



LESSON VII.—August 15, 1897.

Abstaining For the Sake of Others.

I. Cor. viii., 1-13.

A TEMPERANCE LESSON.

Read Chapters viii., ix., and x. Commit verses 12, 13.

GOLDEN TEXT.

'For none of us liveth to himself.'—Rom. xiv., 7.

Home Readings.

- M. I. Cor. viii., 1-13.—Abstaining for the Sake of Others.
 T. I. Cor. ix., 1-27.—Christian Self-restraint Enjoined.
 W. I. Cor. x., 1-14.—'Beloved, Flee from Idolatry.'
 Th. I. Cor. x., 15-33.—We should seek the Good of Others.
 F. Rom. xiv., 1-23.—We should help the Weak in Faith.
 S. Gal. v., 13-26.—'By love serve One Another.'
 S. Gal. vi., 1-18.—'Let us do Good unto all Men.'

Lesson Story.

We have to-day a portion of one of the letters written by Paul to the Church at Corinth. A church in one of the most wicked cities of the world, formed chiefly of men and women newly converted from the worst kind of lives, heathen, who had been brought up without any right teaching. Taught wickedness in the service of their idols, these people at first could not understand how to serve God by pure, true lives. They had much need of instruction and admonition, Paul counsels them gently, tenderly and faithfully.

There had been some difficulty in the church about eating meats which had been offered to idols, some held that it was wrong to do so, others held that since the idol was really nothing in itself, the meat was not changed in any way by being offered to it, therefore one kind of meat was as good as another. Paul writes to them that the way to settle all these difficulties is to live in love, acting charitably, lovingly. He took the trouble to find out exactly what their different thoughts were and to explain to the strong, wise ones why they ought to be loving and careful of their weaker brethren. Better for them to go without the things that were harmless to them, than to stumble the weak brother whose conscience would not allow him to partake of these things. Love solves all problems. Lack of love to our weak brethren is lack of love to Christ. 'Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.'

Lesson Hymn.

Why do you wait, dear brother?
 Oh, why do you tarry so long?
 Your Saviour is waiting to give you
 A place in his sanctified throng.

What do you hope, dear brother,
 To gain by a further delay?
 There's no one to save you but Jesus;
 There's no other way but his way.

Do you not feel, dear brother,
 His Spirit now striving within?
 Oh, why not accept his salvation?
 And throw off thy burden of sin,

Why do you wait, dear brother?
 The harvest is passing away;
 Your Saviour is longing to bless you:
 There's danger and death in delay.

Lesson Hints.

'Things offered unto idols'—The social life of the heathen was closely interwoven with their religious rites, feasts were continually being made of those meats which had been

dedicated to idols. Meats and food of all kinds were used in the worship of these idols. 'We all have knowledge'—we understand about these things, we know that meat is not changed by being offered to an idol. 'Knowledge puffeth up'—like a soap bubble, 'but charity edifieth'—in other words, 'love buildeth up,' solidly. Knowledge may make a fine large appearance, but it is hollow, only a puff, whereas love may not make such an appearance, but what there is of it is a good solid well-built structure.

'He knoweth nothing'—no man can have all knowledge, and if he thinks he has, it is but a proof of his lack of knowledge. The more one knows, the more one sees there is to know. 'If any man love God'—'If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?'—(I. John iv., 20.) 'Their conscience, being weak, is defiled'—burdened with a sense of sin. If they considered that eating the meat was performing an act of worship to the idol, they did wrong to eat. It is wrong to go against one's conscience. 'Meat commendeth us not to God'—it makes no difference what kind of food we eat, if it is good and wholesome it nourishes our bodies and strengthens us for God's service. Drinking is quite another matter, we cannot take a glass of intoxicating liquor without poisoning and defiling the body which God has said shall be his temple. (I. Cor. iii., 16, 17.) Each offence against conscience is a blow which will hasten its death.

'Liberty'—We all have liberty and free will, if we choose to injure and poison our own bodies we may think that is our business. But 'no man liveth to himself' and we cannot do wrong, or even some things which we hold to be right, without becoming a 'stumbling block to them that are weak.' Our Saviour said, 'whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.' (Matt. xviii. 6.) 'Through thy knowledge shall thy weak brother perish for whom Christ died?'—Christ died to save these men, are you willing that they should be lost because of your selfish indulgence. Even if you think that drinking is perfectly right and safe for you, would you not rather give it up than see your brother and sister lose their lives and their souls by partaking too freely of it? It has been said that the bible does not say, 'thou shalt not drink,' neither does it say 'thou shalt drink,' and if we cannot look on it as a duty, we may look on it as a glorious privilege to abstain for the sake of others and for the sake of Christ.

Search Questions.

What sin leads to all others?

'Answers to Search Questions' will be found on page 12.

Primary Lesson.

Did you ever play 'Follow the leader?' You know how one boy or girl goes in front and the rest all follow doing exactly what the leader does, if he climbs over a wall, all the rest do, too. If he walks backwards, they must all do the same, if he jumps over a ditch his followers all attempt it, and sometimes they fall into the ditch because they are not quite as big and strong as the leader. Well, that is just the way grown up people play, too. One person has a party, then all the neighbors think they must each have a party. One lady gets a new silk dress, and almost every other lady thinks she must have a silk dress, too. One man thinks he will take a glass of wine and the other men think that they will do the same. The persons who first do these things never know who is following their example, it is a kind of blind game—you may play the leader but you may never see who is following you. It is pleasant for you to cross the brook on those smooth, round stepping stones, but would you do it if you thought little baby sister was going to follow you alone?

What about that naughty word you said the other day? When you said, 'I won't to mamma, how did you feel when baby brother followed your example and said 'I won't, I won't?' How did you feel when baby brother hurt himself by following you into the

place where you had been forbidden to go? You got out of it safely, but he was hurt.

There are so many things we would not do if we only knew of the people who are following us. You do not think you are leading anyone, but there is some one following you, copying all you do and say, and you do not know who it is, always. You know that your little brothers and sisters look up to you and think that whatever you do is right—doesn't that make you want to do everything rightly?

If you are not trying to do right things, the things that please Jesus, you are a stumbling block. That is, you are keeping some body else, perhaps your own brother or sister, from following Jesus, our great example and leader.

SUGGESTED HYMNS.

'I will follow Jesus,' 'Yield not to temptation,' 'Temperance bells,' 'Have courage to say no,' 'I need Thee every hour,' 'Christian, walk carefully,' 'My soul, be on thy guard.'

Christian Endeavor Topic.

Aug. 15.—Stumbling blocks.—Matt. xviii., 1-14. (A temperance topic.)

Junior Prayer-Meeting Topic.

Aug. 15.—How do people put stumbling-blocks in others' way?—Matt. xviii., 1-14. (A temperance topic.)

Practical Points.

BY A. H. CAMERON.

Although the first two of these are late, they are too good to miss, and are given in this number on account of their value in connection with the others for the review.—Ed.

(Acts xviii., 1-11.)

God's chosen people are neither recognized nor loved by the world. Verses 1, 2.

As every Jewish youth was taught a trade, Paul had become a tent-maker. We find he could practice as well as preach. Verses 3, Also II. Cor. xi., 9.

Paul's preaching was nothing if not persuasive. Verse 4.

They who reject the Gospel remedy have only themselves to blame for being eternally lost. Verses 5, 6.

God's commands are specially sweet to the convert just beginning the Christian race. Verses 7, 8; also Luke xix., 5, 6.

Solid comfort comes from God alone, and his consolations are sweeter than all the pleasures of earth. Verses 9-11.

(I. Thess., iv., 9; v., 2.)

Love of Christ always begets love of the brethren. Verses 9, 10; also John v., 2.

A consistent Christian's walk will bring a blessing upon the believer and influence for good the outside world. Verses 11, 12.

The prospect of meeting loved ones in heaven takes the barbed edge out of our sorrow. Verses 13, 14.

Christ's first coming laid the foundation of our faith; his second advent will set the pinnacle on our highest hope. Verses 15-18.

The day of the Lord will come as a thief, because unexpected, and his coming will steal away all our sorrow and care. Verses 1, 2.

(I. Cor. xiii., 1-13.)

According to I. Cor. xiii., 13, love is greater than either faith or hope. So knowledge must also take a back seat when love comes to the front. Verses 1-3.

Proper conception of the person and character of God will best adjust our attitude to idols. Verses 4-6. John iv., 10.

Some Christians are weak in the faith and may be injured by the thoughtless example of other believers. Verses 7, 10.

Though nothing is unclean in itself (verse 8) we must beware lest our liberty increases our weak brother's infirmity. Verse 9.

Love to Christ is the grandest principle that regulates the Christian's conduct, and when it rules his life, love of the brethren will as certainly follow as winter is followed by spring. Verse 11-13; also Mark xii., 28-31.

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