

WORLD'S TEMPERANCE SUNDAY

Sunday School Lesson for October 26, by the Rev. Titus Lehmann, Pastor of the St. Paul's Evangelical Church.

A FENCE built around a tree will help protect it. But the tree will grow into a strong, virile and fruit-bearing tree only if it has in itself a living seed and vitality. A human character is developed only in part through its environment, through restrictions and negations. It comes to its finest flower when the inherent and vital qualities have an opportunity to grow naturally and positively.

We are having so much trouble with the prohibition and temperance question, with law enforcement, because we are approaching it from the wrong viewpoint. We try to say to people: "Here is a law on the statute books, it is a part of the Constitution. We can rest on that and compel obedience."

We never will have real temperance by law. It must become a part of the consciousness and the conscience of the people. We must educate for temperance; we must enter into the harm of intoxicating liquors from the scientific and economic viewpoint. Loud ballyhoing from either the wet or the dry side can be of little avail. As Christians we will come to realize that temperance is a matter of Christian ethics, and that only then will it become a vital part in the hearts and lives of people when the spirit of Christ has possession of the hearts and of the spirits.

Study of Real Liberty.

"A Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all and subject to every one." Our Scripture passage is taken from Galatians, "The Magna Charta" of Christian liberty. In it the apostle Paul does indeed give us an intense and fiery study of real liberty. The first part of the chapter before us is strikingly illustrated by the words in our caption taken from Dr. Martin Luther's discourse on Christian liberty. We need to let these words, "a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all and subject to every one," sink deeply into our modern consciousness. We are altogether too irresponsible toward our fellows. Selfishness rules the modern world in business as well as in conduct. We do not live for self. The freest man is one who serves others voluntarily. True freedom comes only to the person or nation that willingly binds itself in loving service. "Through love be servants one to another." When Jesus uses the words "for their sake I sanctify Myself" He has indeed given us a wonderful example. "For the sake of the weak brethren, for the sake of the boys and girls of this and future generations I must be temperate, I must be the best I can." You will recall that incident in John

TEXT OF THE DISCUSSION

(Galatians V, 13-26)

For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another.

For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

But I say, Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would.

But if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness.

Idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties.

Envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness.

Meekness, self-control; against such there is no law.

And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with passions and the lusts thereof.

If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk.

Let us not become vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another.

Masefield's "The Everlasting Mercy" when Saul Kane, the habitual drunkard, is reproached by a mother whose boy has wandered down the street with him. Even Saul Kane feels smitten in his soul, for he says:

I'd often heard religious ranters,
And put them down as windy canters,
But this old mother made me see
The harm I done by being me.

Howard Walters, in that famous hymn "I Would Be True," puts this same thought positively when he sings: "I would be true, for there are those who trust me."

Professor L. P. Jacks, in his book "The Living Universe," contrasts "The Civilization of Power" and "The Civilization of Culture." He says when men think of the world as a dead, mechanical thing which exists chiefly that they may exploit it, then the chief end of man becomes the pursuit of material wealth. This is the civilization of power. The civilization of culture emphasizes the development of men and women. It is this latter aspect that is absolutely essential if we wish to bring about world temperance.

Second Aspect.

"A Christian man is the most free lord of all and subject to no man." This is the second aspect that Dr. Martin Luther develops in his famous treatise on "The Liberty of the Christian Man." It is an attitude that is dangerous, and which can be realized only by a truly consecrated and Christian personality. It brings before us, however, the second part of that famous scripture passage in Galatians and gives us the gist of it. Everett Dean Martin in his second thought-stimulating book on liberty

draws the distinction between Greek and Roman ideas of liberty. The Greeks sought for cultural liberty in the individual, while the Romans opposed the individual with laws and regulations. Mr. Martin says that the Christian church has taken over the Roman ideas of liberty. And it is true that we attempt to regulate men altogether too much today.

Paul says that we must "walk by the spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the laws of the flesh." This is a much higher attitude. It is the inner spirit that will enable us to meet our obligations toward our fellowmen far better than any outward law that we might make. In the temperance cause we must therefore insist upon developing a truly Christian life in the hearts and minds of people. The believing soul by the pledge of faith becomes free from all sin. Inward faith sets free. "Do what thou wilt" is indeed the highest freedom. This does not mean license, but the following or the inclination to do good.

The words of Confucius are rather significant in this connection. "At fifteen I wanted to learn, at thirty I stood firm, at forty I had no doubts, at fifty I knew decrees of heaven, at sixty I was receptive to the truth, and at seventy I could follow my heart's desire without transgressing what was right." This word is an illustration of the words in our Scriptures, "If ye are led by the spirit, we are not under the law." In the Christian church the insistence must be on the development of the spiritual life, on the deeper aspects of religion, and yet on a straightforward interpretation of the implications involved in the daily life. The original meaning

of the word "temperance" might well become a part of our thinking and living. It comes from the Greek and refers to the idea of "blending" opposites and extremes, the high and low. In nothing to excess is the principle involved here. The middle path of the road is to be patient with the weak and to resist that which is too strong.

Fruits of the Spirit.

A striking contrast is evident in the delineation of the "works of the flesh" and the "fruit of the spirit." Read that catalogue for yourself. Note the threefold aspect of the "fruits of the spirit." In that schedule we see stressed man's relation to God—love, joy and peace—man's relation to man—long suffering, kindness, goodness—and man's relation to himself—faithfulness, meekness and self-control. We get much farther along by studying the fruits of the spirit than the works of the flesh.

In our Christian work we must insist upon the positive, the fruit of the spirit. One of the great reasons for the part failure of temperance in our land is the constant reiteration of the negative. Prohibition in itself is merely negative, the fruit of the spirit is positive. We spoil things by assuming the defeated attitude, by calling constant attention to that which is wrong, by magnifying the defect. We create a harmful psychological attitude. We must develop a creative, a positive attitude. Call attention to the "beauty of goodness," to the joy of self-control, to the allurements of the "fruit of the spirit." Jesus came not to confine men, to restrict, but to release, to set at liberty. We must find the secret of the conquest of appetites in the spirit of Christ in the hearts.

It is this appeal which is so strikingly brought out in that wonderful poem "The Everlasting Mercy" by John Masefield. The heart of Saul Kane, the drunkard, is gradually touched by one appeal after another, but the final grip is given when the young woman in Quaker dress and winsome grace says to him:

"Saul Kane," she said, "when next you drink,
Do me the gentleness to think
That every drop of drink accursed
Makes Christ within you die of thirst."

As she notes that his heart is gripped she says, "He waits until you knock" and leaves him to himself. The world became a new world to Saul Kane. The blessed gift of inner sight transformed him.

O glory of the lighted mind,
How dead I'd been, how dumb, how blind,
I thought all earthly creatures knelt
From rapture of the joy I felt.

As Christ enters into hearts the works of the flesh are swept out and the fruits of the spirit make their appearance.