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INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Third Quarter-Lesson X. — Sept. 6.

THE TRUE CHILDREN OF GOD.—John 8:31-47.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God.*—John 1:12.

THE TEST AND MEANS OF DISCIPLESHIP.—Ver. 31. *Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him. Those whom Jesus addressed as believing on him, included persons of all degrees of faith, from a mere intellectual acceptance of his words to a full reception of him in the heart. If ye continue in my word. Continue to receive it, to study it, to live by it. My word. The doctrines I teach, the commands I give. Then are ye my disciples indeed. True followers and learners, children and heirs of God. A disciple of Jesus is one who takes him for teacher and master. Jesus himself studies and guides the disciple. The lessons to be learned are to know Christ's will, and to become like him in character. Our whole life is the term time. The school-books are the Bible and the discipline of life. To become a member of Christ's school, to abide there and learn of him, is to be a Christian. Abiding in the Word of Christ is not only the test of discipleship, but is the means of progress and growth as disciples.*

THE PRIVILEGE OF DISCIPLESHIP; THE GLORIOUS LIBERTY OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD.—Vers. 32-36. *And ye shall know the truth. This will be the result of continuing in Christ's word. They shall see things as they are. They shall have the knowledge which comes from experience. And the truth shall make you free. Free from the bondage of ignorance, error, and sin. We be Abraham's seed. And therefore endowed with all the privileges of Israelites. And were never in bondage to any man. They enjoyed individual freedom. Though under the dominion of Rome as a dependent state, they never bent the knee before Roman Emperor. How sayest thou. They totally misunderstood the slavery and freedom to which Jesus referred. Jesus answered. Explaining his meaning. Whosoever committeth sin. The expression means not simply to commit single, isolated, acts of sin, but to live a life of sin. The reference is to the sins which flow from a sinful heart. Is the servant of sin. The bond-servant. His evil nature and bad habits hold dominion over him, and compel him to do that which he knows is wrong. The worst tyrant a man can serve is his own selfish heart. The servant. Any bond-servant. Abideth not in the house (household) forever. I believe the reference to be to Hagar and Ishmael, and Isaac: the bond and free. They had spoken of themselves as the seed of Abraham. The Lord shows them that there may be of that seed two kinds, the son, properly so called, and the slave. The latter does not abide in the house forever; it is not his right nor his position. And these Jews might be of the seed of Abraham, and yet, not be his spiritual children. But the Son. Not the Son of God, but any son. Abideth ever. If they were really the children of Abraham, spiritual children, with his character, his faith, then they would remain in the kingdom of God. So those who are sinners, though they profess to be in the kingdom, cannot remain there. But true disciples abide there forever.*

A SECOND TEST, AND A SECOND PRIVILEGE. "IF CHILDREN, THEN HEIRS."—Vers. 37-47. *I know that ye are Abraham's seed. According to the flesh. But ye. The Jewish nation of which they were a part. Seek to kill me. As in the last lesson. Because my word hath no place. You do not allow my word of truth to enter your hearts and lives. The argument is that they were not true children of Abraham, because they were not like Abraham in character and actions. I speak that which I have seen with my father. He reports the truths he brought with him from heaven. If you were really God's children through Abraham, you would love and receive these truths. Ye do that which ye have seen with (better, heard from) your father. Satan (ver. 44). The children of Satan are instructed or inspired by him. We are children of that whose spirit fills and actuates us. If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. What you do is the test and proof of your parentage. But now ye seek to kill me, a man (a person) that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God. This did not Abraham. For he accepted the truth, and obeyed it. Ye do the deeds of your father. He still keeps them to the point. Then said they to him. The line of thought seems to be this,*

just as we are literally Abraham's true seed, so are we spiritually. We be not born of fornication. We do not owe our position to idolatrous descent of Jehovah. Our spiritual descent is as pure as our historical descent. If thou art speaking of spiritual parentage, "we have one Father, even God." If God were your Father, you would love me. It was impossible to love God and not love the same qualities in another. Why do ye not understand my speech. Why were they continually misunderstanding, misinterpreting what he was saying? Because ye cannot hear. They have their whole character to change before they can understand spiritual truths. The words he spake were hateful to them. Hear my word. So long as they refused to accept of what was true, so long they could not recognize Christ's words as from God. Ye are of (from) your father the devil. Because they are like him, serve him. Two respects in which they imitate him are named. He was a murderer from the beginning. He endeavored to seduce into disobedience, and so to destroy, the human race. Abode not (stood not) in the truth. Referring perhaps to the fall of the devil from being an angel of light. Besides his first act toward the human race was a falsehood, and he has been deceiving ever since. There is no truth in him. The fountain and spring of his life is falsehood. The father of it. Of lying, producing this false nature in others. Because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. They wanted to be undisturbed in their errors. Which of you convinceth me of sin? Rather, convicteth me; to convict a man is to prove him guilty. By this question he asserts, by implication, his sinlessness; he defies his opponents to point out a single sin in his life, a single flaw in his character. And they were speechless before his incomparable character. If I say the truth, why do ye not believe? The next verse explains the reason. He that is of God. As you say you are. Heareth God's words. So as to assent to and obey. Ye therefore hear them not because ye are not of God. Your own conduct proves that you do not belong to God.

PRACTICAL HINTS

We can know whether we are true disciples of Christ, by patient continuance in studying and obeying his word.

We may become better disciples by continually abiding in the word of God.

Christians are the scholars of Christ, learning his lessons.

It is an incomparable blessing to have such a teacher.

Christ's disciples know the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Freedom can only come through the truth, the truth seen, loved and obeyed.

Sin and error always enslave. The sinner is the slave of sin. He is governed by tyrant habits, passions, desires, fears. Satan deceives men in making them think that sin is the way of freedom.

THE BARBARISM OF DRINK.—What a curse is the curse of drunkenness! I heard of a man yesterday that illustrates the horribleness of damning drink. The pastor went to call at a house. He rang the front door-bell. It was not answered. He tried the knob on the front door, but the door did not open. Presently a child came from the back entrance. "We cannot open the front door to-day," she said. "Mamma would like you to come around to the back door." He obeyed. He found "mamma" over a wash-tub, washing with her right hand, holding her baby in her left hand. The hand that she was using in washing had one finger done up. "What is the matter with your finger, Mrs. Sorrowful?" At first she hesitated to answer, but by degrees the pastor learned that her husband in his drunken rage had bitten the finger savagely. Where is your husband to-day? also the pastor asked. The little child answered, "He is lying on the floor in the front hall up against the door. Papa is sick to-day." Oh, what a curse is this curse!

At the Dominion W. C. T. U. convention a lovely bouquet of roses was sent Miss Willard, with a touching note. It says: The loss of husband and two children has brought me to their loving Saviour; this is more than all the world to me. I have one boy in his eighteenth year, and how earnestly I pray that he may be kept from the terrible curse, intemperance! I had him hear you, and he was so wonderfully taken with your beautiful words, I am sure they will do him good in the years that are before him." This wise mother is a colored woman, and controls the ice trade of St. John, N. B.

would be of no help to him;—he too feels he is treading the wine-press alone, and he is disappointed, chagrined, vexed, bitter, because there is no one to be with him in his agony, no one to feel for him, no one to speak a word of cheer, no one to help.

Then there is the loneliness of the sick-chamber and the death-bed, and we have all to be alone there. No one can enter for us or with us into the awful shadows of death. We have to die for ourselves, wade out into the deep waters of the Jordan alone. And how much is the bravest soul and truest Christian often put to it! What a sore struggle with the grim foe! You hear his sad wail in the night as he feels the loneliness and abandonment of his situation: "I have trodden the wine-press alone!"

But fear not, O child of God. To every lone one the Great Lone One has this to say, and there is comfort in His words: "I have been where you are; I have trodden the wine-press alone. I have been far into, and right through to the other side of, the darkness of death and the grave; and now you can go where I have been, for my feet have trodden out a way for you. Fear not. Fear not the foe. Fear not the trials of life. Fear not the last great struggle even. Fear not, for I have overcome; the way is clear."

The Outer and Inner Life.

There can be no vigorous outer life without a corresponding inner life. Whoever, trusting to past experiences, ventures to meet the future in their name, will find himself deceived. To-morrow cannot be fed with the food of to-day. The manna of old did not keep over night; each morning it must be gathered afresh. And so with our soul's subsistence. "Give us this day our daily bread" is the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples to pray. He never lived on the past. Crowned and glorified by his Father at his baptism, that coronation of the Spirit did not suffice to the end. He was always betaking himself to his Divine Helper, frequently spending whole nights in prayer, perpetually referring to his Father's authority and assistance. Accordingly, he applies the same principle to his followers: "As the Father has sent me, so send I you"; not on a detached and lonely errand to which one impulse from him was sufficient, but on a career which must be sustained by his continuous help. "Without Me ye can do nothing." This was the secret of John's spirituality: he leaned on Jesus' bosom, the disciple whom he loved. This was the principle of Paul's heroism: "Not I live, but Christ liveth in me."

This gave to Wycliffe the secret of his great success: "I am but a pen in my Lord's hand." This was the clue to Luther's glorious prowess: "I have so much to do to-day I must spend at least two hours in prayer this morning." This was the clue to Havelock's wonderful blending of military and religious life: a season of private devotion at the beginning of every day, no matter how busy and bloody his soldier work on the campaign. This explained Jonathan Edwards' heavenly-mindedness: he was wont to go apart into the wilderness to be alone with the Divine Majesty. All the mighty men of the Church are men of private prayer, an intense inner life of spirituality and divine communion, which is the basis, or rather the fountain-head, of the outer public success.—Rev. C. J. Baldwin.

The Saloon and the Home.

One of the principal allies of the saloon is the uncomfortable home. We do not fall in with those who imagine that when poverty is abolished vice will also disappear; we are not sure that the comfortable classes do not produce as many drunkards in proportion as the poorer ones, although it is natural that the drinker should often gravitate from comfort to penury, and so make the poor seem worse than they are. Still it cannot be denied that there are as many homes which are no homes at all, and that there are many young men who can find a social life and a comfortable lounging place nowhere but at the tavern. The more crowded the population you are not surprised to find four grogshops at one crossing. What is the remedy? One is to supply suitable lounging places free from drink. In winter these must be indoors, and the duty of the Christian public is plain.

Every church should see to it that the social life of its poorer people is duly provided for. But there is an important thing which the community must do as a whole, and that is to supply public parks, squares and playgrounds within the reach of every dwelling, and sufficient rest and shelter to permit of their being enjoyed by the people and sufficient police and light to prevent their being misused as the night advances. As the city grows it should be a first question with those who have the care of it what space shall we secure for this purpose, and these should be set apart before the growth of population makes the cost of purchasing them too great.—Montreal Witness.

Of all the combats, the sorest is to conquer ourselves, and of all cares, the chiefest should be to wax strong against vice.