

Youths' Department.

Lessons for 1871.

THE WORDS OF JESUS.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17TH, 1871.

Another Comforter.—John xiv. 15-27.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." vs. 18.

SCRIPTURE SELECTIONS.—Acts ii. 1-13; Rom. viii. 1-17.

SUMMARY.—Christ's fleshly absence gives the Holy Spirit's presence, and the Holy Spirit's presence, gives the spiritual and eternal presence of both Christ and the Father, and herein is peace.

ANALYSIS.—I. The Coming of the Spirit, vs. 15-17.

II. Hence the presence of Christ and the Father, vs. 18-24.

III. Hence Light and Peace, vs. 25-27.

EXPOSITION.—Chapters xiv-xvii.—In no other Scripture of equal extent do we see revealed so much of the Redeemer's heart, so many of life's central mysteries. And yet all is so practical, simple, experimental, that the heart even of the believing child "burns within" him as he reads, and the very peace of God steals into his soul as he meditates.

The command.—vs. 15. Love is the one bond between Jesus and his disciples. The soul even of faith is love. From the Apostle's love sprang their sorrow. But this love is not a vague and idle sentiment, it is rather a working force. A "driving power." Jesus is King of souls, and hence not simply man, our fellow and equal. Each disciple has his own work, and this command is for all.

"Another Comforter."—vs. 16. "Another" than Christ. It designates one whose office is not only to plead his employer's cause in court, but to give him counsel, and in general, as need requires, to manage for him and help him in his cause. This "Comforter" is distinguished from Christ. He was a person, as the language here and elsewhere plainly teaches. We thus have here brought out the great truth of a Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a truth full of practical meaning, though equally full of speculative difficulty.

Christ's Prayer.—The promise is, "I will pray the Father." The Spirit is sent through Christ's mediation. The mediation does not first make God willing to save men, but God wills and is willing to save men only through the mediation. One can understand the nature of this asking only as he understands the union and communion of the Father and the Son. The work of the Spirit is represented as consequent upon that of the Son. Hence the Spirit is called the Third person in the Trinity.

"Abide . . . forever."—vs. 16. In contrast to the brief ministry of Christ. "Forever," right on through the life both of the individual and of the church, till the end of the world, and in fullness after that. We rest, God's church rests confidently on these words. God in the person of the Spirit is never to fail us. History is proving this prophecy true.

"Spirit of truth."—vs. 17. The chief work of the apostles was to be witnesses for Jesus, teachers of Christianity, founders of the church, and especially in writing for all future generations the New Testament; and the Holy Spirit was to enable them not only to receive, but accurately by tongue and pen to teach God's truth. They were made infallible teachers; others are not, and yet that special work is ours in its results, for we have their infallible teachings. The Spirit gives to every disciple discernment of spiritual things. 1 Cor. ii. 6-16. Hence the Bible becomes to the converted man a new book. Hence, also, our need of the Spirit in trying to instruct others, whether in private, in the Sunday-school, from the pulpit, or in any way. Nothing can compensate for the want of his presence.

Unseen, unknown.—vs. 17. By "the world," i. e., the unregenerate in distinction from the believing. They "cannot," as such, and while such, "receive" him. The more faithful we are as witnesses, the more will this fact appear. "Cannot receive," because it neither sees nor knows him. Experience and observation teach this almost as clearly as does the Bible. If any man claims that he so has the Spirit of God, that the letter of Scripture is of but little or no use, he is either deceived or a deceiver, perhaps both.

Vs. 17. "With you," as a Helper, as

a friend with a friend, "dwelling," or more exactly, remaining. "In you," as an inspirer, the heart being the "dwelling" place. God is Omnipresent, hence in one sense equally with friend and foe, but graciously present, in the sense of this verse, only with friends.

"Comfortless."—vs. 18. Or rather orphans, bereaved ones. The promise in this verse differs from the preceding. Then it was: the Spirit shall come; here, "I will come." I myself. The second depends upon the first, for it is the Spirit that brings us to Christ and Christ to us, and keeps us together in sweet and gracious converse.

"Ye shall see Me."—"The world" in a "little while," a very little while, for he was crucified the next day, was to see him no more; for the world sees and knows only according to sense. "Ye shall see me," how and why? The rest of the verse should be translated as follows. "Because I live, and ye will." Thus it does not state why we are to live, but why we are to see Christ. According to the flesh Christ was to die and no more be seen or known. According to the Spirit he not only lives, but is Life (vs. 6), and gives this life to his own. Thus both he and his were to live right on, and were to know each other right on. Bodily death does not quench, or even touch this life.

"At that day."—vs. 20. When I am no longer seen in the flesh. In the new birth we come to know Christ as our Saviour and Lord, as our Saviour saving us.

"Commandments" and "love."—vs. 21. In vs. 15 is stated the duty of love. In vs. 21 the reward of this duty and the way it is given. The lovers of Christ are the loved of the Father.

Vs. 23. We, i. e., I and my Father. The Spirit, the Son, the Father, each with the disciple of Christ, inwardly revealed in the way of love. The Holy Spirit comes because of Christ, and the Father comes in Christ, and so Christ is our "all."

"He shall teach you."—vs. 24 refers to the infallible inspiration of the apostles to be the founders of the church, and the writers of the New Testament. The character of the New Testament, in all its parts, is good evidence that this promise was fulfilled. And yet the promise is to the whole church.

"Peace."—vs. 27. His was not an outward peace. He had been "a man of sorrows," had endured toil and "the contradiction of sinners against himself." Even while he speaks the horrors of Gethsemane and of Calvary are settling down upon him. He hears the roar of the hell-flood that is to overwhelm him, and yet he says "my peace." An inward peace in his souls' depths where the world's turmoil cannot reach; where man and God meet and are at one; where the human and divine blend, and the holy eternal repose of God is imparted to man. And so the Lord comes back again to the words of comfort, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

ILLUSTRATION.—A soldier dying in the Crimea, requested to have the passage read to him: "Peace I leave with you," etc. When it was done he said, "I have that peace. I am going to that Saviour. God is with me. I want no more," and expired.

What command does Christ give his disciples? What promise is added? vs. 16, 17. Why is the Spirit called a "Comforter"? Why called "another Comforter"? Is the Spirit God? Acts v. 3, 4. Is Christ God? John i. 1. Is the Spirit only another name for Christ? What is the doctrine of the Trinity? What is its practical value as here shown? Who sends the Spirit? What is meant by the Spirit "abiding forever"? Why is he called the Spirit of Truth? vs. 17, 26. What is it to "receive him"? Who are "the world"? Why cannot they receive him? vs. 17. Who now know the Spirit? What is this knowing? Is the difference between a Christian and the world mainly outward? What second promise is in vs. 18? What does Christ mean by this promise? Explain the words "a little while" in vs. 19. In this verse two kinds of seeing are in view. What are they? Explain the words: "because I live you shall live also?" Explain vs. 20. Compare vs. 15 with the first part of vs. 21. What is the difference? Why the difference? Who is loved of God and of the Father? vs. 21. Can this inward reward of love be given to merely outward obedience? What third promise is given in vs. 23? What is the peace promised in vs. 27? What does the world give? Is Christ's peace in us?

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. Recite.—Scripture Catechism, 357, 358.

What is the difference between a spend-thrift and a feather-bed? One is hard up, and the other soft down.

THE KITTEN OF WINGENHEIM.

CHAPTER I.

A group of peasant boys were standing one day upon the embankment which separates the Rhine from the village of Wingenheim. Having brought some little kittens with them, they were evidently enjoying the cruel sport of throwing them one by one into the river, and watching their dying struggles.

"Hallo! so you think you're to get out, do you?" cried one of the boys, hastily lifting a stone. "We must pelt her well, I say, or she'll be out!"

Stone after stone now flew from the hands of those pitiless boys in quick succession, till one, better aimed than the others, struck the poor little animal on the head, and down she sunk, to rise no more.

"Well, you're done for, that's clear. Wasn't she plucky, though? What a jolly row she made!" and sundry such exclamations burst from the lips of the excited boys, while shouts of merriment and laughter rent the air. The words of Scripture never entered their minds: "A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel."

"Now, then, for the last!" turning to a boy about twelve years of age, who was holding a beautiful kitten in his arms.

"Why, I declare, she seems to know that her death hour's come!" cried one, roughly seizing the poor little creature.

"Look how her hair's bristling up, and how queerly she spreads out her paws to push me back! But this won't do, so come along!"

Not one voice was raised on behalf of the poor little kitten. In their wild excitement they never noticed how beautifully marked she was; nor did her frigid looks and silent pleading for mercy and protection touch their hearts with pity, and cause them to relent.

When about to execute their cruel purpose, a little boy, who had just clambered up the embankment, came running along, calling out eagerly, "Oh, stop a minute! do n't throw the kitten in!"

"And why not? I should like to know. You'll not hinder us, at any rate."

"Do n't drown her: please do n't! Look here: if you'll only give me the kitten for my little baby-sister, I'll give you the whole of this large slice of bread and butter. See how thickly it's spread, too!"

"Done: the kitten's yours! There, take the little wretch; we've had sport enough for one day, at least, have n't we?"

"Oh, yes, that we have!" cried one and all. "But come, let's have our share of the bread and butter."

Holding the terrified little animal as comfortably as possible in his arms, William (for that was the name of the kind-hearted boy) now hurried home with a glad heart.

Arrived at the house, he sprang forward to the side of the cradle in which his much-loved baby-sister, of three months old, was lying wide awake, and exclaimed in a joyful voice, "Look, baby, what a dear little kitten I've brought for you! She'll sleep beside you, and then you'll always have her to play with." After putting her into the cradle, and stroking her beautiful soft coat in a soothing, gentle manner, William withdrew a few steps, to watch the effect of his experiment.

For a few moments baby's large wondering eyes were fixed upon the kitten; then stretching out her tiny hand, she essayed to touch her. Observing that paws was not within reach of the baby-fingers, William was at the side of the cradle in an instant.

"There, now, baby darling, you may stroke her as much as you like. Is n't she a dear wee thing! What a pretty little face she has, too! Oh, how glad I am that those cruel boys did n't drown her before I came! Now, you dear funny little pussy, you must be very good, and never scratch my baby-sister, or I'll not love you at all."

As days, weeks, and months rolled rapidly into the past, little Anna, and Griesel the kitten, became more and more fondly attached to each other. They would often play for hours together, while many a merry laugh rang through the room at pussy's playful springs and funny tricks. Baby Anna's bright eyes ever sparkled with joy so soon as her dear gentle playmate sprang into the cradle.

About a year had now elapsed since William rescued this little kitten from the hands of her cruel tormentors, and what a large, magnificent cat she had grown! Many an excursion she took through the house, garden, and court-yard, but never

remained very long away from little Anna; in fact she seemed to look upon the child as her peculiar care. Although much grown, Anna was still unable to walk; and both she and Griesel continued to sleep and play in the same old cradle which they had occupied a year before. William little thought that the kitten he had saved from drowning, would save his darling sister from a watery grave.

(To be Continued.)

RIVERS OF PLEASURES.

The whole world is running greedily after pleasure. That is very natural; but many are running the wrong way. They find a sip of it for a little while in something, and think it will give fullness for evermore. In undue indulgence of the appetites and passions, in childish amusements, in penurious hoarding, in ambition, in acquiring knowledge, in works of art and beauty, in the social affections, from the lowest to the highest sources, they are tasting of little rills, that dry up in an hour, while there are rivers of pleasures of which they are freely invited to drink for evermore. It is noticeable that there are pleasures; not one pleasure, but many and various. Pleasures for every attribute of our being.

1. There is pleasure for the intellect. Discoveries in art and science are sources of great pleasure. Even in the abstract sciences they afford exquisite delight. My old teacher in mathematics, Prof. W. Smyth, an original demonstrator, told me, that when he found one of his propositions was being verified, he had to leave his table and walk the room, wringing his hands and softly shouting, "Glory! glory!" What will be the pleasure, from illimitable and depths of the works and ways of God, to minds so expanded that the highest discoveries in the unfathomable heights of earth will be only as the letters of the alphabet, to whom there will be no forgetfulness, and whose perceptions will be clear as the sunlight.

2. Of Taste—How many are enchanted now by the contemplation of the beautiful in art or nature. Yet this is but a dim perception of beauty in the twilight, which will wither in an hour, while there,

"Beauty in perfection is, And never-withering flowers."

3. Of Service—They are "swift messengers of his to do his pleasure." The activities of life, even from the cradle, are among his pleasures. How much more the blessed, unwearied service of heaven.

4. Of the Affections—Earth would be a wilderness without love, and heaven is perfect love. Mutual love uninterrupted, so that the fellowship with every one of its inhabitants will be incomparably sweeter than that produced by the most endearing ties on earth—love to Jesus all pervading, and love from Jesus all transporting.

5. Of a Reunion—To meet a single friend from some distant shore and after along years of separation, what ecstasy! But to meet all who have gone before, the loved and lost, on the celestial shore,

"Oh, what will it be to be there!"

6. Of seeing Jesus—There have been many men, and women too, whom I would travel far to see; but to see Jesus, and see him always, be with him, follow him—oh, what delight!

7. Of Worship—How sweet, under the full baptism of the Spirit of God, to worship here,

"to meet where spirits blend, And friend holds fellowship with friend;" but this is only "feeling after God" in the darkness. What will it be to behold him in his glory, and how before him with the innumerable multitude of the redeemed, and praise him as he ought to be praised.

Such are some of those pleasures for evermore, at the right hand of God, where is fullness of joy. Language and conception fail to present them. May they be ours, through Jesus Christ our Lord.—Am. Messenger.

NOT A FAILURE.

Not many years ago a young minister was invited to preach to a city congregation. Under the most depressing circumstances he earnestly endeavored to prove the necessity of immediate preparation to meet Jehovah, from the text, "Prepare to meet thy God." At the conclusion of the sermon he felt that he had made a miserable failure, and so much discouraged was he by the feeble effort, that he thought he would not try to preach again. But God in his mercy, saw fit to attend the solemn truths, the day uttered, with the influences of the Holy

Spirit. Not long after, a young man made application for membership into the church who stated that this sermon preached by that young minister, was the means, under God, of his conviction. What encouragement was this to the young minister and every other Christian to perform his duty and leave the results with God.

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL IDEA.

What is the grand idea pervading the Sunday-school work?

It is an idea nobly comprehended by the mass of Christians. That idea is this: That the Sunday-school affords the very best opportunity for the employment of lay talent in spreading the gospel and bringing men under its influence!

The Sunday-school beyond all other agencies, best develops the working talent and the Christian graces of church members; for teaching is the best way of learning. It is the duty of all Christians to labor earnestly for the spread of the gospel, and for bringing sinners to Jesus, and not the duty of ministers alone. The great commission applies to every individual church member. To every individual Christian the mandate—"Go ye, preach the gospel to every creature, teaching them to observe whatsoever things I have commanded you,"—applies, without a single exception; for it is the duty of the church to extend the kingdom of Christ, and not the duty of ministers merely. And, for private individual effort, conducive to successful training in this great and bounden work of all Christians, the Sunday-school affords the very best field. Nor is this all. To become happy and growing Christians, church members must cultivate their Christian graces. Now this can be better done nowhere else than in the Sunday-school.

Here, then, is the GREAT IDEA of the Sunday-school work. The cultivation of the Christian graces and the employment of laymen in spreading the gospel and saving souls. Or, to express it differently, "increasing and developing the working talent and the christian graces of the church."

In fulfilling its mission there is far more for the church to do than ministers alone can accomplish. In the pulpit and out of it they do much; but ten times their number, effecting a hundred times as much as is now accomplished, would not achieve all that is necessary to be done.

The main body of Christians, male and female, must work; aye, every church member must labor and give, and labor and give perseveringly and abundantly, in order to perform the duty which Christ has imposed upon his people. And nowhere else can they better work, or be better trained for the work of the world's evangelization, than in the Sunday-school. Hence we are amazed at any depreciation of this work! We are amazed at indifference manifested towards it by any! We are amazed that this work is not exalted to the skies by all those who are anxious for the spread of the gospel, and that our denomination is not vastly more liberal, laborious and enlightened.

ANSWERS EASILY MISUNDERSTOOD.

The inundation of 1771, which swept away a great part of the old Tync Bridge, Newcastle, was long remembered, and alluded to with emphasis as "the flood." On one occasion Mr. Adam Thompson was put into the witness-box at the assizes. The counsel asking his name, received for answer: "Adam, sir—Adam Thompson."

"Where do you live?"

"At Paradise, sir."

(Paradise is a village about a mile and a half west of Newcastle.)

"And how long have you dwelt in Paradise?" continued the barrister.

"Ever since the flood," was the reply, made in all simplicity, and with no intention to raise a laugh. It is needless to say that the judge asked for an explanation.

A CHINESE CONVERT in San Francisco was recently examined as a candidate for baptism. The first question was:—How did you find Jesus? Answer: "Me no find Jesus. He find me." Why do you wish to be baptized? "Because Jesus commanded it. And me want to do as Jesus did." If you should die before you are baptized do you think you would be lost? "If me die quick, and no able to be baptized, me think Jesus take me up to heaven. But if me have opportunity to be baptized, and me won't be,—it is all same as no believe at all."