

The text answers the question of the topic: we can make the Sabbath a delight, if on that day we shall "honor him, not doing our own ways, nor finding our own pleasures, nor speaking our own words."

July 21.—"God's Call to Jeremiah to us. (Called of God.)" Jer. 1. 6-10.

What does a "call" mean? When one person calls another it signified that the one calling wants the one called. When mother calls "John," John knows that his mother wants him. God's callings are just as personal as that. God wants you—for yourself, not just because there is something for you to do. God cannot use us in His work without our consent. He wants us first and always for our own sakes. Then when he has us, our hearts and hands are ready to do his bidding. Work does not come first. Consecration is not to work, but to God. Then when we have answered His call by giving ourselves to Him the rest is easy. Not only to be His servants does God call us, but to be His family. Not to serve Him for wages but for love is the true way of work. A loving son or daughter never grumbles at any work given, but does the best possible to please father or mother. God calls us not just to put us to work, but first of all to give us a place in His family. And then for all His blessings and because we love Him as our Heavenly Father we delight to do His will. (Note to leader: Make this clear—we cannot work our way to God by doing. We must come to Him at His call. God does not accept us for what we do. Coming at His call is first—working for Him comes afterward. Consecration is the giving of ourselves to God. Do not let the Juniors think of it as doing work. God wants us for what He can give us, do for us, make of us. Then we prove by our work for Him that He really owns us. God calls us "should be the thought of every Junior. "God takes me because I have come in answer to His call" will then be realized. "God uses me because I am His child and love to do His will" thus becomes a happy experience. "God calls" us just to make us work. He does far more for us than we can ever do for Him. Christian life is not slavery. There is no drudgery in work for God. His service is freedom, a joy, a delight, and our hearts when full of His love sin—the sweet verse:

"In the service which Thy love appoints
There are no bonds for me,
For my bounding heart has learned the truth.

That makes Thy people free,
And a life of self-renouncing love
Is a life of liberty."

Let us not refuse to come to God at His call. Let us never decline His service when He asks us to do something for Him. He will help us as He did Jeremiah. The prophet said that he was a child, ignorant and afraid and weak. God said that He would teach and deliver and strengthen him. So Jeremiah went to his work and God did not forsake him. In trial, persecution, imprisonment, suffering and loss, Jeremiah was God's faithful messenger. So if we answer God's call by coming to Him, and prove our love by doing what He asks us to do, He will be wisdom to our minds, speech to our lips, comfort to our hearts, help to our weakness, and we shall know His presence always with us through life. "God calls you!"

"Dear Master, we are only boys and girls,

We may not travel yet across the sea
To tell the gospel story in far lands,
But when we pray we whisper: 'Lord,
send me.'

"And 'Here am I,' we say to every task
Thou sendest in this our training time;
We listen for thy errands day by day,
And, looking up, we catch thy smile
divine.

"Love's secret is to ever work for God,
And not to mind because he seems to care

To have us do such very little things.
So, Lord, we'll serve thee any—everywhere!"

July 28.—"Lessons from the Rechabites." (Temperance Meeting.) Prov. 23: 20-21.

(Consult the June Era, p. 188, for suitable material, and use Bengough's admirable cartoon as seen on that page, to illustrate this topic. The cartoon made in it very clearly portray the statements made in v. 21 of this week's topic.)

A telling illustration is this:—

"But, doctor, I must have some kind of a stimulant," cried the invalid earnestly; "I am cold and it warms me." "Precisely," came the doctor's crusty answer. "See here; this stick is cold"—tossing up a stick of wood from the box beside the hearth, and tossing it into the fire, "now it is warm; but is the stick benefited?" The sick man watched the wood first send out puffs of smoke, and then burst into flame, and replied: "Of course not, it is burning itself!" "And so are you when you warm yourself with alcohol; you are literally burning up the delicate tissues of your stomach and brain." Oh, yes, alcohol will warm you up; but who finds the fuel. When you take food, that is fuel, and as it burns out you keep warm. But when you take alcohol to warm you, you are like a man who sets his house on fire and warms his fingers by it as it burns.

A competent authority says:

"We put a drop of alcohol upon a man's eye. It poisons it. We try it upon the lining of a living stomach. Again it poisons it. We study after death the stomachs of drinking men, and find the alcohol produces in regular stages, redness, intense congestion, morbid secretion, deeper hurt, destruction of parts, utter ruin. We study its influence upon the health and strength of sailors and soldiers, and help to freeze them in the Arctic regions and exhaust them in the tropics. We watch two regiments on a long march in India, one with and the other without grog, and are driven to the conclusion that even moderate quantities of alcohol weaken the muscles and break the endurance. We visit the training grounds of oarsmen, pedestrians and prize fighters, and learn everywhere the same lesson—alcohol is a poison to muscle and brain."

Aug. 4.—"God's promises to us." (Promise Meeting.) Jer. 31: 33, 34.

God's promises are many, yet they all centre in one great supreme blessing—that we know Him. This is the highest honor that can come to us. It is the sum-total of all human blessedness. "This is eternal life that they may know Thee . . ." and all blessings are included in this one. All promises are comprehended in this one, for "this is the promise that He hath promised us even eternal life." Does God promise us forgiveness of sin in His infinite mercy? Does He promise us help, guidance, peace, joy, rest, and numerous other blessings? Each one of His gifts separately, or all together unitedly, teach us of Himself and help us to know Him as our Father and Friend. . . . Yet, God's promises are conditional. God is not arbitrary in giving His word. We may or may not, as we choose, accept or reject Him and it. Our topic centres in the desire of God that we should be His true and loving children; but God cannot make us such without our consent and will. If,

like Israel, we cherish a wrong spirit in our hearts, worship idols in preference to God, do those things that are evil in His sight, or in any way habitually break His law, we cannot expect blessing. God's promises are for those who honor His word. (When we trust and obey our parents we know they will honor and bless us When we keep the law of our country we are sure of our country's protection When we obey the laws of Nature we enjoy fruitage in our gardens and fields, and even to what we keep "the law of the Lord" we have His favor.) God has no favorites. His promises are made to all who put themselves within the circle of their reach. Within the circumference of God's promises all come who keep His word and by loyal, loving obedience become subjects of His Kingdom in which His beneficent laws prevail. (Make it plain that the characters described in the Bible were truly human, subject to all the laws, conditions, limitations, etc., of ordinary life. . . . We, as much as they, may have God's blessing. His law is the same to-day. The blessedness of life is in character not condition. Righteousness is recompense, and everyone who worketh it "is accepted of Him." While you may ask your Juniors for a partial enumeration of the promises recorded in the Bible, do not fail to establish firmly in their minds the conditional nature of them, as emphasized herein.)

August 11.—"Every-day Mercies." (Common Blessings.) Lam. 3: 22-25.

We should see the kind care of our Heavenly Father in the commonest provisions for our welfare. Our Lord taught in unmistakable words that even in the too often despised mercies of every-day life, our Father was pouring forth His love upon His creatures. The mercies of God are not limited by great or occasional needs. Not in times of awful calamity only does He manifest His grace; but in oft-repeated and daily favors He makes known His care. We should see the small things of daily life we should recognize His kind providence. The sunshine and cloud, heat and cold, moisture and draught, darkness and light, every element in Nature, all combine to own His Sovereignty. The growth of Spring, the maturity of Summer, the harvest of Autumn, the frosts of Winter all unite to do His will. The devout Jew of old recognized the hand of God in every temporal mercy and gave thanks to Him for all daily provision. Christ taught no narrower Gospel. His Sermon on the Mount was full of such teachings of God as made Him a real, kind, bountiful Father. Such should be our thoughts of God. So shall we see His mercies "new every morning," and exclaim, "thou openest Thine hand and satisfiest every living thing." (Do not let your youthful believers have wrong thoughts of God. The impression they now receive of Him may determine their whole future. That God is near them, interested in them, desirous for their welfare, providing for their well-being, comforting them in their troubles, helping them in weakness,—in short in every way acting toward them as a Perfect Father and soliciting from them the loving acknowledgment of grateful children every day, is the truth we should always make clear to young believers.)

Somebody thought "I'm glad to give!"
Somebody thought a valiant fight;
Somebody smiled the whole day long;
Somebody thought "it's sweet to live";
Somebody proved a friend in need;
Somebody sang a beautiful song;
Somebody did a golden deed;
Somebody lived to shield the right;
Was that somebody you?