

The Sunday School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON XXXIX.

REV. 1879. } REVIEW—THIRD QUARTER. { 3 John 1:14.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Follow not that which is evil, but that which is good."—3 John 11.

HOME STUDIES.

M. Rom. v. 1-10; viii. 28-39. Lessons i. and ii.
T. 1 Cor. xiii. 1-13. Lesson iii.
W. 1 Cor. xv. 50-58; 2 Cor. v. 14-21. Lessons iv. and v.
Th. Gal. v. 22-26; vi. 1-9. Lesson vi.
F. Eph. vi. 10-20; Phil. ii. 1-13. Lessons vii. and viii.
S. Col. iii. 16-25; 1 Thess. iv. 13-18. Lessons ix. and x.
S. 1 Tim. vi. 6-16; Titus iii. 1-9. Lessons xi. xii.

HELPS TO STUDY.

The lessons for this quarter have been selected from ten of the epistles of Paul. Of these, eight were written to the churches in Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Colosse, and Thessalonica; and two to the early Christian pastors, Timothy and Titus. These epistles, or letters, were intended by the writer of them to instruct, to reprove, to warn, or to encourage those Christians to whom they were addressed; but the real author of them, the Holy Spirit, had a much wider field in view, and thus it is that they are found to be admirably fitted for the awakening of sinners and the edification of believers in all ages and in all lands. The lessons are eminently doctrinal and at the same time thoroughly practical. Without any violence the whole of Christian doctrine and duty might be deduced from these twelve lessons; and that not only as affecting the people who lived in the apostle's day but also as affecting those who live now. It is not at all necessary, even if it should be allowable, which it is not, to change or modify either the law or the Gospel to suit "modern civilization," "modern thought," "modern culture," etc. There is often too much made of the difference between the past and the present in these respects. The points of agreement are much more important and numerous than the points of difference. Human nature is essentially the same in all ages, and so is Christianity. All that is necessary is to apply to the moderns in their altered circumstances and conditions those very instructions, warnings, and encouragements which were once so beneficial to the ancients; and when this is properly done it is found that the Truth has lost none of its force.

In order to get the review within the scope of an ordinary lesson it will be necessary to make very wide generalizations, such as the following: (1) *The Christian's Triumphs*, which seems to be the leading subject of lessons xxvii.-xxx., although they teach many particulars not included under that head; (2) *The Christian's Duties*, which, with their doctrinal basis, constitute the main teaching of lessons xxxi.-xxxiv.; and (3) *The Christian's Hope*, with its true ground, and its resulting obligations, as set forth in lessons xxxv.-xxxviii.

I. THE CHRISTIAN'S TRIUMPHS.—Lesson xxvii. exhibits the Christian's triumph over Sin—"Being justified by faith;" over tribulation—"Glorifying in tribulation;" over the wrath which is to come—"We shall be saved from wrath." The only way of access to God, and the certainty of the believer's final salvation are also directly taught.

Lesson xxviii. teaches that the believer triumphs over all circumstances—"All things work together for good;" over all enemies—"If God be for us, who . . . against us;" Over all evils—"We are more than conquerors." The true order of the steps in the believer's salvation are here also indicated, beginning in God's eternal purpose, carried on by His unchanging love, and ending in being "glorified."

Lesson xxix. treats of the Christian's triumphs over discouragements—"Beareth all things . . . endureth all things;" Over imperfections—"But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away . . . Now we see through a glass darkly but then face to face." But the grand aim of the lesson is to bring out the nature of Christian love—under the name of charity—its characteristics, and its permanence wherein it excels the graces of faith and hope which have their place and their work in this life.

"Faith, hope and love now dwell on earth,
And earth by them is blest;
But faith and hope must yield to love,
Of all the graces best." etc.

Lesson xxx. is principally occupied with the triumph of believers over corruption—"This corruptible must put on incorruption;" and over death—"Death is swallowed up in victory." The apostle also, in the last verse of the chapter, exhorts the Corinthian Christians, in view of such a glorious and triumphant consummation to be "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

II. THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTIES.—In lesson xxxi. we are taught the believer's duties to Christ—Should live "unto Him who died for us;" and to the world—"We are ambassadors for Christ." The apostle enforces these duties by the most weighty considerations, and in doing so, brings out the following important doctrines: (1) Substitution and Satisfaction—"For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him;" (2) Regeneration—"Therefore, if

any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away behold all things are become new;" (3) Reconciliation—"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."

The Christian's duties are stated in lesson xxxii. as to fruit-bearing—"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance;" toward other Christians—"Bear ye one another's burdens;" toward himself—"Let every man prove his own works;" "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." In one view the passage is a summary of Christian duty; in another it is a catalogue of tests by which a person may examine himself as to whether he is in the faith or not.

The soldier of the cross is instructed in lesson xxxiii. as to his duties in regard to strength—"Be strong in the Lord;" in the matter of armour—"Put on the whole armour of God;" with relation to prayer—"Praying always with all prayer." The enemies are described "the devil," "principalities," "powers," "rulers of the darkness of this world," etc. The armour is mentioned in detail—the girdle, breastplate, shoes, shield, helmet, and sword. And the contest is represented as inevitable—"That ye may be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

The duties of believers in regard to each other are brought before us in lesson xxxiv.—"Be like-minded;" "Let nothing be done through strife." We have here also our duty to follow the example of Christ, the Christian's pattern, in fellowship and sympathy, in humility and self-denial; and, as instruments in God's hands, to "work out" our "own salvation with fear and trembling;" probably meaning that we are to fear and tremble lest the work (of sanctification) should not proceed fast enough, or should be marred through the imperfection of the instrument.

III. THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE.—The believer's hope of "the inheritance" as we are taught in lesson xxxv. leads him to render willing and cheerful service, not as a hireling, but as an heir working for the good of the estate: "In all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another," etc., "Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ." The religion of those who have this hope manifests itself in all the relations of life—husband and wife, parent and child, master and servant, etc.; and they do all things "heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men." The teaching of the lesson may be summed up as practical Christianity, at home and abroad, based on love to the Master and devotion to His cause.

In lesson xxxvi. the believer is encouraged to entertain a good hope concerning them which are asleep in Jesus: "That ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope." He is also told to hope and look for the coming of the Lord: "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven," etc., when both those "which are asleep" and "we which are alive and remain shall be caught up" and "ever be with the Lord."

The Christian's hope of eternal life and happiness, bringing such a rich inheritance to view in the future, and being based upon such a sure foundation, tends, as we learn from lesson xxxvii., to make him contented with his lot in this life: "Godliness with contentment is great gain"—gain even in this life. The life that the Christian is taught to lead is just the life that is most conducive to health and happiness—the best sort of life for the body as well as for the soul. In striking contrast with the benefits of contentment the apostle places the terrible evils arising from covetousness or "the love of money," which is "the root of all evil." He exhorts Timothy to "flee these things," to "follow after righteousness," to "fight the good fight of faith;" and leaves with him, and with us, a solemn charge to "keep the commandment without spot, unrebukeable."

The Christian's hope and prospects as a subject of the kingdom of heaven make him a good subject of the earthly Kingdom or State in which his lot is cast; and so, in lesson xxxviii., Paul instructs Titus to remind the Cretans "to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates," etc. The intelligent Christian will not withhold from earthly rulers that which is their due, neither will he yield to them that which belongs only to God; he will avoid both Popery and Erastianism. The fact that salvation is by grace, and the believer's hope of happiness on that basis, have no tendency to lead him towards Antinomianism, but rather to make him "careful to maintain good works." The lesson closes with a warning against the discussion of "foolish questions," etc., a warning probably no less needed now than it was then.

WOMAN'S MISSION.

The longer I live, the less grows my sympathy with women who are always wishing themselves men. I cannot but believe that in every life that is truly noble—truly good—truly desirable—heaven bestows upon us women in as unsparring measure as upon men. It only desires us, in its great benevolence, to stretch forth our hands and to gather for ourselves the rich joys of intellect, of nature, of study, of action, of love and of usefulness which it has poured forth around us. Let us only cast aside the falseness, silly veils of prejudice and fashion, which ignorance has bound about our eyes; let us lay bare our souls to heaven's sunshine of truth and love; let us exercise the intelligence which it has bestowed on us upon worthy and noble objects, and this intelligence may become keen as that of men, and the paltry high heels and whalebone supports of mere drawing-room conventionality and young-ladyhood withering up, we shall stand in

humility before heaven, but proudly and rejoicingly by the side of man! different always, but not less noble, less richly endowed. All this we may do, without losing one jot or one tittle of our womanly spirit, but rather solely owing to these good—these blessed gifts—through a prayerful and earnest development of those gems of peculiar purity, of tenderest delicacy and refinement, with which heaven has so especially endowed the woman. Let beauty and grace, spiritual and external, be the garments of our souls. Let love be the very essence of our being—love of heaven, of man, and of the meanest created thing—love that is strong to endure, strong to renounce, strong to achieve! Alone through the strength of love, the noblest, the most refined of all strength—our blessed Lord himself—having lived and died teaching it to us—have great and good women hitherto wrought their noble deeds in the world; and alone through the strength of an all-embracing love will the noble women who have yet to arise, work noble works or enact noble deeds. Let us emulate, if you will, the strength of determination which we admire in men, their earnestness and freedom of purpose, their unwearying energy, their largeness of vision; but let us never sigh after their lower so-called *privileges* which, when they are sifted with a thoughtful mind, are found to be the mere husks and chaff of the rich grain belonging to *humanity* and not alone to men. The assumption of masculine airs or of masculine attire, or the absence of tenderness and womanhood in a mistaken struggle after strength, can never sit more gracefully upon us than do the men's old hats and great-coats and boots upon the poor old gardener of the English garden. Let such of us as have devoted ourselves to the study of an art—the interpreter to mankind at large of heaven's beauty—especially remember this, that the highest ideal in life, as well as in art, has ever been the blending of the beautiful and the tender, with the strong and the intellectual.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE SICK-ROOM.

In preparing a meal for anyone whose appetite is delicate, it should be made to look as tempting as possible. The tray should be covered with the whitest napkin, and the silver, glass, and china should shine with cleanliness. There should not be too great a variety of viands, and but a very small portion of each one. Nothing more quickly disgusts a feeble appetite than a quantity of food presented at one time.

The patient never should be consulted beforehand as to what he will eat or what he will drink. If he asks for anything, give it to him, with the doctor's permission; otherwise prepare something he is known to like and offer it without previous comment. One of the chief offices of a good nurse is to think for her patient. His slightest want should be anticipated and gratified before he has had time to express it. Quick observation will enable her to detect the first symptom of worry or excitement and to remove the cause. An invalid never should be teased with the exertion of making a decision. Whether the room is too hot or too cold; whether chicken broth, beef tea, or gruel is best for his luncheon, and all similar matters, are questions which should be decided without appealing to him.

Household troubles should be kept as far as possible from the sick-room. Squabbles of children or servants never should find an echo there.

In the event of some calamity occurring, of which it is absolutely necessary the sufferer should be informed, the ill news should be broken as gently as possible, and every soothing device employed to help him bear the shock.

Above all, an invalid, or even a person apparently convalescent, should be saved from his friends. One garrulous acquaintance admitted for half an hour will undo the good done by a week of tender nursing. Whoever is the responsible person in charge should know how much her patient can bear, she should keep a careful watch on visitors of whose discretion she is not certain, and the moment she perceives it to be necessary, politely but firmly to dismiss them.

She must carry out implicitly the doctor's directions, particularly those regarding medicine and diet. Strict obedience to his orders, a faithful, diligent, painstaking following of his instructions will insure to the sufferer the best results from his skill, and bring order, method and regularity to domestic nursing.—*Scribner for September.*

OCEAN SPLENDOR.

When the sea is perfectly clear and transparent, it allows the eye to see objects at a very great depth. Near Mindoro, in the Indian Ocean, the spotted corals are plainly visible under twenty fathoms of water. The crystalline clearness of the Caribbean Sea excited the admiration of Columbus, who, in the pursuit of his great discovery, ever retained an open eye for the beauties of nature. "In passing over those splendidly adorned grounds," says Schol, "marine life shows itself in an endless variety of forms; the boat, suspended over the purest crystal, seems to float in the air, so that a person unaccustomed to the scene easily becomes giddy. On the clear, sandy bottom appear thousands of sea-stars, sea-urchins, molluscs, and fish of a brilliancy of colour unknown to our temperate seas. Burning red, intense blue, lively green and golden yellow, perpetually vary; the spectator floats over groves of sea-plants, gorgonias, corals, alcyonums, flabellums and sponges that afford no less delight to the eye, and are no less gently gazed by the heaving waters, than the most beautiful garden on earth when a gentle breeze passes through the waving boughs."

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