

Youths' Department.

Lessons for 1871.

THE WORDS OF JESUS.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10TH, 1871.

Words of Comfort.—John xiv. 1-14.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." vs. 1.

SCRIPTURE SELECTIONS.—Psalm xvi; Heb. xii. 18-29.

SUMMARY.—True faith in Jesus gives a good hope of heaven, a holy peace to the soul, genuine communion with God, and the power of Christ-like labor.

ANALYSIS.—I. Faith's Hope. vs. 1-3. (a) Its effect. (b) Object. (c) Ground. II. Faith's Sight. vs. 4-14. (a) Its objects. (b) Its explanation. (c) Its necessity.

III. Faith's Work. vs. 12-14. (a) What? (b) Why? (c) How?

EXPOSITION.—The Situation.—Our lesson presents to us a new scene. The place is "a large upper room" of a private residence in the city of Jerusalem. Luke xxii. 10-13. The time is the evening before the crucifixion, the very night of the betrayal. The company is Jesus and eleven apostles. Judas has withdrawn on his Satanic business. The occasion was the celebration of the paschal supper and the institution of the Lord's supper. The supper is ended. The feet of the disciples have been washed by the Master to enforce "The New Commandment" of love therein given. His impending betrayal, and departure, and their consequent bereavement have been most clearly announced. Ch. xiii. A dark hour for the eleven, an hour of horrible gloom, of blasted hopes, of tormenting doubts, and it was soon to be darker. They were going into the "horror of great darkness." Then as never before those men had need of comfort. Then as never before Jesus gave them comfort.

"Let not your heart be troubled."—This word "troubled" is not as strong as the original. That expresses the idea of agitation, a mighty trouble which unman. He will nerve and establish them. He says: Believe, Trust in God, and trust in me. The word "believe" or trust should be taken as imperative, as a command. Keep faith in God, and so in me, God's Son, even when I seem to be smitten down and lost. It involves the assurance that God cares enough for his own people and cause to stand by them against all enemies.

The "mansions" are apartments in the house—not separate buildings,—rooms for the children, to be occupied permanently. They were said to be "many" to assure the apostles that though disciples were now few, they were to become a multitude, a prophecy of triumph and conquest very fitting to give comfort. God's word uses the language of our earthly life to teach us of the heavenly life, hence the terms "house," "mansions," "place," "way," "city," "streets," "river," "throne," etc., etc., and the essential truth in every case is easily understood; but to take them literally is to make confusion, contradiction and nonsense of Scripture from beginning to end. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be."

The departure.—vs. 2. The apostles present and impending "trouble," refers to Christ's death and his bodily absence from his people. This represents his frequent apparent abandonment of the church or of individuals. Its purpose was for good, as are all seeming departures of our Lord. "To prepare a place." Our last lesson represented "the kingdom" as "prepared from the foundation of the world." The "Kingdom" and the "place" are the same, unless the "place" include also that which the departed saint enjoys before the final judgment. The stonement and the continued mediation of the Saviour are certainly intended. What comfort! "I leave you to save you. I go from you for a time to have you with me forever. What seems against you is for you."

The return.—vs. 3. Primarily "the second coming" not, however, to the exclusion of other comings, as in his resurrection, and at the Christian's death. He may also include his gracious coming through the Holy Spirit, by which he is with his own and they with him ever on earth. vs. 17, 18. The object of Christ's return is said to be to take to him his own that they may be with him, may remain with him. Love is satisfied when, and only when, its object is present.

The goal.—vs. 4-6. "Whither I go." Christ came from God and went to God.

Before the world was he had supreme "glory" with the Father. "I know whither I go," must mean there: "Ye have already begun to enjoy the heavenly bliss, the eternal life, the presence of the Father."

The way is Christ, which teaches that he as divine human is perfected in himself, while no other man is perfected except in Christ. He needed no mediator; we do. All before his coming were saved by him, as also "are all who may be saved without a definite knowledge of his earthly history. He is "the Truth," not only as the object of the teaching, and "the Life," not only as imparting it, but as having "life in himself." Thomas did not mean to contradict, but only to state his difficulty and get an explanation.

The sight.—vs. 8, 9. "From henceforth" this "sight," is that immediate sense of God as present with and in the soul which gives to Christian experience its life, and to worship its reality. The Father manifests himself to the believer, and how sweetly sometimes in the public worship, sometimes in the closet, and how often in hours of trouble! This has made dungeons glorious and martyrdom delightful.

"The words" and "the works."—vs. 10, 11. That the apostles might be comforted, and know also how to comfort others, they had need to rest assured that in Jesus they had access to God, his words and his works, proved the presence of the Father in him.

Faith's works.—vs. 11, 12. "The works that I do." His miracles were only helps to another work, viz., the founding of Christianity,—giving it a place and a start. "And greater works,"—a large and strange promise. The whole work of establishing and diffusing the gospel,—to go on to the end of time.

The reason.—"Because I go unto my Father." The work of the Holy Spirit in its fulness depended upon Christ's departure.

The manner.—vs. 13, 14. Christ wrought in his own name, his disciples in his name. He is the source of their power. How delightful to Christian love to recognize Christ as the one who gives all strength, and through whom we glorify God.

To whom are the words of the lesson spoken? Why just then had they need of comfort? Ch. xiii. What is meant by "troubled"? Does this teach that no one, whether saint or sinner, has reason to be troubled? Through what act must comfort come? vs. 1. Is belief in God different from belief in Christ? What is meant by the "Father's house"? vs. 2. The "mansions"? Why "many"? Why was Christ to leave his disciples? vs. 2. What is this going to be? vs. 3. What was he to do afterward? vs. 4. What and when are the coming and the received? Why would this promise comfort Christ's hearers? Why any Christian? Can it comfort any other man? What, think you, is heaven?

What does Jesus tell his disciples that they know? vs. 4. Did Thomas mean to contradict him? vs. 5. What explanation is given? vs. 6, 7. How is Christ "the way," etc.? Did he mean in verse 7 to deny that till then the apostles "had known" him? What is it to see God? How is he seen? vs. 9. How is God the Father seen in Christ? vs. 10. What fitness had this truth to comfort the apostles and other disciples? Why did Jesus refer to his "words" and his "works" in this connection? vs. 10, 11.

What is the promise in verse 12? Was it meant for the apostles only? What is meant by "the works which I do"? What by the "greater works." Has this promise been fulfilled? What reason is given for it? vs. 12. In what way was the promise to be fulfilled? vs. 13, 14.

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. Recite.—Scripture Catechism, 355, 356.

SAVED FROM THE FIRE

BY MRS. ANDERSON.

About ten o'clock one evening in August, 1869, a fire broke out in the back part of a shop in a house in the Rue St. Antoine, one of the narrowest and most thickly populated streets in Paris. The house was five stories high; it was very old, and built of lath and plaster. The shop was filled with combustible articles, such as butter, firewood, and baskets of eggs, packed with straw, so that the fire spread quickly, and soon the whole building was changed into a burning furnace.

The upper stories of the house consisted each of two or three small rooms, tenanted by workmen and their families. These poor people were in the greatest danger. Before the firemen arrived the narrow staircase was in flames, and it was impossible to escape in that direction.

In this extreme peril, Corporal Thibaud,

a brave officer of the Paris fire-brigade, risked his life repeatedly, in order to save these poor creatures from a fearful death. Even his boldest comrades gazed at him in utter amazement. He had nothing but a simple ladder, furnished with hooks, by means of which he ascended in less than fifteen minutes to the third story. Here he saved a workman named Jacob, and then his wife and child. He next climbed up to the fourth story, where he saved no less than six persons,—two men, two women, and two children.

But in the fifth story there was a poor old woman, who most perished, unless Thibaud went to her deliverance. The danger was very great, but the brave man did not hesitate. He climbed up the ladder. A leaden pipe came in its way and rendered the ascent very dangerous; but still he pressed on, clinging to the burning walls. At length he reached the room, seized the old woman, and placed her upon his back, and then bound her tightly to him with a sheet.

The descent was far more dangerous. The ladder bent beneath the weight of his burden. When he reached the fourth-story window, he was obliged to cling to an iron bar which crossed it, and balance himself until he could again seize hold of the ladder. His heroic efforts were crowned with success, and he reached the ground in safety with the tenth person whom he had saved, at the risk of his own life, from a terrible death.

Shouts of applause burst from the crowd which surrounded the burning house, and had watched with anxious hearts the efforts of this heroic and self-sacrificing man.

His praises were on the lips of every one; and when the Emperor heard of his brave deed, he nominated him a Knight of the Legion of Honor. All felt that this distinction was well deserved by one who so nobly risked his life to save his perishing fellow-creatures.

As you read this true story, you cannot help exclaiming, "What a good, brave man! How those people whom he had saved must have loved him!" And if you were to be told that the old woman, or that one of the children had turned away from Thibaud, when he had placed them in safety on the ground, without a word of thanks, you would think such ingratitude beyond belief. Or, if I were to tell you that any of those persons, for whom this brave man risked his life, had refused to be saved, and when the flames were curling round the doors and windows, had declared there was no danger, and they would not escape, you would say that they must have been crazy.

There is another true story, which you have often heard and read. It tells of one who not only risked, but who actually laid down his life, to save those who were ready to perish. You know that story well,—the story of the cross. You know that when the Lord Jesus trod that path of suffering, no shouts of applause attended him, no eager crowds watched him with love and admiration. The shouts were, Crucify him, crucify him; and looks of hatred and words of scorn surrounded him in that awful hour. Yet the Lord Jesus did not draw back. His wonderful love bore him on, and he died, that sinners might be saved. He died for you. Do you love him? Do you thank him every day for his wonderful love?—Do you trust in him to lead you in safety through every step of your journey here? Do you trust in him to place you among those who are saved in the world of glory above?

Ask yourself these questions. And if hitherto you have been ungrateful to the Lord Jesus, and unmindful of his love, let it be so no longer. Ask him in earnest prayer to fill your heart with love, and to help you to live for him who died for you. —Young Reaper.

HOME COURTESIES.

"I am one of those whose lot in life has been to go out into an unfriendly world at an eager age; and of nearly twenty families in which I made my home, in the course of about nine years, there were only three that could be designated as happy families. The source of trouble was not so much the lack of love, as the lack of care to manifest it." The closing words of this sentence gives us the fruitful source of family alienations, of heart-aches innumerable, of sad faces and gloomy home circles. "Not so much the lack of love as the lack of care to manifest it." What a world of misery is suggested by this brief remark! Not more than three happy families in twenty!—and the cause so manifest, and so easily remedied! Ah, in the "small

sweet courtesies of life," what power resides? In a look, a word, a tone, how much of happiness or disquietude may be communicated! Think of it, reader, and take the lesson home with you.—Ib.

SURGEON AND HIS PREACHING.

Are our readers tired of hearing or reading about Mr. Spurgeon? If they are not, we give them a readable sketch of the great preacher as he appeared to a Methodist minister, a correspondent of the Christian Union. After describing the Tabernacle, he continues as follows:

"On Sunday, July 18th, when we were present, there were said to be five thousand people in the church, every available seat in the house was filled, and even in the uppermost gallery, which nearly touches the ceiling, many were standing.

"Mr. Spurgeon, exactly at the time for the opening service, made his appearance on the platform, followed by the elders of the church, who took seats immediately behind him. Standing out on the platform, he commenced pouring out his soul in prayer: 'O Lord, we would draw near to Thee with our hearts; may our songs be heart-music, and our prayers not the mere semblance of devotion.' Commencing thus, he continued in a most unaffected strain until he seemed to forget everything but God and the souls around him. Pleading for the sinners of London, he said, 'O crucified One, whose hand holds the silver scepter, strike with that scepter the stony hearts of sinners in this great city; Thou art greater than Moses; strike the rock, and let streaming tears gush forth.' Then he pleaded for the purification of his members. 'May we not only be resigned to that which is disagreeable, but give up perfect acquiescence in Thy will; lay us on the altar, though the altar be an anvil, and the purifying hand a hammer.'

"He continued for some time in this strain, and closed with an earnest petition for his brother ministers. 'Bless our ministers; fill them with the Holy Ghost; may they not be content with old and rancid supplies, but anoint them with fresh oil.' "He gave out the hymn in a clear natural voice, reading with great impressiveness, and without any instrumental accompaniment, the whole congregation poured out the glad words of praise, Mr. Spurgeon himself singing with them. I had heard the echoing strains of trained and gowned singers in St. Paul's, and the artistic and thrilling tones of organ and congregation in Westminster Abbey, but this was praise from earnest Christian souls, and my own heart went up to the very throne in that grand song of joy.

"Two lessons from the Scriptures were read, and the people all over the house opened their Bibles and followed the pastor in the reading. Commenting on the conduct of the elder brother in the parable of the Prodigal Son, he said, 'Evermore self-righteous sinners are offended when chief sinners are received. 'Thou never gavest me a kid,' said the brother. Ah, he was all duty and no privilege—self-righteous and legal sinners need not expect much joy! Grace is the only spring out of which the water of joy doth flow.'

"He read a portion of the fifth of Romans, lingering at the sixth, seventh and eighth verses: 'For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly; for scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love to us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' Many preach a Saviour for sinners, many that Christ died for the righteous; but Paul would have it that Christ died for the ungodly; this passage should be read with wet eyes; there is music here. Our sins are mountains, but grace like Noah's flood will be twenty cubits over their highest summits.' Interspersing remarks like these throughout his reading, he secured the undivided attention of his hearers.

"The sermon was on the 'Freeness of Grace,' and spite of the pronounced and outspoken Calvinism of the speaker, he proclaimed a salvation as broad, deep and full as was ever declared from an orthodox Arminian pulpit. At times he was very pathetic, especially when he told his own experience, how he felt he was near the gates of hell, and Christ lifted him up and gladdened his soul with the message of mercy, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee.' At one time he thrilled the whole large congregation by the simple utterance of the word 'Hope.'

"The audience were held by the spell of his eloquence for a full hour, and showed no signs of weariness or uncensuredness.

"From a recent attack of illness Mr. Spurgeon seemed very feeble, and his full round face was quite pale. With small sparkling eyes, a well-formed nose, and a countenance peculiarly animated in conversation, his appearance is quite pleasing and attractive, especially when he smiles and shows a set of clear ivory-like teeth. Short, stout, and muscular, he is a fair type of the Anglo-Saxon."

A GOOD REPUTATION TO HAVE.

A young man had volunteered, and was expecting daily to be ordered to the seat of war. One day his mother gave him an unpaid bill with money, and asked him to pay it. When he returned home at night she said: "Did you pay that bill?"

"Yes," he answered.

In a few days the bill was sent in a second time.

"I thought," she said to her son, "that you paid this."

"I really don't remember, mother; you know I've had so very many things on my mind."

"But you said you did."

"Well," he answered, "if I said I did, I did."

He went away, and his mother took the bill herself to the store. The young man had been known in the town all his life, and what opinion was held of him this will show.

"I am quite sure," she said, "that my son paid this some days ago; he has been very busy since, and has quite forgotten about it; but he told me that day he had, and says if he said then that he had, he is quite sure he did."

"Well," said the man, "I forget about it; but if he ever said he did, he did."

"UPSETTIN' SINS."

Dr. McCosh (now President of Princeton College) tells the story of a negro who prayed earnestly that he and his colored brethren might be preserved from what he called their "upsettin' sins."

"Brudder," said one of his friends at the close of the meeting, "you ain't got de hang to dat ar word. It's 'besettin', not 'upsettin'."

"Brudder," replied the other, "if dat is so, it's so. But so I was prayin' de Lord to save us from de sin of intoxication, and if dat ain't a upsettin' sin, I dunno what am."

The missionaries and native preachers of the American Baptist Missionary Union average eleven baptisms a year, while the 8,787 Baptist clergymen in the United States baptize each an average of eight converts annually.

The Baptists of Texas have formed an Educational Union, a joint-stock company, the chief object of which is the establishment and endowment of a university. The name and location of the institution are to be definitely fixed and made known when 150,000 dols. shall have been secured.

The Phrenological Journal sapiently remarks that "a severe Puritan would have felt it to be wicked to see any thing good in a totally bad boy." So would any other man, we think.

Don't jump at a conclusion touching the contents of a book. An enterprising young farmer, enthusiastic in his profession, ordered "Rain upon the Mown Grass," and found it was,—sermons. But they were good ones.

An Indiana paper refused lately to publish eulogies gratis, but added: "We will publish the simple announcement of the death of any of our friends with pleasure."

If we would have powerful minds, we must think.

An exchange, describing a funeral, says: "The procession was very fine, and nearly two miles in length; as was also the pray of Dr. Perry, the chaplain."

Dr. Dollinger, who is just seventy years old, is a very abstemious man. He eschews tobacco and alcohol, rises at four, and goes to bed at nine. His library of 30,000 volumes occupies the whole house.

"Are the pictures which you brought home from Europe all landscapes?" said an artist to Mrs. Devoe, one day. "Bless you, no," replied the indignant lady, "they're lie painin'."

What a man is at home, that he is indeed, if not to the world, yet to his own conscience and to God.—Philip.