

Youths' Department.

Lessons for 1871.

THE WORDS OF JESUS.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31st, 1871.
Last Words of Jesus.—Matthew xxviii. 16-20.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And the Spirit and the Bride say: Come. And let him that heareth say: Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will let him take the water of life freely." Rev. xxii. 17.

SCRIPTURE SELECTIONS.—Isaiah lv; Rom. xi.

SUMMARY.—The church must give to the world the gospel, and the Lord will give to the church success.

ANALYSIS.—I. The Occasion.—vs. 16, 17. (a) Persons and place. (b) Mental States.

II. The Commission.—vs. 18, 20. (1) The Master's absolute authority. (2) The Disciples' triple duty. (3) The perpetual encouragement.

EXPOSITION.—The Contrast.—Last Sabbath we saw Jesus on the cross at the point of death, and his words were the words of a dying friend. To-day "he is not there, he is risen." He speaks to us in the power of a new life, and as a king from the throne.

The Appearings.—Before his death, Christ was continuously with his disciples, one with them, mingling also with the populace, withdrawing into solitude only occasionally for devotion. After his resurrection, and before his ascension, he did not thus live, but was only now and then seen, showing himself only to disciples, and for the purpose of establishing their confidence.

The eleven.—vs. 16. One was not, for he had gone to "his own place." Were there present only the eleven? Probably many others. The mention of the eleven only, is because of their prominence in the new church as its founders under Christ. They were to be, through their spoken and written words, the authorized teachers of the gospel for all times and all men, and the commission was, therefore, specially to them. (1) From John xx 19, 29; Luke xxiv. 33, 48, it seems that to the eleven Christ had fully shown himself to the removal of all "doubt" previously in Jerusalem, and as here "some doubted," they were not of the eleven. (2) The terms in which this meeting had been announced, are general enough to include all disciples, not excepting the women. See vs. 7, 10. "Before you," women with the rest. "My brethren," a general term. (3) The formal, and at least triple announcement of the meeting suggests its public character. Ch. xxvi 32; vs. 7, 10. (4) Paul (1 Cor. xv. 6), says that "Christ was seen of more than five hundred brethren at once," and this may well have been the time. (5) "The Great Commission," in its nature, was for the church as a whole, as we shall see.

Worship and doubt.—vs. 17. The eleven, and all who had already seen the risen Lord, with others, doubtless, recognized Jesus at once.

"Jesus came."—vs. 18. Not alone to the doubting, but to the whole company, that they might distinctly hear his words.

The Analysis.—The words of Jesus here given, consist of three divisions: (1) The ground of the command, i. e., the reason why he gives it, and why his church should heed it. "All power," etc. vs. 18. (2) The command itself. vs. 19 and a part of vs. 20. (3) The encouragement to obedience. Last part of vs. 20.

I. THE GROUND OF THE COMMAND.—(1) In general. The absolute supremacy of Christ is a first and fundamental truth of the gospel. Every view which denies or questions the supremacy of the Saviour, and makes or tends to make him only a teacher, exemplar, etc., leaves us without God's gospel.

(2) In particular.—The "power" here is authority, control, a prerogative of office not an attribute of person. Hence "all power" does not here mean simply omnipotence, an attribute of God. It would not be said of this or any other attribute that it "is given." Omnipotence, or the true Deity of Christ is here implied. "In heaven and on earth." Compare Eph. i. 20-23; Col. i. 15-22. ii. 10; Phil. ii. 6-11, and other passages. Christ is the head of mankind, and whatever pertains to man, whether to his bodily or his spiritual nature, to his temporal or his eternal interests in this world, or in any other world, is under the complete sway and direction of our exalted Redeemer.

"Is given to me." As spoken by Jesus and written in the Greek, these are the emphatic words. They teach, not that Christ was not in the beginning with God and himself God, but that though thus divine, he yet has control and headship of mankind as Mediator, and this mediation is based upon his atonement made in the flesh.

II. THE COMMAND.—(1) In general.—The command is addressed primarily to apostles, for they were to organize and direct Christian labor, give with divine authority the gospel in preaching, and leave us the Christian text-book for all time the New Testament. It was not to them alone, for they were to do and did do this work in conjunction with helpers, and, as we saw, many of these helpers were then present. Indeed every disciple is to be a witness for Jesus, and to aid both in making new disciples and in perfecting the disciples made.

(2) In particular.—"Go ye," is introductory. Put yourself into position to do work. The last must be sought. Christ in coming to earth set the example. Still they were to tarry in Jerusalem for a little. Luke xxiv. 49. (b) "Teach all nations." The word "teach" does not bring out the Saviour's idea as given in the original. The primary aim is to make Christians. "All nations" yet not as nations, for conversion, like the final judgment, is personal, man by man, each for himself. "Baptizing them into the name," etc. Not before, but after they become disciples. Thus John iv. 1, "Jesus makes and baptizes more disciples." Mark xvi. 16, "He that believeth and is baptized." Baptism does not make one a disciple, nor is it for one who is not a disciple, be he infant or adult. The word "baptize" is the Greek term translated, not translated, into English. It means to immerse, dip, plunge, and not to sprinkle, pour, cleanse, etc. The scriptural references to the ordinance and the practice of the early church, as also still that of the Greek church, conform to this meaning. This solemn command to baptize is at the same time a command to the believers to be baptized. Not again and again, but once at the beginning of Christian life, in the name thenceforth to remain in that name. "In the name," should read "into." Thus correctly in Rom. vi. 4; Gal. iii. 27. Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one name, yet three names, one Being with a triple personality. "Teaching to observe all things," etc. "The gospel is to change not opinion merely, but the life, and that in all things, making a complete character. The commands are all forms of the one commandment "love," and so the watch-care is to be in the spirit of love.

III. THE ENCOURAGEMENT.—"And lo" This marks the vast import of what follows.

A present Christ.—Two weeks ago we found Christ on the evening of his betrayal, making to the eleven the promise to come unto them and abide with them. Here it is made more formally and publicly, and is connected with the great duty of the Church as an incentive. The "I" as spoken, and in the original written, is extremely emphatic. I myself, the Lord who have "all power," even I with this absolute power and control, "with you." You on whom this mighty work is laid; you my disciples, church, and no other man or men, "with you." Not against, "with," to direct, strengthen, comfort, in high, personal communion also, "with you" to give to this enterprise success by using to this end all my "all power." "I am with you unto the end of the world." Having loved his own, he loved them unto the end, the end of his earthly life, and then keeps with his loved and loving church till the world itself, the course of human history, ends by the Second Coming of Christ, when a fuller and more manifest presence shall begin, to end never. Amen.

What contrast in the conditions of Christ as seen in the last, and in this lesson? What events have come between? How did Christ spend his time between his resurrection and his ascension? See last day of the gospels. Why does Matthew say, "the eleven" vs. 7, 10; 1 Cor. xv. 6? Where is Galilee? What mountain is meant? What did "some doubt?" vs. xvii. Why should they doubt?

What is here meant by "all power?" What is meant by its being "given" to him? Does this imply that Christ ever lacked the attribute of omnipotence? By whom were all things made? John i. 3; Heb. i. 2; Col. i. 15-22. Compare Phil. ii. 6-11. How did Christ become our Saviour, and the Head of the Church? Heb. ix. 14. What command did Christ give? vs. 19, 20. To whom was it given? Are all new to "go?" What is here meant by "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded?"

What is meant by teaching all nations? Who are to be baptized? Compare Mark xvi. 16; Acts ii. 14. What is baptism? Matt. iii. 16; Acts viii. 36; Rom. vi. 4. Should sprinkling or pouring be called baptism? What Scripture is there for the baptism of infants? What is meant by the phrase "in the name" as here used? See Gal. iii. 27. Explain the phrase, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded." What promise follows? How does Christ fulfill it?

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. Recite.—Scripture Catechism, 361, 362.

THE KITTEN OF WINGENHEIM.

CHAPTER III.

While Mr. Barthel had gone to rescue William and the baby as recorded in the last chapter, Mrs. Barthel had sought a refuge among the other villagers on a neighboring hill-side, where she awaited her husband. But he did not come. Every moment seemed an hour, and every moment really increased the difficulties of his escape. At length a party started to aid and rescue him. When within a few steps of the cottage, cries for help were heard issuing from within. To cling through the window and rush to the side of Max was the work of an instant. There was no time to be lost. To gain an entrance to the chamber where the baby lay was out of the question. All that could now be done, was to drag the distracted father from the bedroom door, and force him to leave his perilous position. A few minutes longer, and he must have been drowned in his own cottage.

"Thank God, there they come at last!" exclaimed Mrs. Barthel, rushing down to meet the small band of friends, for whose approach she had been watching so wistfully; but at sight of her husband's empty hands, and miserably dejected appearance, she suddenly stopped; and throwing her arms above her head, cried in a tone of bitter agony—

"Max! oh, how could you leave our little darling? Will no one help me to save my child? And with a loud piercing cry the frantic mother was rushing off towards the village, when she was caught in Edmund's arms.

"My dear friend, this won't do!" he exclaimed, in a voice trembling with emotion. "You must leave your little one in God's hands—no human arm can reach her now! Come, sit down, there beside your husband, who nearly lost his life trying to rescue her!"

"Hark! hark!" cried Max, suddenly starting up. The loud crashing noise of the raging flood, as it was breaking up, and forcing itself through the embankment, had ceased, the water over the fields and village being now on a level with the river.

"That is my little Anna—my beloved child!" exclaimed Mrs. Barthel, weeping and wringing her hands, in an agony of grief, as a child's voice was distinctly heard.

"And Griesel!" cried the three children simultaneously, "yes, that's Griesel, I'm sure it is!"

No words can describe the bitter anguish of soul, with which the parents strained every nerve to catch their infant's feeblest cry! Fainter and fainter the little weeping voice became; and now when only the cat's wailing cries were borne aloft on the night breeze, they sounded like the mournful notes of a death-song over the dying babe; but at last Griesel's dismal cries also gradually died away in the distance; and amid the death-like stillness which prevailed, while clasping his sobbing wife to his bosom, Max exclaimed, in a low, faltering voice, "Minnas, my own dear wife, our little darling is now safe in our Heavenly Father's arms! Oh, let us try to say, 'The will of the Lord be done!'"

Drawn together by the strong bonds of a common sorrow, these poor villagers sought to comfort one another, as slowly and sadly the dark hours of that terrible night passed by. With trembling anxiety they longed for the morning; but when at last the first faint streaks of the dawning light appeared, and rapidly spread over that scene of havoc and desolation, their spirits sank within them, while from the hearts of many a distressed parent arose the fervent, earnest prayer: "Lord, help us, and our little ones."

And God did in his tender mercy provide guardian angels for the little helpless Anna. As the water rose higher and higher in the room, the cradle was lifted up and floated on the surface like a small boat. Rocked by the ceaseless motion of the water, little Anna slept soundly and sweetly. Griesel, as usual, was lying at her feet.

From the constant action of the water the mud wall between the wooden framework of the room gave way, and fell into the water, without harming the sleeping child in the least. A short time afterwards the wall on the opposite side fell down in like manner; and now the cradle became violently agitated by the force of the stream formed through the house. Caught at last by the current, it was carried through between the wooden framework into the open air; not however without encountering sundry rude shocks. The poor child was startled, and began to cry bitterly. The mother heard indeed the voice of her beloved child calling for her, but for the first time in her life was unable to rush to her side; she could but cry, "God help my suffering babe!"

No sooner did Griesel hear her little playmate's cries of distress than, springing to the head of the cradle, she began to caress her—rubbing her soft head up and down the child's face, and licking the little hands which used to stroke her so fondly, as if to say, "Don't cry, baby dear; you're not quite alone, nor forsaken." Little Anna was soon comforted, and as the fresh cool breeze fanned her burning cheeks, she gradually sunk once more into a sweet, sound sleep.

Meanwhile the cradle had drifted into the middle of the river Rhine, and was now being borne along at a rapid rate, the light breeze catching the outstretched covering, and turning it into a sail. As it fully alive to their perilous position, the poor cat never slept; but, while mewing in a monotonous, melancholy way, faithfully kept watch over the sleeping infant, as hour after hour they were driven farther and farther from the village of Wingenheim.

As morning dawned, the cradle approached a large stone-bridge, crowded with people, who had flocked thither from the neighboring town, eager to judge for themselves of the extent of the devastation which had been wrought during the past night. They were watching with intense curiosity and melancholy interest the debris of every description, including many articles of household furniture, as they came floating down towards them with the current, each telling its own sad tale of sorrow. But suddenly the silent spectators were thrown into a state of the greatest excitement, when, among other objects, a cradle hove in sight.

Taught by her fine instinct, Griesel was making every effort in her power to attract the attention of the people on the bridge. With head erect there she sat, uttering louder and more piteous cries than ever, while gazing eagerly at the on-lookers, as if appealing to them to come and rescue her dear little mistress.

Exclamations of horror and heart-felt compassion resounded far and near, when an infant was descried within the little cot, sleeping as peacefully and sweetly as if no danger were near. A general rush was made from the bridge for the water's edge; but, alas, it was too late! The cradle had already reached the entrance, and was being hurried below one of the arches. With breathless anxiety and tearful eyes the sympathizing crowd now watched, as like a cork upon the white foaming waters it was tossed about from side to side, and whirled round by the eddying waves. The struggle for existence though short was great indeed. Hope more than once vanished from the scene, and cries of pity and mournful regret rent the air, in the full expectation of instant destruction. But Griesel, ever on the alert, no sooner saw the cradle dip to its edge in the water, than, quick as thought, she sprang to the other side, and thus restored the equilibrium. Fairly seized at last by the stream, it was borne triumphantly out of the encircling arms of the dangerous eddy, amid many hearty shouts of joy from the intensely excited bystanders.

A boat was now quickly manned and pushed from the shore, in pursuit of the cradle, and it and its precious little occupants were brought safe to land.

The rest of our story is soon told. In such neighborhoods stories travel fast and far. The rescue of the poor babe and her strange pilot from the flood was spread far and wide, and soon reached the ears of the sorrowing mother, whose joy when she learned of the rescue of her darling given up for lost and mourned as dead, it would be in vain to attempt to describe. Little Anna still lives, and loves to listen to the story of her perilous voyage. Griesel, the faithful Griesel is long since dead, but her memory is dear to all, and is preserved permanently in a little statuette of the much-loved and greatly-prized animal carved in stone and placed above the house-door. EVENING HOUR.

BIRDS GOOD FOR SOMETHING.

The rice birds of Carolina were once considered a great pest by some people. I hope a great many others knew better. The little creatures gather round the fields in harvest time, and of course eat a good deal of grain. Some years ago it was determined to make war on them; and drive them off; and the effort partially succeeded. "What were the birds good for?" The rice planter soon found out; for with the decrease of the birds the worms increased so fast, that instead of a few scattered grains to feed the birds, the whole crop was wanted to fill the hungry maw of the army which came to destroy every young shoot that sprung up. The birds were invited back again with a hearty welcome. Rice cannot be cultivated without them!

A few years ago the blackbirds of Indiana were considered a great nuisance by the farmers. Whole fields of oats and corn were sometimes destroyed. The farmer sowed, and they reaped. He scolded, and they twittered. Occasionally a charge killed a score; but it made no more impression upon the great sea of birds than a bucket of water from the ocean. A few years later, everything on the land seemed destined to destruction by the army-worm. Man was powerless—a worm among worms. But the hated blackbirds came to his relief, and proved his best friends. No human aid could avail. So that God has given us the beautiful birds to be our friends and fellow-workers in the cultivation of the soil. And the laborer is surely worthy of his hire. Why should we grudge the food claimed by them that follow the plough and snatch the worm away from the seed, that it may produce grain for our use? No honest man would cheat a bird out of his spring and summer wages. —Young Reaper.

FOUND OUT.

On the top of a hill was an orchard, and on one of the trees was a boy stealing apples; another boy was at the bottom of the tree, on the watch to see that nobody found them out.

Nobody was near that they could see; but that did not prove that nobody saw them; for, seven miles off, Prof. Mitchell, the astronomer, was examining the setting sun with his great telescope, and the hill happening to come within its range, the actions of the boys, the every tall-tale looks on their face, attracted his notice. He saw what they were up to. He found them out. There was no escaping the great eye of his telescope, looking full upon them. They little thought of such a thing.

But there was another eye upon them, a great eye and a sharper eye, and the eye followed them. It was God's eye; and his eye is on us. It sees near; it sees afar off. It sees in the day; it sees in the night. It sees out of doors; it sees in doors. It sees our actions; it sees our hearts. It sees us too by name. Professor Mitchell did not know the boys. God knows.—16.

ATTENTION TO LITTLE THINGS.

Attention to very little things must be observed, if one would render home pleasant.

Suppose the routine of housekeeping, or the drudgery of it, if you have that to attend to, is tedious. We should look upon it as our work or duty to try to perform it to the best of our ability. A successful performance of the most irksome task will render it almost pleasant. In my opinion it is not necessary to have the nicest china in order to enjoy washing dishes, that worst of all housework.

When I first commenced housekeeping, the lamp chimneys were my terror; and though I knew how much their being bright and clean added to the cheerfulness of the home evening.

My husband was very sensitive about this one thing. I wanted to please him, but so disliked cleaning the chimneys that I often tried to persuade myself that they did not need it this time; but when lighted at night I saw my mistake. Then, instead of blaming me, my good husband would take them off and clean them himself. This annoyed me; I felt reproved, and determined to put my dislike out of the question, and have clean chimneys every day.

On my sitting room wall hangs an illuminated text: "Serve the Lord with gladness." How often I glance at it, and think that, in the cheerful performance of little duties, irksome in themselves, I am serving the Lord. Nothing should be looked upon as a small matter which tends to render home cheerful and pleasant. —Hearth and Home.