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The Sabbath School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Second Quarter Lesson 5 May 5 1901

JESUS AND PETER.—John 21: 15-22.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*Lovest thou me?*—John 21: 17.

LEARN BY HEART.

Vs. 15-17; 1 Cor. 13: 8, 13

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time.—Some time in April, A. D. 30, probably soon after the 16th, when he appeared to the disciples, the second Sunday evening.

Place.—On the shore of the Sea of Galilee, probably near Capernaum, where some of the disciples had homes.

JESUS APPEARS TO SEVEN DISCIPLES BY THE SEA OF GALILEE.—Vs. 1-14. We now come to the seventh appearance of Jesus, in all, but the third to the disciples as a company (John 21: 14). When Jesus arose from the tomb he left a message for the disciples to meet him in Galilee (Matt. 28: 7, 16). In the meantime he appeared to them very briefly several times. Accordingly a week after the resurrection, the eleven (Matt. 28: 16) went away into Galilee, and waited for the appointed appearing of Jesus there. While waiting for the appointed time, seven of them go to the Sea of Galilee, the scene of their former labors. They were Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James and John, and two others (v. 2).

Toward night Peter proposes to the others to go a-fishing, and they fall in with his plan. They probably needed to do something for their own support. But not a fish came into their nets. They did not cease their efforts till morning dawned. As they came near the shore, Jesus was standing on the beach. He suggested that they cast their nets on the right side of their boat, and would find. The result was that they returned to the shore with one hundred and fifty-three large fishes.

The result made them think of Jesus. It was now lighter, and John first discerned that the seeming stranger was Jesus himself. The impetuous Peter, waiting for neither boat nor fish, plunged into the water, and hastened to Jesus. On the beach they found Jesus, and taking some of the fish they had just caught, the seven breakfasted with Him.

It was a repetition of the object lesson of two years before. Now they are to learn:

1. Jesus cared for their support, and is able all through their lives to give them a livelihood.

2. That the higher duty glorifies, instead of degrading the lower; that every business in which men can be rightly engaged is a calling and a ministry.

3. That without Jesus they can do nothing.

4. That sometimes they must wait and toil without visible success for a time, but that Jesus sees and knows.

5. That through faith and obedience, guided by him, they may expect success.

THE RESTORATION OF PETER.—Vs. 15-17. Peter's life since his denial must have been full of sorrow and doubt. What will be his position hereafter? Can he go on with his work as an apostle? Can Jesus forgive him? Can his sin be blotted out?

So when they had dined, Jesus saith... *Simon... Lovest thou me more than these?* More than the other disciples. This was a reminder of his boast that "if all shall be offended in thee, I will never be offended." The question itself referred back to the denial. Do you really love me, you who cursed and swore that you never knew me? *Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee.* The now humbled disciple passes over the more, and says, not I love thee more than these, but Thou knowest that I love thee. Failure had taught him humility. *He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.* Feed refers to the spiritual sustenance required by the flock of Christ. Lambs are the young whether in years or in Christian experience. Feeding his lambs would be the proof of Peter's love, and the means of increasing his love, and also the assurance from Jesus of restored confidence and favor.

Note the emphasis Jesus lays upon care for the young, by placing this duty first.

Feed my sheep. Tend or shepherd my sheep; a different word from the one translated feed in the previous verse. It includes watching, feeding, leading, guarding. To rule is a small thing; to shepherd, a great one. *He saith unto him the third time.* The three questions could not but recall the three denials. Peter was grieved. Not only because the third repetition reminded him of his denials, but also because the third putting the question questioned whether Peter was sure he loved. Peter protested, *thou knowest all*

things. Thou hast into the depths of my soul, thou knowest that I love thee.

THREE PROOFS AND TESTS OF PETER'S RESTORATION.—Vs. 18-23. 1. The command of Jesus that Peter should be a shepherd of his flock, and feed the sheep and lambs, proved to Peter that he was restored to his old place and work. Jesus would not appoint a bad shepherd to such a place.

2. Jesus foretold to Peter that he would be faithful unto death, and be a martyr for love of him and his cause. He had failed a few days before, but that day was past; henceforth he would be true even to the death. *When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself,* in preparation for active service. *When... old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands.* In willing submission to his fate. Alluding to the stretching forth of the hands on the transverse beams of the cross, which he did of his own accord. *Another shall gird.* The executioner shall bind him to the cross with cords. *Whither thou wouldst not.* To death. This does not mean that at the last St. Peter will be unwilling to die for his Lord, but that death, and especially a criminal's death, is what men naturally shrink from. *Signifying by what death he should glorify God.* According to Origen, Peter was crucified with his head downwards, either by his own request, because in his humility he was unwilling to suffer the same death as his Lord, or by order of Nero, as matter of wanton and ingenious cruelty.

3. A direct command to be his follower. *Follow me.* Wherever I lead, even though it be to the cross. Follow my teachings, my principles, my example, my labors for the salvation of men, my cross, and my crown. *Peter, turning about.* Apparently, Jesus moved along the shore, and Peter was following him, when he saw John also following on behind them. *Lord... what shall I do?* This was a natural question. Peter knew his own fate, that he should grow old in Christ's service, and at last die on the cross; but his friend, what of him? But here was an opportunity to teach another lesson Peter needed to learn. *If I will that he tarry till I come.* No matter how long I permit John to live, what is that to thee? The disciples misinterpreted it, but Jesus himself left it indefinite (vs. 24-24). *What is that to thee?* All that lies in the hands of God. Different lives will be guided in different ways, as God sees best. Only one duty is yours, *Follow thou me.*

PRACTICAL LESSON.—The one great lesson is the possibility of the restoration of the fallen. However great a sinner a man may be, he need never despair of the divine mercy.

The Forward Look.

I feel just like sitting down and having a good cry over myself, said a young girl, recently, to an older friend. It seems as if I couldn't be what I ought to be. I hate myself! I am sick of myself!

Then why in the world, Ethel, don't you get away from yourself? asked her friend. If you believe in the religion of Christ, why do you cling to the religion of self?

Why, that's exactly what I don't want—the religion of self! cried Ethel, indignantly. I want to be unselfish. You don't understand.

Yes, I do, said her companion, smiling. I've been there myself, and that is how I know about it. I need to keep looking at myself, and fretting over myself, until I woke up one day to realize that so long as my religion centered in the spiritual power of my own personality, it could never be anything but a caricature. My dear child, suppose, when a seed was planted in the ground, it should keep on saying to itself: How small I am, and how unable I am to lift the earth that presses on me! I have no leaf, no stem, no root, as yet. I have no strength. I am not growing. I can't grow. I never shall grow! Do you think it would be a promising seed if it had such ideas! Don't you see that the proper thing for a seed to say, as it lies in the ground, is: I must reach the light. I know it is up there, and I must push toward it. Even if I die, I must get to the sunlight! Then it thinks no more of itself; it thinks only of the sun; and the sun smiles upon its first green leaves, and then on its growing stem, and after a while upon blossom and fruit. The way to grow is to grow toward the sun. Even a plant in a cellar knows that, and sends out long shoots toward the light. Don't you see what I mean?

Ethel nodded assent with the light of a new idea in her face. Go on, she said.

But that's just what I want you to do, said the older woman, to go on. Look forward, look ahead. Look out for others and help them. Look anywhere, everywhere, except backward or at yourself. Then you'll grow, because you can't help it. You will be in the sunlight of

God's smile, in the atmosphere of His will, and flower and fruit will come in His chosen time.

Was she not right? Is there any other way to grow? Is there anything more hindering to growth than to be shut in to self?—Mary Whiting Adams, in *Wellspring*.

The Girl of Fifteen.

Margaret Sangster says, in *Windsome Womanhood*: If a girl admit me to her room I need no other interpreter of her character. Her daintiness, her delicacy, her fondness for art, her little fads and caprices are here revealed. Does she care for athletics, her room tells the story. Her mandolin or banjo, her books on the swining shelf, her desk, her dressing-table explain her, for whatever we live we set our seal, and this unconsciously. The untidy girl keeps her room in chaos and confusion; it looks as if swept by a small cyclone. The orderly and fastidious girl has a place for each belonging and puts it there without effort and without fuss. As for the room itself it may be plain to bareness, or beautifully luxurious, a cell or a shrine, it owes its grace or lack of charm more to its occupant than to its paper and paint, its bed and bureau, its rug and chairs. When a mother cannot give her young daughter a whole room for herself, she should at least contrive for her a little sanctuary, by means of screens and curtains. Some one spot where she may rest the sole of her foot should belong to the young girl, if only a corner under the stairs or a good sized closet with a window and door.

With its delicate papering of rose pink or robin's egg blue, its furnishings in white, its rocking-chair, its table, its sheer muslin draperies, its simple engravings on the wall, its cups and saucers, that she may give her chum a cup of tea or chocolate, the girl's room need cost little in money. All the good things in this world do not depend on gold and silver, nor need we resign our right to beautiful surroundings because we must keep a strict rein upon expenditure and have an eye to ways and means. Unless a young woman learns early to make the most of her little in hand she will never be successful when she has a large sum in her stewardship.

Win the Young.

A bishop once remarked, if the church neglects the children, the Devil will not. There is much truth there, for the Devil neglects not for a single minute. Do not be afraid to bring the children into the societies of your church while they are young.

When are they old enough? When they are old enough to know right from wrong. There are 10,000 boys in the reform schools of this country under 17 years of age. Nearly all the criminals of this country are under 20. The children should be brought in before they are 15 years of age. They must be trained of course, but bring them in.

Edwards was only 11 when he was converted. Wesley and Luther were about the same age, and Spurgeon was 14. You cannot tell what the boy may become. Do not be afraid to work for him. The junior departments are the greatest schools for the making of righteous, manly citizens this country possesses.

Do not wait until the boy has got into the gutter before you can help him, but reach out for him now. Spurgeon said that in all his ministry he never had to discipline a single member who was taken in under 12 years of age. The children understand vastly more than you think. Never give a boy up, no matter how bad you may think him. The wild boys often make the best men.

Chinese Boys Have Many Names.

Since the troubles between China and the other nations began, the boys and girls of America have learned much about the children of the great empire of the yellow man in Asia. Few, however, it is probable, have solved the question of Chinese names—a puzzle that confronts every city boy or girl every time he or she goes by the Chinese laundry on the way to school. But to the Chinese boy or girl it is doubtless all simple enough. Take the name of Li Hung Chang, for instance—the best-known Chinaman living to-day. Any Chinese boy or girl would say it was easy enough. Li is his family name and means Plum. The only difference between Li Hung Chang's name and the name of Mr. Plum, who may live in your town, is that the great Chinese diplomat puts his last name first, and Mr. Plum, of America, puts it last, where, you should say, any man's last name ought to be.

The American boy or girl does pretty well these days if he or she is given more than three names, as Mary Ellen Jones or Charles Wil-

liam Brown. Some of them are presented with only two, while once in a while some of us are given four. But the Chinaman has any number before he grows up. As a baby he receives his "milk" name. Then, when he enters school his "school" name, and when he is grown his title or "life" name.—Chicago Record.

A Danger to Children.

A man, not a church member, but a parent, lately remarked that he used to dance and play cards but he did not intend to allow his children to do so; and then asked, How can I train them to keep away from these evils when church members about them patronize them? This is a question that others, similarly situated, are asking.

It used to be that these worldly amusements were largely discounted by those who claimed to be Christians, but now there is little or no distinction among church members and worldlings in respect to them. Religion suffers in consequence. Many persons are injured by the dance and card table in body, purse, character, principle and life, while those who profess the Christian religion and engage in them prove stumbling-blocks to those who from past experience, see harm in them, and who want to guard their children from damage through them.

Here is ground for thought and prayer on the part of all who desire to live so as to do the most good and the least injury in society.—Presbyterian.

The Woman and Her Clothes.

When a woman devotes one-half of her life to thoughts of dress she absolutely takes the whole question out of its proper relation to her life, and belittles the talents which God gave her for far greater things, writes Edward Bok, in reply to a woman correspondent, in the April Ladies' Home Journal. It is, indeed, a grave question whether she does not debase herself. Nor will she be well-dressed: the chances are far greater that she will be overdressed. No woman who has any regard for what is worth while in this world, and for what will bring her the surest and fullest happiness in the long run will so dissipate her energies and vitality. The right to dress prettily and becomingly belongs to every woman. It is her birthright, and her duty. A disregard of dress, or the affectation of queer or freakish dressing, does not belong to a normal woman. But to make dress one of the vital things of life is carrying it beyond the ridiculous point and close to the criminal. And it is just this rightful adjustment of the things in life which simplicity does for us. It gives a rightful place and a rightful value to each. It doesn't belittle the one or distort the other.

Child Culture.

Child culture depends upon child character. We must know what a child is before we can determine what the child is to be. A study of the earthliness of the little children is the first condition of their successful development in the direction of heavenliness. The Master said, Ye must be born again. That implies being born once as a natural man. For that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual.—New York Observer.

Willie was ashamed. He hung his head and blushed. A rude boy had laughed at him and said, Oh, you're a church member! At night Willie's mother told him some stories about Paul, and he said, I like him; he was brave. Then his mother opened the Bible and read what Paul wrote about not being ashamed of the Gospel. I am sorry I was ashamed, said Willie. I will hold up my head next time as bravely as Paul did.

Piety of childhood and godliness of old age are blood relations. No life ends right that does not end with God. The successful man is governed by well defined and deep convictions.

Attachment to Christ is the only secret of detachment from the world.

Mr. Thomas Ballard, Syracuse, N. Y., writes: "I have been afflicted for nearly a year with that most-to-be dreaded disease Dyspepsia, and at times worn out with pain and loss of sleep, and after trying almost everything recommended, I tried one box of Parolee's Vegetable Pills. I am now nearly well, and believe they will cure me. I would not be without them for any money."

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