

The Sunday School

BIBLE LESSON.

Adapted from Hurbut's Notes.

Fourth Quarter.

JOHN'S MESSAGE ABOUT SIN AND SALVATION.

Lesson XII. Dec. 19.—1 John 1, 5-2, 6.

GOLDEN TEXT.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, 1 John 1, 9.

I. LIGHT AND DARKNESS. VERSES 5, 6.

5. THIS THEN IS THE MESSAGE—John never uses the word "gospel," but speaks of "the testimony," "the truth," or, as here, "the message." This verse gives the theme of his epistle, which he presents as a message from his ascended Lord. WHICH WE HAVE HEARD OF HIM—Revised Version, "from him." "As the Son announced the message heard from the Father as his apostle, so the Son's apostles announce what they have heard from the Son." AND DECLARE UNTO YOU—Better, as in the Revised Version, "and announce," as a herald proclaims the message of his king. This little book nowhere presents lines of arguments and conclusion, but everywhere announces truths as by divine authority. THAT GOD IS LIGHT—"Of all existing things not one is so pure, so abstract, so glorious, so beneficent, so incapable of stain or admixture, as earthly light; and earthly light is but an analogue of the Light which is immaterial and divine."

"No one tells us so much about the nature of God as John; other writers tell us what God does, and what attributes he possesses; John tells us what he is. There are three statements in the Bible which stand alone as revelations of the nature of God, and they are all in the writings of John; 'God is spirit,' (John 4, 24), 'God is light,' and 'God is love' (1 John 4, 8). NO DARKNESS AT ALL—"Strong negation. Greek, 'No, not even one speck of darkness.' No ignorance, error, untruthfulness, sin or death.

6. IF WE SAY—There were some in that day, as now, who claimed that sin belonged to the body and not to the spirit, so that one could be a Christian while committing sin. "The errorists who say this are never, in this epistle, far out of John's sight. Thrice in this brief summary does he allude to them with an 'if we say.'" HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH HIM—Communion of heart with God, which is the privilege of every disciple. AND WALK IN DARKNESS—That is, lead lives of moral impurity and wrongdoing. WE LIE—Our life is a lie. It is true that Christians sin. But it is equally true that just in proportion as they give way to sin they become spiritually dead. The measure of spiritual life is the measure of freedom from sin.

II. SIN AND FORGIVENESS. VERSES 7-10, 1, 2.

7. IF WE WALK IN THE LIGHT AS HE IS IN THE LIGHT—"The distinction of words is to be noted; he says that God is in all the light, but that we ought to walk in the light. WE HAVE FELLOWSHIP—Loving the same God, embracing the same views of religion, and living for the same ends, we shall of course, have much in common, and thus shall have fellowship with each other. THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST—The blood is the life current; and Christ's blood, in the New Testament, means his atoning death, through which we are saved. "Paul chiefly connects with this expression the power of justification, but John here connects with it the power of purification from sin." CLEANSE US—"This figure simply means, first, that our sins are, upon our faith, forgiven us on account of the death of Christ; and, second, that the Holy Spirit being given in consequence of that death, does, in the completeness of that work, so strengthen and energize our moral and spiritual powers that we are able to reject temptation and avoid sin; and just in the measure and fullness of that power in exercise is the entireness of our sanctification. When that divinely bestowed power is complete the sanctification is entire."

8. IF WE SAY THAT WE HAVE NO SIN—Doubtless there were some who said so and thought so. John has just said that Christians should walk in the light; yet he now declares that even Christians have sins which need to be cleansed; a truth which all must admit. The more a man knows of the meaning of "God is light"—that is, the more he realizes the absolute purity and holiness of God—the more conscious he will become of his own impurity and sinfulness. Compare Job 9, 2: 14, 4; 15, 14; 25, 4; Job 26, 9; Eccles. 7, 29. WE DECEIVE OURSELVES—Self-deception is easy, and some delude themselves with

the thought that their hearts are pure, when even their neighbors know better.

9. IF WE CONFESS—"No mere outward lip-confession is here meant, nor, on the other hand, any more being aware within ourselves of sin; but the union of the two, an eternal spoken confession springing from genuine inward contrition. FAITHFUL—"As having promised. No confessor need ever doubt the divine truthness. JUST—"Not merely the mercy, but the justice or righteousness of God is set forth in the redemption of the penitent believer in Christ. God's promises of mercy, to which he is faithful, are in accordance with his justice." FORGIVE—Forgiveness holds the transgressor constructively as if he had never sinned so far as penalty is concerned. AND TO CLEANSE US—"The distinction between the forgive and the cleanse should be carefully retained. Forgiveness removes guilt and penalty for past sins; sanctification inspires to future sinlessness.

10. IF WE SAY THAT WE HAVE NOT SINNED—"Since this cleansing is a work ever proceeding, the perpetual tendency to relapse into sin is here recognized. The same grace that cleansed the soul at the first is perpetually required to keep it clean." WE MAKE HIM A LIAR—"Because he has everywhere affirmed the depravity of all the race. On no point have his declarations been more positive and uniform than on the fact of the universal sinfulness of man."

1. MY LITTLE CHILDREN—"The diminutive form does not at all imply that he is addressing, persons of tender age; it is a term of endearment. IF ANY MAN SIN—"So liable is even the Christian to transgression that provision must be made for its occurrence." WE HAVE AN ADVOCATE—"Christ appears for us in heaven, a faithful Advocate. His intercession is a part of his priestly office. We have a faithful High Priest, therefore a faithful Advocate. He lays our cause to heart; our cause is his cause.

2. HE IS THE PROPITIATION—"The death of Christ is called the propitiation, for it makes it possible for God to receive sinners into favor, and prompts to the exercise of mercy in a way consistent with the claims of justice. NOT FOR OURS ONLY—"Christ's advocacy is limited to believers (verse 1; 1 John 1, 7): his propitiation extends as widely as sin extends.

III. LOVE AND OBEDIENCE. VERSES 3-6.

3. WE DO KNOW—In other words, we have this evidence. THAT WE KNOW HIM—"To know God" is not merely to know that he is. In John's sense it is to have full knowledge of him—that is, to receive him into the heart.

4. IS A LIAR—As above, his life is a lie. If anyone claims to be a Christian here is the ready test—does he keep the commandments of Christ? Is his life according to the Christian precepts?

The grand jury at the criminal assizes, Ottawa, brought in a true bill, Wednesday afternoon, against Shea, Bissonette and Troy, who were committed for trial recently for conspiring to defraud in connection with the Capital-Toronto lacrosse game in Toronto on Dominion Day.

Hon. Dr. Borden and Major General Gascoigne have gone into the matter of the trouble in the 66th Regiment of Halifax. It will be explained to the officers that their step has been taken under a misconception, that they misunderstood what General Gascoigne said, and that the blame is in the main to be attached to the men themselves who were found in the crops and at the same time attached to the imperial service. Hon. Dr. Borden leaves for Europe on the 8th.

On Wednesday there were disturbances amounting almost to rebellion in Prague Austria. Czechs attacked houses occupied by Germans and had to be dispersed by troops. All traffic was suspended and business houses were closed. Twelve battalions of infantry and a squadron of Hussars held the streets in the evening. Two hundred arrests were made and about 80 persons were injured. In evening a mob attempted to storm a cartridge factory in the suburbs. At least two hundred persons were killed outright and it is feared that others were killed and wounded. The authorities have proclaimed the city under martial law.

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EQUITY SALE.

There will be sold at Public Auction on Saturday, the Eleventh Day of December next, at 12 o'clock (noon), at Chubb's Corner (so called), in the City of Saint John, pursuant to the directions of a certain decretal order of the Supreme Court in Equity, made on the 17th day of August, A. D. 1897, in a certain cause therein pending wherein S. Augusta McLeod is Plaintiff and Florence M. Wright, Aretas Roy Wright, Ida Irene Wright, Bessie Bell Wright, Clara Gladys Wright, Gur Charleston Wright, Louie Lavenia Wright and Howard D. McLeod are Defendants. With the approbation of the undersigned Referee in Equity the land and premises mentioned in the said Plaintiff's Bill and in the said decretal order and therein described as follows: "All those certain lots, pieces or parcels of land situate, lying and being in Carleton, in the City and County of Saint John, known and numbered on the plan of this part of the City as lots number (325) three hundred and thirty-five and (326) three hundred and thirty-six, fronting on Charlotte Street, and numbers (351) three hundred and fifty-one and (352) three hundred and fifty-two, fronting on Tower Street, being each fifty feet by one hundred feet more or less, the same having been deeded to the President, Directors and Company of the Commercial Bank of New Brunswick by B. Wilms by deed bearing date the thirteenth day of October, A. D. 1897, and duly registered and by several mesne transfers conveyed to J. Hebert Wright."

For terms of sale and other particulars apply to the Plaintiff's Solicitor or the undersigned Referee.

Dated this 29th day of September, A. D. 1897. R. MCLEOD. E. H. MCALPINE, Plaintiff Solicitor. Referee. EDWARD A. EVERETT, Auctioneer.

EQUITY SALE.

There will be sold at public auction on Saturday, the 3rd day of January next, at 12 o'clock, noon, at Chubb's Corner (so called) in the City of St. John pursuant to the directions of a certain decretal order of the Supreme Court in Equity made on the nineteenth day of October, A. D. 1897, in a certain cause therein pending wherein Mary, Blanche Williams is Plaintiff and William Holman is Defendant, with the approbation of the undersigned Referee in Equity, the land and premises mentioned in the said Plaintiff's bill and in the said decretal order, and therein described as follows: All the right, title and interest of the Defendant in and to a certain Indenture of Lease bearing date the first day of March, A. D. 1887, and made between the Rector, Church Wardens and Vestry of Trinity Church, in the Parish of St. John, of the first part, and William Holman, Junior, of the second part, and by the said William Holman assigned to John M. Robinson (which said Indenture of Lease by certain assignments and the land thereby demised and all the buildings thereon have become vested in the defendant) and in and to the lands and premises therein and in the Plaintiff's bill described as "all that certain lot, piece and parcel of land situate, lying and being in Duke's Ward, in the City of St. John, bounded as follows, namely, beginning at the South Eastern corner of a lot of ground, formerly leased by the said Rector, Church Wardens and Vestry to one, Caleb Radcliffe, the said corner being on the western side of Charlotte Street, thence running along the southern boundary line of said Radcliffe lot the extent thereof eighty feet, thence southerly on a line parallel with the said street thirty-three feet four inches, thence easterly on a line parallel with the said Radcliffe southern boundary eighty feet to the said street and thence northerly on the line of the said street to the place of beginning with all the privileges and appurtenances to the same belonging.

For terms of sale and other particulars apply to the Plaintiff's Solicitor or the undersigned Referee.

Dated at the City of St. John this 16th day of November, A. D. 1897. E. H. MCALPINE, Solicitor. Referee in Equity. Plaintiff's Solicitor. W. A. LOCKHART, Auctioneer.