

LESSON VII—August 15th, 1897.

Abstaining for the sake of Others. 1 Cor. 8: 1-13.

(Commit to memory verses 13, 13. Read chapters 8 to 10).

GOLDEN TEXT: "For none of us liveth to himself." Rom. 14: 7.

PROVE THAT—We should practice self-denial. 1 Cor. 8: 1-13.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Quest. 88. *What are the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption?* A. The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption, are his ordinances, especially the word, sacraments and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation.

LESSON HYMNS. *Children's Hymnal*—Nos. 1, 12, 173, 134.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* Abstaining for the sake of others. 1 Cor. 8. *Tuesday.* Abstain from appearance of evil. 1 Thess. 5: 14-23. *Wednesday.* Not expedient. 1 Cor. 10: 14-23. *Thursday.* Be separate. 2 Cor. 6: 11-18. *Friday.* Consideration for others. Luke 6: 27-36. *Saturday.* Burden-bearing. Gal 6: 1-10. *Sabbath.* The perfect pattern. 1 John 3: 10-16. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections*).

HELPS IN STUDYING.

INTRODUCTORY. The First Epistle to the Corinthians was written from Ephesus near the close of Paul's residence in that city (ch. 16: 5-8) about A. D. 57. It was intended to correct various disorders in the church and meet the errors of false teachers. Although the question dealt with in our lesson would not arise to-day, yet the principles on which it is settled are valid for every age and country.

LESSON PLAN. I. The Liberty of the Strong. vs. 1-6. II. The Conscience of the Weak. vs. 7, 8. III. The Dictate of Love. vs. 9-13.

1. Things offered to idols—Of the victims offered in sacrifice, part was consumed on the altar, part was given to the priest, and part was returned to the worshipper. This latter portion was eaten at a festive meal (10: 27) or sold in the market (10: 25) and might happen to be purchased by christians who did not know where it came from. **We all have knowledge—**Namely, that an idol is nothing at all, and that the meat is not affected in any way by having been in its temple (Rom. 14: 14; 1 Cor. 10: 19). **Puffeth up—**Readers vain and conceited (Rom. 14: 3-10) if not tempered with charity and modesty. **Love (R. V.)—**This "edifies," or builds up, the christian and the church. **2. Knowledge** which renders one self-conceited and contemptuous of others will not lead one aright in serving God (Gal. 6: 3; 1 Tim. 6: 4). **3. Is known of him—**God approves of him, and guides him in the way of duty. Not our knowledge, but our love commends us to God. **4. An idol is nothing—**The pretended gods have no existence. They are delusions of Satan. **6. We by him—**Redeemed by him, created anew by his spirit (Eph. 2: 10; 2 Cor. 5: 17; Gal. 6: 14). **7. That knowledge—**Namely, that an idol is nothing. Some cannot shake off so easily the old superstitions of heathenism (1 Cor. 10: 28, 29). **Being weak is defiled—**Whatever a man does, believing it to be wrong, or not being quite sure about it, is sin (Rom. 14: 1, 14, 23; 15: 1). A conscience is said to be defiled either when it approves or cherishes sin, or is burdened by a sense of guilt. **9.** It is quite true that meat does not affect our relation to God, but an action, innocent in itself, becomes wrong when it is the occasion of another's sin. **10.** He will say "If it is right for him, it can't be wrong for me" and self-indulgence will override conscience. **Emboldened—**lit. "edified," the wrong kind of "building up." **11. Perish—**This must be the inevitable result of such conduct if persisted in (Rom. 14: 23). What an infinite distance between the self-denial of Christ and the trifle asked of us when we are requested to abstain from intoxicating liquors (Rom. 14: 15; 15: 1, 3). **12. Wound—**"Strike a cruel blow at" (Matt. 25: 40, 45; Mark 9: 41, 42; Acts 9: 4). **13. The decision of the apostle** is a noble one, and worthy of imitation. No one has a right to dictate to us, and so make his narrow view binding upon us, but christian love should constrain us to yield voluntarily for his sake. If the use of alcoholic beverages wounds our brother and so far perpetuates a source of misery to our race, then we are not true to the heart of Christ if we refuse to abstain from them. There are many arguments for "total abstinence," but the one in our lesson ought to be sufficient for every christian.

LESSONS. 1. Love is better than self-conceited knowledge. 2. Love is of God for God is love. 3. We should bear with the prejudices of others. 4. It is a dreadful thing to lead another into sin. 5. Abstain altogether from intoxicating liquors.