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The Sabbath-School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

[FROM PELOUBET'S NOTES.]

Second Quarter.—Lesson 7.—May 16.
THE NOBLEMAN'S SON.—JOHN IV. 43-54.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way, thy son liveth.—JOHN IV. 50.

THE ARRIVAL OF JESUS IN GALILEE.—Vers. 43-46. Now after two days. The two days spent in Sychar. And went into Galilee.

The northern of the three provinces of Palestine. In the time of Christ it was one of the finest and most fertile portions of the earth. According to Josephus, it contained 204 cities and villages, the smallest of which contained above 15,000 inhabitants. The population must have been two or three millions. The Galileans were a moral, intelligent, industrious, and enterprising people, possessed of vigorous minds and healthy bodies.

For Jesus himself testified that a prophet hath no honor in his own country. This is a well-known difficulty. Meyer seems very near the truth when he explains thus: Jesus, knowing well that a prophet has no honor in his own country, began by gaining honor for himself beyond it, at Jerusalem (ver. 45); and so it was that he now returned to Galilee with the reputation of a prophet, which gave him access to hearts in his own country.

The Galileans received him, with respect and reverence, but not necessarily with true faith in him as the Saviour. Having seen all the things (the things should be omitted) that he did at Jerusalem at the feast. The "feast" is no doubt the Passover. For they also, etc., i. e., the Galileans were accustomed to attend the feasts at Jerusalem.

So Jesus came again into Cana. Because, having once been welcomed there as a friend or relative, by the miracle which showed forth his glory, he would now be likely to receive a favorable hearing and make more disciples.

HEALING OF THE NOBLEMAN'S SON. Vers. 46-50. And there was a certain nobleman. Officer in the service of the king. Whose son was sick at Capernaum, on the north-west shore of the Sea of Galilee. The distance of Capernaum from Cana was from 20 to 25 miles. The report of Christ's return to Galilee had spread over this wide area.

When he heard that Jesus was come. . . he went unto him. Having heard of his miracles, he saw hope of healing for his child. He was not yet a believer in him as the Messiah, but had that beginning of faith which led him to go to him in his need. Besought him that he would come down and heal his son. He seemed to feel that Jesus could heal him only by going to him.

Except ye see signs and wonders. What he taught was (1) that the faith, having its origin and strength in these external signs, was an inferior kind of faith, having less influence on the life and character; while (2) that faith that hungered and thirsted after righteousness, that felt that the teachings of Jesus were divine because they feed the soul and met its spiritual needs, was the higher and better faith.

His only reply was to repeat his request.—Sir, come down ere my child die. Here was an intense earnestness that showed (1) the depth of a father's affliction, (2) that he had made the request, not because he wished to see a sign, but because he believed that Jesus could heal his son.

Go thy way; thy son liveth. Here is the reward of his faith, and the means to larger faith. Liveth expresses his recovery to health. He will not die, but is to live. He will not come to heal the child; there is no need that he should do so; the child is already whole. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken. Here was a step higher in his faith. He believed the word of Jesus. He had come nearer the true faith, which is a personal trust in the Lord Jesus. And he went his way. He left Jesus, and either started immediately for home, or went somewhere for the night, and left for home the next morning.

THE REWARD OF FAITH.—Vers. 51-54. As he was going down (from Cana to Capernaum), his servants met him. When more than half his journey was completed, he met the servants, who had started the same morning to bring him the glad news that "yesterday at the seventh hour the fever had left" the child. Thy son liveth. There must have been not only a sudden recovery, but several hours of the night in which to test its reality, before they would take pains to send messengers to prevent the man from bringing Jesus. For they knew nothing of the part Jesus had in the cure. Yesterday at the seventh hour, i. e., at seven o'clock in the evening. The fever left him. So the father knew that it was at the same hour. And, therefore, that the healing was the work of Jesus, and not any natural recovery. And himself believed, and his whole house.

Household, family. He believed what? Believed on Jesus as his Saviour. Before, he had believed about him; now, he believed on him. They all became disciples.

We should take our children, our sick, our burdens and cares to the Lord Jesus.

God listens to our prayers in behalf of others, and grants them blessings on our faith.

He that has faith will act upon that faith, and through acting upon it the faith will be increased.

Faith in Jesus is never without its reward. Jesus is just as able to heal the sick now as he was 1800 years ago; and he will do it whenever it is best, and in his own way. All means are his, and to use means is one way of trusting him. But if the temporal blessing is not given, it will be only because great spiritual blessings can come only by withholding what we desire.

The importance of parents becoming Christians for the sake of their influence in leading their children to Christ. This is one of the strongest motives for a true and earnest Christian life.

TEACHING CHILDREN TO PRAY.

BY JEAN KINCAID.

While visiting, not long ago, at the home of a school friend, it was extremely interesting for me to observe her management of her small daughter Helen, a child of nearly five years. The best hours of the morning are none too good, my friend thinks, for the mental and spiritual instruction of the little lady.

I was sitting down to some letter-writing one morning after breakfast, when little Helen interrupted me with—

"Here, you come too, auntie," pulling me along by my hand in her eagerness.

"Come where, dear?"

"Come to meeting. Here's your book."

She had a small prayer-book under her arm, and insisted upon giving me a large hymnal.

"Mamma and I have a meeting ev'ry morning and ev'ry night, you know, and you must come too," she said.

I followed her wondering. My friend smiled, but did not explain, and we seated ourselves by her side. Helen cuddled down between us on the sofa, gave a hand to each, and listened with grave interest and appreciation while her mother read a psalm. There happened to be several verses in this psalm that Helen had been taught to repeat from memory. She seemed pleased to meet these again, and recited them after they were read. Then we all knelt and repeated "Our Father," followed by the "Gloria" and a small petition constructed especially for Helen's use. "God bless auntie too," said the sweet voice, in conclusion, and then the little figure sprang up again, as fresh as a flower, as gay as a bird, and all ready for mamma to "play" school with her.

Most mothers, probably, teach their children to "say their prayers," but how many are there who positively share in the devotions of their little ones, and teach them by the example of that participation the value of prayer to old as well as young?

I could not help contrasting in my own mind the scene in my friend's home with another which took place in the house of an acquaintance where I was making a call. Here, too, was a small daughter, of the same age as the other, a remarkably beautiful child, but of that unpleasant description usually known as "sharp." She was monopolizing the greater part of the conversation when her mother said:

"Isabel, say your little prayer for the lady."

The child did not flinch nor hesitate, but rattled off the required formula without even winking.

"Isn't that 'cute'?" asked the fond mother, in admiring accents, at its conclusion.

I confess with shame that I was pusillanimous enough to murmur something to the effect that it "sounded very pretty," and the child, who had been waiting for my answer, walked away, with a smile of satisfied vanity. But my whole soul rose in revolt against the sacrifice of the thing, and I longed to cry out, "Oh, mother, mother, can't you see that you are destroying in your child the tiny germ of reverence for holy things which she naturally possesses? Can you not see the inevitable result and natural consequence of your course?"

Mothers, take your children with you in prayer to God for the enlightenment and help which they so sorely need. Pray together.

And you, mothers of children who are growing into manhood and womanhood, and will soon buckle on the armor for their own fight in the world, is the memory of your prayers with them and for them to be a shield and a safeguard against the darts of the Evil one?—Christian Union.

THE COLORED SEXTON.

The sexton of a Baptist church in a large Western city was a good colored brother, who rarely took part in the social religious meetings of the society; but when he did all present held their breath, for it was well known that some one was to be "hit on the head," and great amusement was in store for the others.

On this particular occasion the subject of the prayer-meeting was "Christian Humility." Mr. Bascom, one of the wealthiest church-members, while leaning on his gold-headed cane and toying with his elegant watch-chain, concluded his remarks, with great affectation of humility, by saying: "If I ever should be so favored as to reach heaven at all, it seems to me that a place in the most remote section, the most obscure corner, of that blissful region will be infinitely more than I deserve. And when the call comes to me 'to go up higher,' it seems to me I shall feel like putting my hand upon my mouth and my mouth in the dust, and crying out, 'Unclean! unclean!'"

When he was seated, the colored brother rose in the rear of the room, and slowly advancing, faced the audience, and thus addressed them: "Bruders an' sisters, when I hears de angel Gabri' blow de trumpet a-callin' me home, it 'pears to me I'll be so powerful glad I'll just call out, 'Ho! on dar, Gabri'; I hears de trumpet, an' I's comin' mighty quick!' An' it 'pears to me I'll be so bustin' full of joy I'll jest go shoutin', skippin', leapin' right up to de front ob de throne as fast as I kin git dar. An' dar I'll stan' wid de white robes on, a-wavin' de palm branches, an, a-shoutin' 'Glory! glory! glory! glory to the Lamb dat was slain!' For what do de Scriptures say? 'Who are dese in white robes?' 'Dey what came up through great tribulations.' Down here de black skin an' de great tribulations; up dar de white robe an' de joy for evermore. Now my brudders an' sisters, what do de Scriptures say agin? Dey say, 'What though dey be black as ink' (or something to that effect), 'dey shall be whiter dan snow.' An' it 'pears I'll be so powerful happy up dar dat I'd like to shake han's wid all my brudders an' sisters, without distinction ob age, color, or previous condition ob servitude—good many on 'em I hain't shook no han' win here—but it 'pears to me I'll be so occopied a-wavin', an' a-praisin', an' a-shoutin' hallelujah! hallelujah! hallelujah! close up on de right side ob de Lamb, that I won't hab no time to go peekin' roun' de dark corners ob heaven to find Bruders Bascom."—Lynn Burdette, in Editor's Drawer, Harper's Magazine.

DON'T WASTE VITAL ENERGY.

The most vigorous persons do not have too much vital energy. People generally inherit a lack, or at least find that much vital energy has been permanently lost in their childhood or youth, through the ignorance or carelessness of their parents. Often it is impaired by wrong indulgences in early manhood. The endeavor with all persons should be to husband what is left, be it much or little. Therefore:

1. Don't do anything in a hurry.
2. Don't work too many hours a day, whether it be farm work, shop work, study work, or house work.
3. Don't abridge sleep. Get the full eight hours of it, and that, too, in a ventilated and sun-purified room.
4. Don't eat what is indigestible, nor too much of anything, and let good cheer rule the hour.
5. Don't fret yourself or anybody else, nor indulge in the blues, nor burst into fits of passion.
6. Don't be too much elated with good luck, nor disheartened by bad. Positively—be self-controlled, calm and brave. Let your brain have all the rest it needs. Treat your stomach right. Keep a good conscience, and have a cheerful trust in God for all things and both worlds.

A REMARKABLE CONFESSION.

It is a remarkable confession, but it was made by a well-known theatrical manager in New York. He said, as reported in the Herald, "I think that the stage to-day is a greater evil than any other institution we have. Nothing else does so much harm to the young men and young women of this city." He justified this statement by citing the fact that never have the indelicacies of the stage—we use a mild word—been so great as now. This manager accounted for this condition of things by the fact that people go to the theatre to keep from thinking. "People who live in fashionable flats and brown stone fronts," he said, "who are right on the ragged edge of their finances and worried to death over business troubles, don't want to go to the theatre to think; they want to be exhilarated and forget their troubles, as a man drinks immoderately to drown care."

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