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The Sabbath-School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Third Quarter—Lesson VI—August 8

WORKING AND WAITING FOR CHRIST.—I. Thessalonians 4: 9-5: 2.

Read I Thessalonians, Chapters 4 and 5.

Commit Verses 16-18.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself: that where I am, there ye may be also.*—JOHN 14: 3.

THE HEAVENLY LIFE ON EARTH.—Vs. 9-12. In this epistle Paul praises this church. They were far from perfect; he has to warn, and exhort, and entreat them. But he first praises. He finds in them all the good there is, commends and encourages it. He says, "This is good, now abound more and more." PURITY.—Vs. 1-8. "God hath not called us to uncleanness, but to holiness." The unchaste act or thought is an affront to the Holy Ghost.

BROTHERLY LOVE.—V. 9. *As touching brotherly love.* In all its manifestations, of help, sympathy, kindly feeling, unity of feeling and work. *Ye need not that I should write unto you, because your conduct shows that ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.* The teaching and guidance of the Holy Spirit fill your souls with a nature inclined to love. *And... ye do it, not only toward your own familiar church, but toward all the brethren which are in Macedonia.* They had the broad spirit of love which inspires home missions, and feeble churches, and reaches out to all classes and races.

GROWTH IN GRACE.—V. 10. *We beseech you... that ye increase (abound) more and more.* It is in the nature of a living virtue to grow larger, stronger, more fruitful. That which does not grow is dead. The more active love is, the more it seeks its task to enlarge. Christians are born children, with room to grow. They do not spring into complete sainthood at once.

A TRANQUIL SPIRIT.—V. 11. *That ye study to be quiet.* That you have not a restless desire for great things, for notoriety.

HONEST DAILY LABOR.—*Do your own business.* See to it that your own daily labor tasks are well done. "The daily life of toil... does not rob us of the Christian life, it really puts it within our reach."

AN HONORABLE DAILY LIFE.—V. 12. *That ye may walk honestly.* The danger of the Thessalonian Christians was that they were inclined to wait for the coming of the Lord in idleness, or merely religious meetings, instead of being found at their daily duties. The true Christian life does not consist in merely doing right, but in doing it honorably, in the beauty of holiness.

A SPIRIT OF INDEPENDENCE.—*That ye may have lack of nothing.* The sufficiency which comes from diligence in business and faithfulness in daily work is a great power. It aids true manhood; it gives power of helping others; it prevents servility of spirit.

THE COMING AGAIN OF OUR LORD.—Vs. 13-18; 5: 1, 2. *But I would not have you to be ignorant.* The life beyond is very close to the life here. Concerning them which are asleep. The Christian word for the death of the Christian, implying, (1) continued existence; (2) absence from the activities and intercourse of this life; (3) an awakening of the same persons; (4) not unconscious of the soul in the other world. *That ye sorrow not.* They were to maintain an attitude of cheerfulness, vigilance, and hope. *Even as others which have no hope.* The Gentiles, "in spite of dim hopes and splendid guesses, looked on the world beyond the grave as being at best 'a dolorous gloom.' For if we believe, as we assuredly do, that Jesus died, just as really as we must die, and rose again, proving that death did not end all, that the soul does not die with the body, and that he was the promised Messiah, the Son of God. Then also which sleep in Jesus. Belong to him, and have received his promise of eternal life. Will God bring with him. From the grave to his home on high. We say unto you by the word of the Lord. It was no guess or splendid hope of his own, but the word of Christ himself. That Paul had many special revelations made to him, we know from 2 Corinthians 12: 4. Compare also Galatians 1: 3; 1 Corinthians 11: 23; 15: 3. *We which are alive.* This does not necessarily imply that he expected to be alive when Christ came. The time of that coming was uncertain, and he knew he might die at any moment. The "we" is simply an identifying himself with the Christian community; "we Christians," those of "us" who shall be alive at that time. There would be two classes of Christians at the coming of the Lord: one, of those living at the time; the other, of those who had died previously. *Shall not pre-*

vent. Old English for peace, come in advance of them which are asleep. Those who have previously died in Christ. We shall not anticipate those who have fallen asleep, i. e., shall not arrive more quickly to communion with Christ. *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with the voice of the archangel.* The chief of all angels would repeat the summons. *The trumpet (or trumpet) of God.* It would be no minor occasion, but the summons would come officially from the King of kings. *The dead in Christ.* Those who die believing in Christ, belonging to Christ, and who have been "asleep in Jesus." *Shall rise first.* First the dead in Christ shall rise, then we who are living shall be caught up. *Then, immediately after the resurrection of those in Christ. We which are alive and remain (survive) shall be caught up (the great change from natural to spiritual bodies having first suddenly taken place).* "Caught" implies a sudden, irresistible force; it signifies not into, but amid clouds, surrounding and upbearing. *So shall we ever be with the Lord.* See him, feel his presence. Christ will be seen and known as angels know one another in heaven. There will be a nearness of love and sympathy beyond all we have known before. We shall be in his kingdom where no evils come, instead of in this life of mingled good and evil. *Wherefore comfort one another.* The comfort is in the certainty of the coming of the Lord, and the triumph of his religion. In the certainty of a heavenly home with Christ, a life of joy after death. In the certainty of meeting again those who have gone before. *But of the times and the seasons connected with the coming of the Lord. Ye have no need.* Because of the teaching of Christ, which they knew. *The day of the Lord, i. e., the day of the Lord's coming.* This includes not only his coming at the end of the world, but all the special manifestations of that coming, as at the day of death and the destruction of Jerusalem. *Cometh as a thief in the night.* At unexpected times, unrecognized till it has already come.

PRACTICAL HINTS.

The fact of Christ's coming and of his triumphant reign was certain. Christians lived and labored in the assurance of victory and glory.

The coming again of Christ was like the coming of summer after a long winter. It does not come all at once in its fulness, but by degrees, mostly so imperceptibly that no one can tell by mere observation the times and seasons of its coming. So come, and is to come, the great dispensation of the kingdom of Christ. The times beginning at Christ's death and ending with the destruction of Jerusalem witness a real second coming of the Son of man. That this is so is made as clear as words can well make it by the declarations of Christ himself. It is not the end, not the full shining of its glory. There will be a great final coming of Christ at the time of the judgment and resurrection, referred to in our lesson, in Revelations 20: 7 to 22: 5; and Matthew 25.

From the very nature of the case, the disciples could not know the times or seasons. But the need of watching and of faithful living, the comfort of hope, and the strength to endure to them, and comes to us all, at all times.

The Sabbath in Nineteenth-Century Cities.

From an address at Montreal, April 18, by Rev. W. B. Crafts, Superintendent of the Reform Bureau, Washington, D. C.

We are told that "the complicated civilization of the nineteenth century" requires that Sabbath observance and Sabbath laws should be relaxed. Nay, this is a new reason why they should be maintained and strengthened. Did Adam, to whom the Sabbath law of work and rest was given before the fall—did he, who knew nothing of "cut-throat competition," and "soulless corporations," and "hard masters," and a wearying "tricks of trade," need a Sabbath law more than we do to-day, when sin has put its curse into the Edenic blessing of labor? At Sinai, where the Sabbath law was proclaimed, did those Hebrew herders, moving on at three miles an hour, need a law to protect them against the overstrain more than the engineers of to-day, who drive their iron dragons a mile a minute, with hand on the throttle eye on the track, every power alert? Did those dozen farmers from whose ploughing-bee Elisha was called to be a prophet—I have seen in that region a modern ploughing-bee of eighteen—did those farmers, gossiping together as they kept step with their slow oxen, need a Sabbath law more than the motor man who harnesses the lightning to his electric car, and drives through crowded city streets, where a moment's inattention may cause the loss of a pedestrian's life and his own position?

Did the farm of Boaz, where the friendly co-operation of capital and labor left nothing to be desired—did that and other such places of that age require a Sabbath law for protection of servants more than it is required by the millions of employees to-day, whose master is "neither man nor woman, neither brute nor human," but the ghoul with a soul we call corporation? Did Dorcas, sitting out in the sunlight beside her cottage, daff in hand, leisurely spinning and weaving the coats and garments for the little orphans that played at her feet—did she require the protection of a Sabbath law more than the young girl of fourteen in a modern mill working a dozen hours per day in the close air and clanging noise, under a hard master?

Turning to the more recent times when the foundations of this republic were laid on the Bible, the Sabbath being assigned a prominent place among American institutions, did our fathers, when they lived half a mile apart, curtained at night with the soft velvet of silence, need a day of protected quiet more than their sons in the tenements of to-day, where going to bed at night is often like the "charge of the light brigade"—noises in the flat above, noises in the flat at the right, noises in the flat at the left, noise in the flat below; the high fiddle-diddle of a midnight dance on the floor overhead; the crash of a family jar just beyond the wall on the right; a piano through the wall on the left making love on that side and hate on this side at midnight; while the flat below does its share in the torture by an early start on a fishing excursion to murder sleep in the morning?

When nearly all the work was in the open air, in forest and field, was there more need to protect the toilers' right to one day's release from labor, than now, when many thousands work at night and in the mine, and thousands more in stifling shops? Is there more excuse for keeping thousands toiling on the Sunday mail now, when a letter is carried from New York to San Francisco in five days, than in our fathers' days, when such a journey took five months? Was there less excuse for our fathers to issue Sunday papers when news crossed the Atlantic in two months, than there is for us when the news of Europe reaches us by telegraph the day before it happens?

Every change in the world since the Sabbath was instituted has been a new reason why God's Sabbath laws and ours should not be changed. They came to the kingdom for such a time as this. More than ever before, we should see to it that neither ourselves nor others cause any Sunday work except of necessity or mercy.

A Friend of the Helpless.

An exchange tells the following interesting story of a dog's kindness: "The other evening, in New York, a policeman was strolling along one of the upper West Side streets not far from a stone-yard. Presently a white bulldog ran toward the policeman, barking as if for aid. The policeman was quite struck with the way in which the dog would give his bark, and then bound back into the yard. He decided at last that he would see what the dog was trying to do. He followed him into the yard and on the ground was a little white bundle. The policeman struck a match, and the little white bundle proved to be a baby. The policeman picked it up, almost afraid that the dog would bite him; but instead, he wagged his tail, and gave evidence of being quite pleased at the policeman's act. The dog trotted along by the side of the policeman until the latter went into the station-house. When the policeman went into the station-house, the dog followed him, seemingly listened to what he said, and when the door was opened, walked out. Evidently, the little baby was a stranger to the dog. He had found it in the lonely place, and then done what he could to have the baby cared for. The policeman says that this is just a common street dog—probably one of the kind that naughty boys would think it great fun to tease, and to tie a tin pal to his tail and send him frightened down the street. But this dog was a real hero, and showed himself much more human than the boys who delight to torment him."

How Jane Struggled with Grammar.

Little Jane had been repeatedly reproved for doing violence to the moods and tenses of the verb "to be." She would say, "I be" instead of "I am"; and for a time it seemed as if no one could prevent it. Finally, Aunt Kate made a rule not to answer an incorrect question, but to wait until it was corrected.

One day the two sat together, Aunt Kate busy with embroidery

and little Jane over her dolls. Presently doll-society became tedious, and the child's attention was directed to the embroidery-frame.

"Aunt Kate," said she, "please tell me what that is going to be."

But Aunt Kate was counting, and did not answer.

Fatal word "be"! It was her old enemy, and to it alone could the child ascribe the silence that followed.

"Aunt Kate," she persisted, with an honest attempt to correct her mistake, please tell me what this is going to am."

Aunt Kate sat silently counting, though her lips curled with amuse-ment.

Jane sighed, but made another patient effort:

"Will you please tell me what this is going to be?"

Aunt Kate counted on, perhaps by this time actuated by a wicked desire to know what would come next.

The little girl gathered her energies for one last and great effort, and said:

"Aunt Kate, what am that going to be?"—Young People's Paper.

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Royal Trades.

The Prince of Wales is said to have learned in his youth to make stockings. His son, the Duke of York, learned the trade of ropemaking. His cousin, the Czar, Nicholas II., can plough, sow, and reap. The Emperor William is a practical typesetter. King Humbert is not only an excellent shoemaker, but cobbles, also, to perfection. Oscar of Sweden handles the axe with dexterity, like an approved woodsman, not even yielding the palm in this respect to Mr. Gladstone. Queen Victoria is exceedingly fond of knitting. Not many days ago she finished a woollen coverlet, and presented it to the oldest and most deserving of the inmates of an asylum for disabled working-women in the Isle of Wight.

"What shall I do for Christ?" asked a young disciple of Bishop Selwyn. "Go where He is not, and take Him with you," was the venerable bishop's reply.

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