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The Sabbath-School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Second Quarter—Lesson XII—June 20

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY.—Romans 14: 10-21.

Commit Verses 19-21.

MAY BE USED AS A TEMPERANCE LESSON.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth.*—ROM. 14: 21.

SOME DIFFICULT PROBLEMS OF THE EARLY AND OF THE MODERN CHURCH.—Two of these practical problems are referred to in the early part of the chapter.

FIRST. The question of what it was right to eat. The church consisted of Jews and Gentiles, who naturally differed in opinions on many questions of right and wrong Some ate only vegetable food, others felt that they could eat any kind of food. Some of the Jewish members were afraid of eating flesh or drinking wine in the great heathen city, the fear of their being made, in some technical way, 'unclean'. Flesh of creatures killed by heathen butchers, and wine from the vineyards of heathen, were forbidden by the rabbinical laws

SECOND. Was it right to eat flesh that had been offered to idols? A large portion of the meat offered for sale in the markets had been offered in some heathen temple as a sacrifice to idols. Should they eat of such meat? Were they, in so doing, partakers in idol worship? Should they go to any heathen feasts with their friends, or should they abstain altogether.

THIRD. A question of Sabbath observance (vs. 5, 6). We are to remember that at this time the seventh day was kept by the Jews, and the first day of the week by the Christians, both Jews and Gentiles. Some kept one day, some the other, and some both. It was not a question whether the Sabbath should be kept, but which day should be the Sabbath rest. Ought Christians to keep all the feast days of the Jews? Could the Gentiles keep religiously the heathen festal holidays? Should the Jews keep the traditional fast days?

FOURTH. As we saw in Lesson VIII., there was the question whether the Gentiles must conform to the Jewish ceremonial law, and become Jews in order to be Christians; and growing out of this the further question of how the Jews could have social intercourse with the Gentile non-conformists, and thus prevent a division in the church.

1. There are certain acts which are universally conceded to be right. About these, people of fair common sense and religious intelligence have no question. There are other acts which are as plainly prohibited. To do them is wrong and always wrong.

2. There is a very large number of acts which lie in the twilight region. They are not wrong in themselves, but according to the circumstances and motives of their doing.

3. There are not a few questions similar to those which perplexed the early church, which continually come up for settlement by the modern church.

Many of them are connected with amusement or recreation and with Sabbath observance.

Ministers and teachers should not merely say to the youthful inquirers that "they must decide these questions for themselves," as is too often done. Christian leaders are to help them to decide, to point out the principles on which they must decide, to show them the facts which will guide to a right decision.

THE TRUE SOLUTION.—The method of settlement is that employed all through the Bible, of laying down general principles, and not definite rules and commands. The principles abide eternally, and must apply to modern problems.

THE LAW OF LOVE.—Vs. 10-13 *Why dost thou judge thy brother?* Act as judge and jury on his conduct. We know so little about others, understand so little the motives which prompt them, or the circumstances in which they act, that we cannot form that fair and just estimate of their deeds *Set at nought thy brother.* As if he had no conscience, no right to decide for himself. Some persons show a spirit in condemning others worse than the wrong which they condemn. *For we shall all stand,* etc. The book of his life will be opened, and every act, including his judgments of others, will be open before God. Each is responsible to God, and must be fully persuaded that his course is right before God *Let us not therefore judge one another.* Let us allow them the same liberty that we demand for ourselves.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS. 1. Every one must settle the questions of right and wrong before the bar of God and his own conscience. He may be helped to a decision by others, but it it is his own decision by which he may abide.

2. In all matters of absolute right and wrong we are to stand firm and strong.

3. The main question is whether there is a sincere desire to serve the Lord and do right.

4. Liberty does not prevent any one from holding decided opinions, and speaking of them, and arguing for them.

5. The spirit of judging others is a very bad fault. It is closely allied to self conceit, malevolence, bigotry, and injustice.

THE LAW OF LOVE REFUSES TO PUT A STUMBLING BLOCK IN THE WAY OF OTHERS.—Vs. 13-15. *But judge this rather.* That is, turn your judgment to yourselves, and see to it that by your use of your liberty you do not cause others to fall into sin. *I know, and am persuaded.* In reference to different kinds of food, or food offered to idols. *There is nothing unclean of itself.* The food does not affect the spirit, or the character, for good or evil. *But to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.* Because in eating it, he goes against his sense of right. He is deliberately doing what he believes to be wrong. *If any brother be grieved.* Injured, hurt. *Destroy not,* etc. By tempting him to sin, by our example or persuasion, and especially by ridiculing him, as narrow, bigoted, puritanical, etc. *Let not....your good.* Your light, your liberty, your freedom of thought, your large views. *Be evil spoken of.* Because misunderstood, bringing discredit on the cause, and on the very things that are so good and precious to you.

SUGGESTIONS. We have liberty, but we should use that liberty at the command of love. It does not take away our liberty, if we choose to give up what we have a right to do for the sake of helping others. The worst and meanest thing a man can do is to be a stumbling-block in the way of others.

THE LAW OF LOVE GAINS ITS VICTORIES BY PUTTING THE HIGHEST THINGS FIRST.—Vs. 17-21. *The kingdom of God is not meat and drink.* "Eating and drinking," They are very small affairs. In themselves they do not make any one better or worse. But there are some things absolutely essential, *righteousness* in heart and life, *peace* with God and man, *and joy* in the Holy Spirit, pure, heavenly joy. These things must be in every disciple; and to destroy these through any insistence on particular kinds of eating or drinking would be to act like the soldier who threw away the jewels, but kept the casket. *Follow after.* With all your heart, letting no such outward matters as food and drink interfere with your reaching the goal. *Things which make for peace.* In the church, among Christians. *Edify another.* Build up character and Christian life. *For meat, destroy not the work of God.* That is paying too high a price for any kind of food or pleasure. *All things indeed are pure,* etc. Emphasizing the fact that even things good in themselves may become a stumbling-block and occasion of failing. *It is good.* Honorable, noble, worthy. Self denial for the good of others is one of the noblest of all virtues; and refraining from permitted things for this reason, increases the virtue of the world. *Nor to drink wine.* Not long ago there was an explosion in a colliery, by which four hundred miners were suddenly hurled amid shattered ruins into horrible death. It was caused by a single miner who had opened his safety-lamp to light his pipe. To that pipe were sacrificed four hundred precious lives of fathers, husbands, and sons. The social atmosphere around us is full of the explosive fire-damp of intemperance. Total abstinence is our safety-lamp.

Keep Clean Company.

No self-respecting young man can afford to be habitually in the company of any other young man who has no respect for himself nor any regard for God. Many a youth who was favored with excellent parents and good training, and who had always deported himself finely, has been sadly led astray by evil companionships. And in many instances the evil companions were outwardly respectable, belonging to highly respectable families. It is such ones as these that are extremely dangerous. Their moral poison is concealed. They are very deceitful characters. Outwardly they are fair, but inwardly they are full of moral fondness. Many parents, supposing that their children were in good, clean company, have finally been horrified upon learning that the companions of their sons and daughters were vile creatuaes. But young men of good characters can soon discern whether those whom they associate with are morally pure or not. And just as soon as the self respecting young man finds that the one whose company he is beginning to keep is a foul mouthed, skeptical young man, he should at once desert him severely. Certainly no Christian young man should allow himself to be the companion of a profane, vicious young man. He may try hard to influence the godless young man to forsake his ways and become a Christian, but it is quite another matter to be intimately and steadily in his company. Need I urge any Christian young lady to avoid the company of any dissolute young man? Need such a one be urged to refrain from keeping company with an intemperate, profane young man? Such urgency should not be needed; but alas! there is too frequent occasion for it! One of the mysteries is, that any intelligent, well-bred, sincere Christian young woman can allow herself to keep intimate cordial company with a godless, profane, intemperate young man Yet it is a fact, and a sad one, too, that some Christian young ladies have actually entered into courtship with intemperate and licentious young men! O, as you value your souls and moral decency, do keep clean company!—Epworth Era.

Strange Bible Facts.

The learned prince of Granada, heir to the Spanish throne, imprisoned by order of the crown for fear he should aspire to the throne, was kept in solitary confinement in the old prison at the Place of Skulls, Madrid. After thirty-three years in this living tomb death came to his release, and the following remarkable researches, taken from the Bible and marked with an old nail on the rough walls of his cell, told how the brain sought employment through the weary years:

In the Bible the word "Lord" is found 1,853 times, the word "Jehovah" 6,855 times, the word "reverend" but once, and that in the ninth verse of the one hundred and eleventh psalm.

The eighth verse of the ninety seventh psalm is the middle verse of the Bible.

The ninth verse of the eighth chapter of Esther is the longest.

The thirty-fifth verse, eleventh chapter of John, is the shortest.

In the hundred and seventh psalm four verses are alike—the eighth, fifteenth, twenty-first and thirty-first.

Each verse in the one hundred and thirty-sixth psalm ends alike.

No names or words with more than six syllables are found in the Bible.

The thirty seventh chapter off Isaiah and nineteenth chapter of II. Kings are alike.

The word "girl" occurs but once in the Bible, and that in the third verse, third chapters of Joel.

There are found in both books of the Bible 3,538,483 letters, 773,693 words, 31,373 verses, 1,189 chapters, and sixty-six books.

The twenty sixth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles is the finest chapter to read.

The most beautiful chapter is the twenty-third psalm.

The four most inspiring promises are John 14: 2, 6:37, Matt. 11: 28, and Psalms 37: 4.

All who flatter themselves with vain boastings should read the sixth chapter of Matthew.

All humanity should learn the sixth chapter of St. Luke, from the twentieth verse to its ending.—Herald and Presbyter.

Answered Prayer.

BY MARY BLISS DALE.

The English lady was troubled and sick at heart. The ever-jealous nuns and priests with unflagging zeal and poisonous words had influenced parents, however reluctantly, to take their children from her school, and now the government had issued orders that no Mohammedan child should pass her doors. Day by day there were fewer children. One morning there were none, when only two months before there had been the hum of one hundred and thirty voices!

Miss —— says, "I went to my room and fell on my knees. 'O God, my heart is breaking—if Thou wilt still have me to work here, give me a sign. I cannot rise until Thou dost hear and answer;'" and even as she prayed a peace, unknown for days, stole upon her, and rising she called her Syrian Bible woman, and together they went into the streets.

At the first house Fatima, the Mohammedan wife, came out, and, too excited for salaams cried, "I have been waiting for you; come and hear my dream. Last night I saw a golden ladder leading to a shining place, and a figure descending, more beautiful than anyone I had ever seen. He said to me, 'Fatima, who am I?' and I answered, 'Thou art Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God' He smiled and said, 'You are blessed because you have believed;' but when I tried to go to Him He said, 'Not now, but sometime I will come and take you to Myself,' and then I awoke."

And the English lady went home with joy in her heart, for of all the Mohammedan women of the town, Fatima had shown the most hatred of the Christian religion.—Woman's Work for Woman.

Be not simply good, but be good for something.

It is not more talent you need, but grace to make a right use of the talent you have.

The most noble of all ambitions is that of promoting peace on earth, good will to men.

A teacher was recently recounting how, in 1848, he was given a class of six little boys. One became a minister, others made a success of life, and the teacher thanked God for the privilege of service. Such work pays.

"You can make the clock strike before the hour by putting your own hands on it, but it will strike wrong. You can tear the rosebud open before its time, but you mar the beauty of the rose." So we may spoil many a gift or blessing which God is preparing for us by our own eager haste He is weaving our lives into pattern of beauty and strength. He has a perfect plan for each. Do not pull at the threads of life. Do not hurry the Almighty's plan. We must live by prayer in our ignorance of life. God's love is the motive of all delay—to give us unexpected and surprising blessing.—Anon.

Why will you allow a cough to lacerate your throat or lungs and run the risk of filling a consumptive's grave, when, by the timely use of Bickle's Anti-Consumptive syrup the pain can be allayed and the danger avoided. This Syrup is pleasant to the taste, and unsurpassed for relieving, healing and curing all affections of the throat and lungs, coughs, colds, bronchitis, etc, etc.

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GENTLEMEN,—For a long time I had pimples breaking out all over my face. I was told about B. B. B., and started its use. After taking one bottle I was much better, and the second bottle made a complete cure. I have recommended it to others of my friends and they have found it uniformly satisfactorily.
A. F. BEST,
Whitebread, Ont.

The Flies.

Always it is desirable, when possible, to kill the first flies which come to play havoc with the housewife's peace of mind. A poison that is recommended in the New York Sun is offered as a possible solution of the fly difficulty. It is this: "Take a tablespoonful of ground pepper and mix it with two teaspoonsful of brown sugar. Moisten the compound with milk and place where there are rays of light. The flies will generally be quickly attracted and eat greedily. If they do, it will be their last meal, for the least taste of it is, to a fly, poison.—Herald and Presbyter.

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I am willing to make oath to the truthfulness of the above statement.

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