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THE TEACHER.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1872.

STUDIES IN THE EPISTLES.

SUNDAY, July 28th, 1872.

A Living Sacrifice.—Rom. xii. 1-8.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." vs. 2.

SCRIPTURE SELECTION.—Phil. ii. 1-18; 1 Cor. 12.

SUMMARY.—Each for all, and all for Christ.

ANALYSIS.—I. God-ward service. 1. The body sacrificed, vs. 1. 2. The mind renewed, vs. 2. II. Man-ward service. 1. The modest judgment, vs. 3, 4. 2. The various gifts, vs. 5-8.

EXPOSITION.—Transition.—Faith in Christ begets devotion to Christ. Out last lesson was on faith, this is on works. As we then saw, faith works, and hence our present lesson fitly follows our last. We keep to the order of nature, or rather of grace.

The analysis.—All Christian action is service rendered to God, and all kinds and forms of action should be Christian. Christ bought us, in whole, not in part. So we are his, and because his, God's, in the toil of the hands, the labor of the brain, the flow of the affection. We cannot then divide up duties into two classes the God-ward and the man-ward, except as to their immediate end. In one sense all is for God, because his will is in all supreme, in another a part is for man, because we deal with men, and labor for them.

I. GOD-WARD SERVICE.—In general.—The appeal ["I beseech you," etc.] covers both forms of this service, and extends through vs. 2. The foundation of the appeal is "the mercies of God," vs. 1. Compare with this xv. 30; 1 Cor. i. 10; 2 Cor. x. 1.

1. THE BODY SACRIFICED.—The language refers to the Jewish sacrifices offered by divine appointment both in the tabernacle and afterwards in the temple. There were three kinds of sacrifices setting forth (a) atonement, for sin by the "sin-offering" and the "trespass-offering." (b) Self-dedication to God by the "burnt-offering." (c) Thanksgiving by the "meat offering," and the "peace-offering." It is not the first kind to which Paul here refers, for he has shown before that Christ, and only Christ, is the atoning sacrifice. Only he could make atonement. But because that had been made, men accepting his sacrifice could now both dedicate themselves to God, and thereby show their gratitude. To the last two kinds of sacrifice, therefore, Paul refers. See Leviticus, chapters i-vi. The sin-offering was first to be made, then the others might follow. Such was the order of nature, and so is it under the gospel. Thus we have here the language of the altar. "Present," as in bringing forward the animal to be slain and placed on the altar. "Bodies," as of the victim to be slain. "Sacrifice," the victim as devoted to God, slain and offered. "Service," the whole series of acts embrac-

ing the presentation of the victim and the connected worship like our service, designating public worship, "living," as opposed to a dead victim. "Holy," as prescribed by the Mosaic law. "Acceptable to God," because "holy." "Reasonable, i. e., of a rational being, as opposed to that in which brutes were offered.

The doctrine here taught is a duty enjoined. We are through life to serve God with our bodies in a complete, grateful, holy, and thus acceptable, spiritual, or rational service. Christ gave to God his body as a sin-offering for us.

2. THE MIND RENEWED.—"Be not conformed to this world."—"This world," or rather "age," soon, is here as often contrasted with the "world [or age] to come," where righteousness is to prevail. Now sin is the chief characteristic. Men at large live for self, not God; for earth, not heaven. We must not understand Paul as speaking of dress, or manners, or speech, or anything outward, but of "the mind." There is no sin in being outwardly like the world, save in any immoral practice. We are not to be conformed to the world in spirit, not to have the same motives, principles, spirit, aims.

"Be ye transformed," thoroughly, throughout changed, from that which the man of worldly mind is, from that which every one of us has been, and in part still is, "By the renewing of your mind." One who becomes a Christian becomes "a new creature." The renewing goes on from the new birth till glory is reached.

"Prove" God's will. The word translated prove, means first "test" or "make trial of," and then, as such testing, shows what a thing is,—know." Some take it here in the latter sense, "that ye may know God's will," better "that ye may in your own experience realize by testing, make experimental proof of God's will," in other words become God-like, since the will of God expresses his character.

II. MAN-WARD SERVICE.—In general.—This follows the others, as the second table of the law follows the first. All true love to men is rooted in love to God, all true service for man is rooted in service to God. That is the Bible idea through and through. So Paul joins this part of the passage to the former part by the word present yourselves to God, "for" only this can you do what follows. The minister's highest glory is to let God speak through him, to pass along the heavenly message. Vanity is sadly out of place in a creature. How fitly does this modesty of the apostle introduce his plea for modesty in his readers.

1. THE MODEST JUDGMENT.—The appeal.—(a) To whom? Every one in the church. Doubtless not all had equal need of it, but Paul did not care to single any one out. He could reach the ones specially intended, if there were such, by this general statement. (b) For what? A modest estimate of self. He is willing that each should think of himself according to the truth, but not above that. It is no true modesty to think or speak of one's self worse than the truth warrants.

(c) The standard.—Each man's measure of faith. Mark well, the standard is not, as many make it, money, or culture, or position, or any such thing, but simply the faith in Christ which comes of the Spirit.

The reason for the appeal.—vs. 4. The church is like the human body, it has one life, yet many parts or members. This social life tempts vanity, but vanity disturbs and may destroy it. To have harmony each member must give every other its place. Each exists for the body, not the body for each. Vanity in a man leads him to wish others to bow to him, and to try and make them do this. Then comes confusion, and ruin. For the good of the whole we have place among disciples, and the good of the whole becomes the good of each, and the welfare of man. The body is said to be "in Christ," because no one is truly in the Christian brotherhood unless he is in Christ, by living faith. If there is discord among Christians, it comes not from their Christ-life, but from the old self-life. This law of love is the true law of all human society, of all social life.

2. THE VARIOUS GIFTS.—The origin of the gifts is grace. God's unmerited favor determines what spiritual gift each shall have. This excludes boasting and vanity.

The nature of the gifts most prominent in the early church is indicated. All are not mentioned, but enough to show the principle which is to guide every one in every age. "Prophecy" is speaking God's will with authority under inspiration, especially in making known new truth.

The prophet was next in rank to the apostle. "Ministry," if, as is likely, it refers to official service, is not a pastor's or preacher's service, but a deacon's. Deacon and minister are words of the same meaning originally, the first from the Greek, the second from the Latin. The teacher is thought to have been much the same as our preacher, explaining the Scriptures. Exhortation is a lower gift, and naturally follows the teaching. The duties next named need not be regarded as official. Possibly they are. The distribution of money or its equivalent needed to be done impartially with sole reference to needs "in simplicity."

QUESTIONS.—To whom were these words written? What does Paul beseech them to do with their bodies? What were the Jews accustomed to sacrifice in their temple service? Lev. chs. i-iii. What sacrifice atones for all sin? Rom. iii. 24. In what way can one present his body as a living sacrifice? Why is this called a "rational service"? By what did Paul urge his plea?

What is it to be conformed to this world? 1 John ii. 15-17. Ought one to differ from others in dress, manner, etc., simply for the sake of differing? How ought men to be transformed? vs. 2. What are men before they are transformed? Eph. ii. 1. What after? 1 John iii. 1. Like whom is the renewed man? John xiv.

Against what sin does Paul warn in the third verse? Whom does he warn? Has the professed church in Rome always obeyed this command? Ought a man to regard himself as either less or worse than he is? What is self-respect? What is humility? Can one have both? Are men inclined to think too highly of themselves? To what are Christians compared in vs. 4, 5? Is the same comparison made elsewhere? Col. i. 18. Read 1 Cor. xii. 12-26. Does this comparison show why a man should seek the good of others? What are the "gifts" named in vs. 6-8. Has every man a gift?

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. Scripture Catechism, 58.

SUNDAY, Aug. 4th.—Christian Living.—Rom. xii. 9-21.

Youths' Department.

OVER THE FENCE.

Over the fence is a garden fair—
How I would love to be master there!
All that I lack is a mere pretence,
I could leap over this low white fence.

This is the way that crimes commence;
Sin and sorrow are over the fence.

Over the fence I can toss my ball,
Then I can go in for it—that is all;
Picking an apple up near the tree
Would not be really a theft, you see.

This is a falsehood—a weak pretence;
Sin and sorrow are over the fence.

Whose is the voice that speaks so plain?
Twice have I heard it, and not in vain,
Ne'er will I venture to look that way,
Lest I shall do as I planned to-day.

This is the way that all crimes commence,
Coveting that which is over the fence.

KATIE'S DREAM.

Katie fell asleep by the fire one afternoon, and when she woke she said to her mother—

"O mother, I have had such a dream!"
"And her mother said—

"What was it, Katie? tell it me."

So she rubbed her little eyes, and began:
"I dreamt I was a good fairy, in a green gauze dress; and I had a wand; and when I saw any one sick, or sorry, or in distress, I just tapped them with my wand—that's a long stick, you know, mother—and in a minute they were well and happy. And I liked to see them glad; and they loved me so. O mother, I wish I could be a good fairy! but I know I can't, for there are not really such things as fairies at all, you know."

And Katie looked quite unhappy for a minute.

But her mother asked—
"What would you do, Katie, if you really were a fairy? Come now, think it over, and tell me."

So Katie thought a minute very hard, and then she said—

"I'd make baby all right, the minute he tumbled down, and not let him cry a bit. And granny's dim eyes should see well, and the stitches in her knitting be picked up the minute they fell. And poor sick Bertie, in the cottage, should get better, and not fret so as he does. And—and, father should have lots of money to buy that piece of land he wants for a school. O mammy, what a big tap I

should have to give for that; and then up would jump the school, with a porch all covered with flowers. But, O dear! I mustn't think about it, for it only makes me so sorry that I can't be a good fairy."

Katie's mother smiled at this, and answered:

"But I think you might be a good fairy, dear, if you liked."

Katie jumped up, wide awake now.

"O mother! What do you mean? Do tell me! But, O dear! I hear granny calling me. Wait a minute."

And off scampered Katie to do an errand for granny.

Katie's father was a clergyman, so Katie saw and heard a good deal of other people's troubles, which perhaps was the cause of her dream.

That evening when baby came down for his half-hour in the drawing-room he was fretful, and when it was his bed-time he would not go unless Katie did too. Now it was not Katie's bed-time, and she wished very much to stay; but the little brother put up his lip, and cried for her.

Katie half meant to let him be carried off sobbing; but she heard a tiny whisper from her mother of "good fairy." A light came into her eyes, and she trotted off with baby, who was always happy with her.

Next day, granny lost her spectacles. Katie was busy making a bead-mat; but something said to her (not her mother this time) "good fairy," and down went the beads, and down went Katie on her knees under the sofa, looking for the spectacles.

"Good little fairy," said granny, as Katie appeared with the lost treasures.

"I must try to be a fairy to sick Bertie, too," said Katie to herself.

So each day she went down the lane with flowers, or toys, or an amusing story; and though it was dull sitting in a dark cottage, she tried not to mind that. And Bertie liked her visits very much.

"It does him all the good in the world, miss, your chatting to him a bit," said his mother. "Why, the doctor came yesterday, and said he wasn't the same child. 'Amuse him,' says he, 'and he'll get over this.'"

Katie was actually doing all she had thought the good fairy could do, and without wand; all except the school, at least; and wish and plan how she would, she could not make that appear. No; it certainly wanted the fairy's tap, tap, to do that. And Katie almost forgot the school in the visit of an old uncle—who was gouty, and sometimes cross, and whom Katie was much afraid of at first. But by-and-by she grew sorry for him, when she saw how his leg hurt him; and she forgot to feel angry that he did not like baby in the room, and often scolded Muff, her dear little dog. And, by-and-by, out of sheer pity, she grew to wait on him as she did on her grandmother—fetching him the newspaper, telling him when it was time for his medicine, and making herself so busy attending to his comforts, that she never had time now to think about fairies.

One day, Uncle Dick was very chatty, and something in the conversation turning on dreams, Katie told her old dream again. And ever after that, Uncle Dick called her his good fairy, and he bought her a green winter dress—not gauze, but good warm stuff—and used to joke her about the wand.

"You haven't got that," he would say, "or else I should see that school popping up in the village. Ah, we must wait a bit for that!"

But how long do you think they waited? Only till her birthday. Then Katie found on her plate an envelope. All sorts of thin crackling paper came out of the envelope, on which was written, "A wand for my good fairy, with which to tap for the school."

Uncle Dick had put bank-notes—\$300—in that envelope, and Katie's father was to have his school directly.

"Mother," said Katie, her eyes glistening, "I needn't wish to be a good fairy any more, need I?"

"Darling," said Katie's mother, and grandmother, and Uncle Dick, "we think you are one already."

Children's Prize.

TEMPERANCE FABLE.

The rats once assembled in a large cellar to devise some method of safety in getting the bait from a steel trap which lay near, having seen numbers of their friends and relatives snatched from them by its merciless jaws. After many long speeches and proposals of many elaborate but fruitless plans, a happy wit standing erect said:

It is my opinion that if with one paw we can keep down the spring, we can safely take the food from the trap with the other.

All the rats loudly squealed assent. Then they were startled by a faint voice, and a poor rat with only three legs, limping into the ring, stood up to speak:

"My friends, I have tried the method you propose, and you see the result. Now let me suggest a plan to escape the trap. Let it alone."

"I CAN PLOD—I CAN PERSEVERE."

When Rev. Dr. Carey, the great pioneer of mission-work in India, first proposed his plans to his father, he said: "William, are you mad?" And ministers and Christians replied to his proposition, "If the Lord should make windows in heaven, then might this thing be."

His discouragements in first entering upon his work in India were appalling. When he found himself without a roof to cover his head, without bread for his sickly wife and four children, he made up his mind to build a hut in the wilderness, and live as the natives did around him. "There are many serpents and tigers, but Christ has said that his followers shall take up serpents," said this undaunted man.

God did not call him to this sacrifice, but to others, which required wonderful courage and persistence, before he achieved his final success which has made him famous the world over.

What was the secret that enabled the shoemaker's apprentice to become one of the most distinguished men of the age? What brilliant gift raised him from an obscure position to one of honor and fame, as the author of grammars and dictionaries, translations of the Bible and other books? He either translated or assisted in the completion of twenty-seven versions of Scripture, requiring a knowledge of as many languages or dialects.

He betrays the secret. In giving an estimate of his own character, he speaks of himself with Christian humility, but with full consciousness of the honor put upon him in the wonderful results he had been permitted to achieve. While not laying claim to brilliant gifts or genius, he says: "I can plod—I can persevere."

He does not say, as we hear too often now-a-days, "I could always manage to get along, and keep up with my class in some way, without much study. I could jump at the meaning of my lessons; or I can catch up a trade without years of hard labor, but, "I can persevere."

Plodding boys, hold up your heads! You may seem to be left behind in the race by your so-called "smart" companions. Plod on. "The race is not always to the swift."—Am. Messenger.

"DO NOT GIVE IT UP."

A gentleman, travelling in the northern part of Ireland, heard the voices of children, and paused to listen.

Finding the sounds proceeded from a small building used as a school house, he drew near; and, as the door was open, he entered, and listened to the words the boys were spelling.

One little fellow stood apart, sad and dejected.

"Why does that boy stand there?" asked the gentleman.

"Oh, he is good for nothing?" replied the teacher. "There's nothing in him. I can make nothing of him. He is the most stupid boy in school."

The gentleman was surprised at this answer. He saw that the teacher was so stern and rough that the younger and more timid boys were nearly crushed. He said a few kind words to him; then, placing his hand upon the noble brow of the little boy who stood apart, he said, "One of these days you may be a fine scholar. Do not give up, but try, my boy, try."

The soul of the boy was roused. His dormant intellect awoke. A new purpose was formed. From that hour he became studious and ambitious to excel. And he did become a fine scholar, and the author of a well-known commentary on the Bible a great and good man, beloved and honored. It was Dr. Adam Clarke.

There is a difference betwixt entertaining of sins, as thieves and robbers, and as guests and strangers; wicked men entertain sin as a guest, the godly man as a robber; the one invites it as a friend and acquaintance, the other throws it off as a rebellious traitor.—Spencer.