

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1881.

THIRD QUARTER.

Lesson XIII.—SEPTEMBER 25.

THE BODY IN SUBJECTION.

1 Cor. ix. 22-27.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 26, 27.

Paul treats of liberty. He claims absolute freedom from the control of men (vs. 4-6) And yet he shows that for the sake of others he is willing to waive all rights, (vs. 19-21). To illustrate this idea he introduces the words of the lesson.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things."—1 Cor. ix. 25.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. The Body in Subjection, 1 Cor. ix. 22-27.
T. Helping the Weak, Rom. xv. 1-7.
W. Doing Good, Gal. vi. 1-10.
T. Woe through Drink, Prov. xxiii. 29-35.
F. Mastery over Self, Matt. x. 16-33.
S. Faithful unto Death, Rev. ii. 8-11.
S. Self-control for the Gospel's Sake, 1 Cor. ix. 22-27.

SELF-CONTROL FOR THE GOSPEL'S SAKE.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Self control for Others, Vs. 22, 23. II. Self-control for Self, Vs. 24-27.

QUESTIONS.—Vs. 22, 23. — What is meant by "self control?" What persons did Paul probably refer to as "weak?" Who are weak in respect to intoxicating drink? How would such a course help these weak ones?

Vs. 24-27.—For whom was Paul controlling himself according to vs. 22, 23? How does he express his personal course in vs. 26, 27? How does he illustrate it in vs. 24, 25? What is there in these verses which induces to total abstinence? What blessings have been lost through intemperance?

In 1 Cor. viii. 13, the apostle sets forth that higher law of love which involves the denial to one's self of even lawful things, that a brother may be kept from stumbling. That law is enforced in the ninth chapter; and, in our lesson, we have the great purpose of self-denial more fully presented, and its reasonableness illustrated by reference to the conduct of those who took part in the Grecian Games. The lesson is given as a Temperance Lesson, but it involves far more than abstinence from intoxicating drinks. The principle here taught not only inculcates Total Abstinence, but also settles the vexed question of worldly conformity. It presents the most exalted standard of Christian living.

NOTES.—I. Gaining the Weak, (vs. 22, 23).

Verses 22.—To the weak. Weak in the faith (Rom. xiv. 1); with unenlightened consciences, superstitious, scrupulous about little and unimportant things. To such he says, I became as weak. He humored, patiently, their weakness. His master passion was the saving of souls; he would gain the weak, instead of being, in any way, a stumbling-block to the weak and inexperienced. To this end, he would submit gladly to any denial of self. The gain of even some was worth the expenditure of all means. In becoming all things to all men, he did not play the hypocrite, nor compromise the truth, or any principle of right. Here is the spirit of thorough consecration to the one work of winning souls.

Verses 23.—This I do. Not simply what he has specified, but all his doings, his labors and sufferings are for the gospel's sake. The one object in his life is the furtherance of the gospel. That I might be partaker thereof. The Apostle aimed to be a fellow partaker with those whom he gained in all the rich gospel blessings.

II. Striving for Self-Mastery, (vs. 24-27).

Verses 24.—Know ye not? The Athenian Games, in which the foot race was included, were celebrated in the neighborhood of Corinth, and were not only well-known to the people of that city, but were more a passion than a mere amusement, and had, to some extent, a religious character. No more apt illustration could have been used to

show the need of earnestness and complete devotion in the Christian life. A race. Was the most ancient and continued to be the most esteemed among the purely Greek athletic contests. Paul frequently refers to it. See Gal. ii. 2; v. 7; Phil. ii. 16; iii. 14; Heb. xii. 1, 4. Fleetness was highly prized, also, as fitting men for the sudden onset and rapid retreat in war. Run all, etc. Many entered upon the race, although they knew that but one could gain the prize. So run, etc. In such manner. The exhortation is to Christians. Only believers have entered the race, for a sinner, "dead in sins," (Eph. ii. 1), "without strength," (Rom. v. 6), cannot engage as a spiritual athlete. There are higher attainments than merely being safe in Christ. Obtain. As trainers and spectators, by their exhortations, stimulated those in the race, so Paul would stimulate the believer to the highest efforts in the Christian course.

Verses 25.—Every contestant in the games subjected himself to severe training. Striveth. Literally, agonizes. Temperate in all things. The discipline lasted ten months, preparatory to the contest. The diet was spare,—free from wine, or delicacies, the "temperate" here, so far as wine is concerned, was total abstinence. A corruptible crown. A garland of pine-leaves, which soon withered. At other places, the wreaths were made of olive, or parsley, or apple, or bay leaves,—all perishable. Incorruptible. The crown of righteousness, (2 Tim. iv. 8); of life, (James i. 12); of glory, (1 Pet. v. 4). As the prize before the Christian is so much nobler, he should be the more ready to practice self-denial to obtain it.

Verses 26, 27.—Uncertainly. Not without a definite object. "He who runs with a clear aim, looks straight, and runs straight to the goal, casts away every weight, pays no regard to what bystanders say." Fight. Beateth the air. "The allusion is not to a 'sham fight,' or rehearsal of a fight with an imaginary adversary, but to a fight with a real adversary, (viz, the body), in which the boxer vainly hits into the air instead of striking his antagonists." Paul did not throw away his energy by having no aim, and so striking the air; but he knew his enemy, and planted his blows full in his face. I keep under my body. Rather, I buffet, or bruise my body. That is the adversary, and I chastise it. The word rendered "keep under," signifies to strike heavily in the face, so as to render it black and blue. The Apostle is speaking simply of such a mastery of the body by the soul, as uses it for the one end,—the service of God. Preached. Heralded. Paul keeps to the metaphor of the race, and compares his preaching, in which he exhorted men to the Christian life to the office of the herald who made known the laws of the game. Castaway. Rejected. If any of the combatants had contended unfairly or unlawfully, they were rejected and disgraced.

SUGGESTED LESSONS.

The beauty and divinity of Christianity are seen in this spirit of benevolence and self abnegation, which led Paul to be willing to be weak, not for selfish ends, but to save others. The Founder of Christianity made himself "of no reputation" for the same purpose.

If Paul would sacrifice so much to "save some," then men are lost. If all are to be saved, why such strenuous efforts to save a few?

Though salvation is a free gift, and it is "to him that worketh not, but believeth" (Rom. iv. 5) that righteousness is imputed, yet the rewards of service come only to those who earnestly strive for them.

The Apostle was determined to win men—so determined, that he adapts himself to their humblest conditions. In matters not involving Christian principle, he held himself ready magnanimously to make any sacrifice of individual taste or personal convenience, in order that he might get hold of the sympathies, and save the souls of men.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

Tell the children about the careful rules for eating and drinking that must be observed by those who race; and impress that wrong eating or drinking is a great hindrance.

Every one who wishes to can join in the race, men, women, and even little children. Then, the second strange thing is, that there is not only one prize, but a prize for every one, and every one who truly strives may win it. To run the heavenly race means to strive very hard to do those things that please God.

To be temperate is to take a proper amount of those things that are good for us, and not to touch those things that are bad for us. —Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Youths' Department.

Scripture Enigma.

No. 138.

PART II.

Now for the contrast—what are things below, If from the sacred writings we would know, The following sayings show:

Each several name or epithet bisect, The first and finals from one half select, The other half reject.

1. Supreme use of God's good gift of speech, Which good things only ever ought to teach, This use I fain would reach?

2. First of Paul's suffering kinsman, men of note, What time th' Apostle to the Romans wrote; His name in order quote?

3. Last of the monarchs that, on David's throne, Called the twelve tribes of Israel all his own; His haughty name make known?

4. Chiefest of those who did the work withstand Which King Darius wrought by Joshua's hand; His name I next demand?

5. Latest of Israel's kings, of line de-based, What time God's vengeful messengers made haste; Tell me his name disgraced?

6. Sweetest assurance! to the pilgrim true— God's eye to guide him all life's journey through; Recite what God will do?

7. Dearest delight of that most glorious King! Tell what thou art to him, that I may sing Thy love with voice and string?

8. Last of three glories! Babylon and Bel Did, once of old with thee in Shinar dwell— Thy sounding title tell?

9. Brightest of tints, whose simulating pride Would claim to be with royal gold allied! Its glittering name provide?

Lo! now the heaven-taught sayings of the seer, T' awaken reverent love and holy fear, In majesty appear.

Aud may our souls, in these acrostics learn, From all things earthly in our prayers to turn, And God's true shrine discern! —Selected.

CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

239. Make a diamond of the following described words:

- 1. The man who asked God for wisdom.
2. A man's name.
3. Strong cloth.
4. Above.
5. Grown up boys.
6. The centre of more.
7. Half a negative.

240. Form an acrostic of answers to the following and find in the initials the name of an Apostle:

- 1. What old Testament high priest, Bored a hole in the lid of a chest?
2. What covetous wicked man of old, Stole and concealed a wedge of gold?
3. What woman sat at the Saviour's feet, While her sister served as he sat at meat?
4. The mother of a prophet bold and brave, Who for truth's sake his life-blood gave?
5. Zacheus climbed up what sort of a tree, That he the Lord of life might see?
6. What ancient city, rich and proud, Under God's wrath and judgment bowed?
7. Who broke the serpent Moses made, Because to it was worship paid?
8. Who sold the right of an elder son, And regretted too late the deed he had done?
9. Where was St. Paul stoned, and we read, They cast him out of the city as dead?

- 10. What beautiful woman, brave and true, Saved the life of her people, God's chosen, the Jew?
11. A king of Israel whom false aims directed, Rejecting God, was himself rejected?
12. What martyr was the first to die For love of Christianity?

Answer to Scripture Enigma.

No. 137.

- 1. C armel.
2. E liezer.
3. A bdon.
4. S erug.
5. E noch.

- 6. T yre.
7. O bed.

- 8. D elilah.
9. O rlah.

- 10. E sau.
11. V inegar.
12. I saiah.
13. L aban.

CEASE TO DO EVIL. Is. i. 16.

ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

- 237. S hake-speare.
238. B O A R D
O R D E R
A D O B E
R E B U S
D R E S S

Something to carry Home.

It was an unusually warm morning for June. But little air stirred the lilac bushes, and the chickens wallowing in the cool, moist earth beneath them, crouched down often, as though overcome by the heat.

I raised my parasol as I stepped out upon the front porch, and gathered up my dress with a listless hand, and I looked out over the road which stretched out to the church, whose white spires rose above the green trees in the distance; and I wondered how I was to get over that hot hill, where not a shadow broke the glare. Such a sudden outpouring of the sun's heat seemed quite overpowering. When I entered the church I found my heterogeneous collection of scholars nearly complete; but I opened the close-shut window near, and dropped into my straight-back chair, feeling as though there was not one atom of reserve force left in me with which to tackle my duties. It was discouraging to have such feelings to contend with, when I had striven so, but an hour ago, for a prayerful, tranquil mind; and I strove to overcome it. But the children, rubbing their feet on the bare floor, nearly sent me wild, and I was glad when the opening bell called us to order. I did not gain control of myself so but that when, after the lesson was well begun, Julia Simpson, or Julia Ann, as children call her, came in, dragging by the hand such a little mite of a brother as seemed too small to be anywhere but at home, I was annoyed.

"Why can't mothers be their own nurse girls?" I thought; and I'm afraid there was the least mite of sharpness in my voice as I said, "You shouldn't bring such a baby to Sunday-school."

"Mother said I'd got to stay and mind him then," was Julia's reply.

I made room for them, and gave the little fellow a book of pictures to keep him from talking; but of course it wasn't a minute before the book went, with a bang, on the floor. When this happened for the first time, and just as I was saying, "Now, children," I took the book, and, much to the child's apparent wonderment, tossed it on the table. After this, for a while, the child was determined to do the talking himself, and of course every time he gave utterance to anything in his funny baby fashion, a suppressed titter would break out from somewhere among the thirty-five children composing the class. At last I seemed to get a little of the child's attention. I think it came from my talking of the verse, "His flesh shall be fresher than a child," calling the children's attention to how beautiful, soft, rosy cheeks like Julia's little brother's were, and took up one of his chubby little hands to show them the difference between such flesh and mine. At any rate, the latter part of the exercise the child sat swinging his fat legs, and crouched down in a sort of listening way, as though giving us his undivided attention. But I supposed this came from drowsiness, and at last I forgot him entirely.

When the school was closed, and the

children straggled out, I stumbled over "Eben," as Julia called him. He raised his great black eyes to mine, and said, in his slightly solemn, childish way, "I'll come adain."

"Yes," I said; "and you must be a good little boy all the week." "I'll be dool, and pray Dod," he said, nodding his head like a wise Judge and marching away.

The last thing I had striven to impress upon the children's minds had been the need of prayer—for everything and at all times; and I was surprised that even so much, as seemed by the child's words, had been grasped by him. And going home, thinking it over, the breeze seemed a good deal fresher than when I went over the road before, though it was an hour nearer noon, and the way was not half so long and tiresome.

The next Sunday I looked for little Eben, but Julia came without him, and in time the incident of his ever having come slipped from my mind. A few weeks later I stood one morning out among my late roses, clipping and tying them up, and smelling of this and that half-open rose, when a "hem" caused me to turn suddenly, and I found a woman standing beside me. How she had opened the gate and trodden the gravel walk without my knowing it was a mystery; but there she was, and as she did not say anything, I said, "Good morning." She answered with a nod, and then stood awkwardly twisting the fringe of her shawl between her thumb and finger. Not knowing what else to say, I asked, "Can I do anything for you?"

"Well, no—that is, I only thought I'd come and tell you about my boy."

"Who is your boy?"

"Why, my Bub, Ebenezer, that Julia Ann took to Sunday-school."

"Oh," I said, the Julia Ann letting in a little light, "You're Julia Simpson's mother? I remember little Eben's coming with her one day. Yes, yes."

"Well, you see"—and the woman settled back, as though surer of her ground now—"I used to mind about religion quite a sight when we were first married. But after things got going so hard with us, and it was work, work, and money always short, and the children coming along, and so little time for anything, we kinder forgot about it; and when we didn't, there did not seem to be much chance for such things; and I used to tell Rufus—his my husband—that there wasn't much time for poor folks to be religious in, and he seemed to think it was about so. Well, as I started to tell the next day after Bubby went to Sunday-school was what some folks call "blue Monday with me. The baby'd been worrying all night."

"Eben?" I asked.

"Oh, no; you ha'n't seeing my baby yet. She's most a year old, and a wonderful sight like her father; as I was saying, she'd keep me awake; and now there was the big washing, and the sun up so hot before I got to it; and taking it all round, it seemed as though I never could get through with it all; and after I rubbed a little, I just dropped into a chair with my hand on my back, saying, 'It's no sort o' use; I never can do it.' Bub was on the floor with the baby's playthings, and I didn't suppose he was minding me one bit; but he looked up with those great eyes o' his'n, and says he, shaking his head, 'Why don't you tell Dod so?' I thought it must be I hadn't heard him right, and so I asked, 'What did you say, Eben?' 'I say,' he said, rising to his feet, 'why don't you tell Dod so, and not bover so about it?'

I got right up, and went about my work, but I was sort o' numb like, as though I had got a blow. You see it was so queer like for Eben to talk like that. I tried to move about lively, and get myself free, but I couldn't, and at last I went into the bedroom, where baby was in bed asleep, and shutting the door, did just tell the Lord all about it; just how tired I was, and how hard everything was going, and how little strength I had, and asked Him to get me through the day the best He could; and when I went back to the kitchen my heart was as light as a feather, and I broke right out singing, as though I was a girl. But I hadn't got to the best of it," she continued, as I moved a little to get my handkerchief. "If you'll believe me, as I was a-taking out the first boiling, he should come in but Rufus, and says he, I didn't have quite the right lumber for the job, so I thought