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The Sabbath-School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Fourth Quarter—Lesson X—Dec. 5.

CHRIST'S HUMILITY AN EXALTATION. — Philippians 2: 1-11.

Read the Epistle to the Philippians.

Commit Verses 5-8.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.*—PHIL. 2: 5.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time of writing. — In the late autumn of A. D. 62, or early in A. D. 63.

Place of Writing.—Rome, Paul's hired house where he was held a prisoner.

To Whom Written. — To the church at Philippi, the chief city of Macedonia, the first church founded by Paul in Europe, on his second missionary journey, A. D. 51.

Sent by Epaphroditus, who brought gifts to Paul from Philippi.

Place in the Acts.—The founding of the Philippian church (Acts 16: 10-40). The writing (Acts 28: 30, 31)

Author.—Paul about 60 years of age.

Language.—Greek.

THE LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS. This Epistle reveals something of the character of the Philippian church. Paul writes nothing to them in reproof, as he is compelled to do to most of the churches. On four occasions this church helped sustain him in his poverty and imprisonment. Twice they sent gifts to his support while at Thessalonica (Phil. 4: 16), once while at Corinth (2 Cor. 11: 9), and now they send one of their number to Rome with gifts to support him in prison. This messenger was Epaphroditus, who, arriving in the malarious season, was prostrated with Roman fever. Paul sent this letter back by him on his recovery. The people of Malta were the only others recorded who expressed their love in this way to Paul. The Ephesians wept over him, but there is nothing said of their expressing their feeling by aiding him. Perhaps they did.

AN EXHORTATION TO UNITY. — Vs. 1, 2. *If there be.* If there are in existance such things as make Christian unity possible. *Any consolation*, encouragement, strengthening. *Comfort of love*, incentive which love brings. *If any fellowship of the Spirit.* Communion with the Holy Spirit, which makes all Christians one; or participation in the love, joy, peace, which the Holy Spirit produces. *If any bowels.* R. V., tender mercies, a loving feeling toward all. *And mercies.* Pity, compassion, for the sorrows and weaknesses of others, and loving forgiveness for their sins and mistakes. *Fulfil ye my joy.* Make its cup full; complete it. His joy in seeing the church he had founded, and the Christians he loved fulfilling their mission, and living the ideal life, by being *likeminded*, thinking the same thing, in accord with the two respects which follow: —(1) a unity of affection, *having the same love*; (2) a unity of sentiment, *of one accord.* The general expression is then repeated in a stronger form, *of one mind*, thinking the one thing.

WHAT IS CHRISTIAN UNITY.—It is not perfect similarity of belief. "The one mind" is the oneness that insists on liberty of thinking and speaking; oneness of purpose, agreeing to differ on minor points, agreement as to the essentials.

Nor is it oneness of outward organization. This is neither desirable nor impossible.

Christian unity is a unity of life under Christ as the head. It is a unity of purpose, a unity of love, a unity of principle, the unity of one kingdom, with one law and gospel; one government under one King. It it this unity with an infinite variety of manifestations.

IMPORTANCE OF UNITY. (1) Christian unity shows the power of the Christian religion. Only a mighty power could effect such a result from the widely different elements of which the church is composed. (2) It shows the divine nature of religion, in that it produces the same characteristics in all. (3) Only when the church is one can it receive the Holy Spirit in his fulness and power. Therefore (4) Christian union is the condition of the highest usefulness. (5) It is the condition of the highest Christian experience "that they may be perfect in one." (6) It is the condition of leading the world to believe; it is necessary to success in fighting the Lord's battles and doing his works.

AN ENEMY OF CHRISTIAN UNITY. —V 3. The great enemy of Christian unity is selfishness, manifesting itself in contentions with others. See Christ's words to the disciples when they contended for the first places in his kingdom (Luke 22: 24-26). Such feelings are opposed to the nature of Christianity, and ruin the spirit of unity. And in *vainglory.* Personal vanity.—This self-conceit is prejudicial to peace. Inordinate self-display absorbs brother-love. The two impediments to an universal, diffusive, unconditional charity are the exaltation of party and the exaltation of self.

THREE AIDS TO UNITY.—Vs. 3-5. HUMILITY. *In lowliness of mind.* Not a mock humility, nor ignorance of what one really is or can do, but the opposite of claiming attention and honor, on account of it. It is the humility that makes one feel small in the presence of God the humility that does not seek great things for itself. *But let each esteem other better than themselves.* Let others have the honors. In every person there are some things to which others can look up

LOVING ONES NEIGHBOR AS HIMSELF.—*Look not every man on his own things.* Do not be absorbed in self, and in one's own interests and views. *Also on the things of others.* He is not to forget his own affairs, but to love his neighbor as himself.

THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST.— *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.* The disciple must imbibe the spirit of the Master, or he is none of his. It is his spirit which will produce unity.

THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST.—Vs. 6-11. *Who, being*, implying past as well as present existence. *In the form of God.* Not the shape, "but the essence of a person or thing. He was one with God. *Thought it not robbery*, etc. Did not, before his incarnation, regard his divine equality as a prize which was to be, retained at all hazards, but on the contary, laid aside the form of God, and took upon himself the nature of men. *Made himself of no reputation.* He not only did not enrich himself, but he emptied himself; he used his equality with God as an opportunity, not for self exaltation, but for self abasement. He divested himself, not of his divine nature, for this was impossible, but of the glories, the prerogatives, of Deity, by taking upon him the form of a servant.—*The form of a servant.* The same word for form as in the phrase form of God, and with the same sense. What Christ grasped at in his incarnation was service.—*Was made in the likeness of men.* A double suggestion lies in the words: (1) that he was really like man as he truly was man.... with his liabilities to trial and suffering; and (2) that he was also more than man. *And being found in fashion as a man.* He showed himself possessed of a true body and a rational soul,—a soul that grew in wisdom, as his body grew in stature.—*He humbled himself.* A further act of self-denial. *Became obedient unto death.* He freely obeyed God, even though it led him to death. *Even the death of the cross.* The most dreadful and humiliating death possible. *Wherefore.* In consequence of this spirit of humility and obedience. The humility of Christ was real humility, it was self forgetfulness for the sake of others; willingness to do the most humble duties and take the most humble position, not because these were good in themselves, but to help and save others. *God hath highly exalted him.* Because he was worthy of exaltation; because his spirit was one that should be shown and honored before the world with God's approval. *And give him a name which is above every name.* The word Jesus, composed of two words meaning 'Jehovah the Saviour." His name stands first in the annals of the universe, because no one else ever has so condescended and humbled himself from the throne of heaven to the lowly service of man. *That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.* In its presence, in its influence. *Of things in heaven.* Nothing exists in heaven but must look up to him. *And things in earth.* Not only men, but all forces and powers, commerce, art, invention, intellect, all shall be subservient to him and his cause. *And things under the earth.* The secret and yet hidden powers of nature. Or it may mean the dead, good and evil, and the demons of the lower regions, whose defeat will exalt the conqueror. Thus the whole universe shall join in his honor. *That every tongue should confess.* Here is the promise of the triumph of Christ and his kingdom. *To the glory of God the Father.* Whatever Jesus did was not for himself. Thus is he the best example of true humility, which ever seeks God's glory and not its own

PRACTICAL HINTS.

There is only one way of true greatness. He is greatest who most serves his fellowmen. This is true of the church as a whole, as well as each individual in it. That church will have the most success which does the most to convert and elevate the people.

It is by this spirit that we can obtain unity in the church.

Every one needs an ideal, a perfect example. This perfect ideal is Jesus Christ, who lived out the principles and precepts he taught. Our aim and prayer must be to be like him.

We obtain the spirit of Christ by feeding on Christ. Spurgeon says, "As certain silkworms have their silk colored by the leaves on which they feed, so if we were to feed on Christ, and nothing else but Christ, we should become pure, holy, lowly, meek, gentle, humble.

Hindering and Helping.

There are two kinds of church life. One hinders the cause and the work for which the church stands, and the other helps. Hindering may be active or passive. Active hindering is done on this wise: Deploring to others the coldness and formality of the church, whining because there is no revival, declaring that the church debt cannot be paid, that the money assessed for missions and other church beneficences cannot be raised, that the preacher's salary cannot be paid, and by taking up and circulating evil reports about ministers and members of the various churches. Passive hindering is accomplished quite effectively by doing nothing —staying away from the church services, paying no quarterage, giving all our attention to the world and none to the interests of the church, etc. The chief obstacle in the way of the church just now in many places is their passive hinderance. It is worse than the active form. But the helping life is the need of the church to-day. It is the very opposite of the hindering life, and is the kind every church member has solemnly obligated himself to live. Besides this, it is the easiest, and by far the happiest, life a church member can live. As with the hindering, so the helping life may be either active or passive. Of course the active is the better. It manifests itself in prompt, regular, and cheerful attendance at all the church services and business meetings. It is prompt and efficient in assuming its full proportion of the burdens and responsibilities of the church, and in helping to devise ways and means to defray running expenses and for the payment of church debts. The active helper lives his religion every day. He carries cheerfulness in his countenance, makes the Golden Rule shine out in all his dealings, talks of Christ and his love, to his unconverted neighbors, and kindly urges them to taste and see for themselves that the Lord is good. Oh, what a helper such a life is to the Church! But not all can be thus active. Some are timid and reserved in their disposition. Well, all such can at least be passive helpers How? By living their religion—by being kind and sweet-spirited in all their acts and associations, by telling their "troubles and trials" to the Lord in secret prayer and saying nothing about them in the class meeting, and by speaking in their quiet way to their neighbors of their hope of heaven and the joys of salvation Oh, the importance of all being helpers instead of hinderers in the great work of the world's evangelization!—Rel. Telescope.

Queer Discipline.

The true disciplinarian does not waste words. Obedience that is finally dragged out of a child after a war of words and waste of time is almost as bad as disobedience. The following from a newspaper will illustrate this point:

"Willie!"

"What you want?"

"I want you to get right up!"

"All right," says Willie, and turns over for another nap. Half an hour passes and then—

"Willie!"

"Y-a a a-s."

Fifteen minutes later:

"You Willie!"

"Well?"

"You going to get up to day?"

"Yes."

"Well, be about it then. You march yourself right down here!"

Twenty minutes elapse.

"Willie!!!"

"What you want?"

"If you're not up in five minutes I'll come up there and rout you out in short order! You mind that!"

"I'm a-coming,"

"You'd better, sir, if you know what's good for you!"

Fifteen minutes later:

"Will! if you're not out of there in ten minutes I'll douse you with cold water — see if I don't! Get right up!"

Willie comes down half an hour later and the triumphant mother says:

"Aha, young man, I thought I'd rout you out! You may just as well understand first as last that when I speak you have to mind. Remember that!"

Time for Bible-Reading.

A class of persons who profess to love the Bible excuse their neglect of it by saying that they have no time for Bible-reading. But is there any person in this land who cannot command the time to read a chapter from the Scriptures every day? It may be doubted whether there is such a person. There are many who cannot do this and at the same time do all that they desire to do in other directions But this is not a reason for neglecting the Bible. Our Bible reading should be one of the first duties of every day. A good rule is to read nothing else until we have read a portion of the Scriptures. If we adopt this rule and rigidly adhere to it, we shall never lack the time to read at least a few verses from the Bible. This can be done at home, and it can be done abroad; it can be done on a journey. The man of the world can read his newspaper on the cars; if we are as much interested in the Bible as he is in the daily news, we shall be able to read a chapter on a railroad train. And if it is always in mind, we shall find no day too short to read a lesson from the Scriptures.—National Presbyterian.

A Cool Head.

A clear, bright brain, a cool head free from pain, and strong, vigorous nerves are requisite to success in modern life. Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills invigorate and brighten the brain, strengthen the nerves, and remove all heart, nerve and brain troubles.

Snap and Vigor Wanted.

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BISHOP THOBURN tells a beautiful story about a picture of his dead child. It seemed a very imperfect photograph, so blurred that scarcely a trace of the loved features could be seen in it. But one day he took the picture to a photographer, and asked him if he could do anything to improve it. In three weeks the Bishop returned, and, as he saw the picture in its frame on the wall, he was startled. It seemed as if his child were living again before him. The image had been in the old picture but was concealed beneath the blurs and mists that were there also. The artist, however, had brought it out in strong, living beauty, until it was like life in its tender charm. In every true disciple of Christ there is the image of the Master. It may be very dim. Its features are overlaid by blurs and blemishes, and are almost unrecognizable by human eyes. It is the work of Christ in our lives to bring out this likeness, more and more clearly, until at last it shines in undimmed beauty. This is what Christ is doing in many of His ways with us.

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