read to her about the early disciples, and then took her to Jesus in prayer, for so it seemed literally to Lottie, for as she rose from her knees she said to me:

'O, Miss, the Lord made me hear him calling, "Follow me" all the time you was a-praying; so I jest said, "Yes, I will, right now."'

This was Lottie Cameron's conversion. Years have passed since that Saturday afternoon, but Lottie Cameron, though still poor, is a true and faithful follower of Jesus Christ, and a consistent member of the Church of God. Think you that Christ would have let one of his little lambs perish, because they did not know how to find him?—From a Worker's Note Book.