

The Christian Messenger.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1875.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, November 7th, 1875.—The Work of the Spirit.—John xvi. 7-14.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"He shall teach you all things." John xiv. 26.

ANALYSIS.—I. The expediency of Christ's going away. Vs. 7. II. The object of the Holy Spirit's coming. Vs. 8-14.

THE HOLY SPIRIT in point of order, of office, and of work is the Third Person of the Trinity. The Father plans, the Son executes, the Holy Spirit applies the achievement of a finished redemption. An equality of nature, therefore, does not hinder an inequality, or diversity, in respect of relation to this wonderful result. The disciples of Christ, not as yet deeply initiated into the mysteries of the unfolding plan of salvation, receive the prediction of their Master's departure with the profoundest sorrow. They know little or nothing of that other divine personality who was to enter their souls as comfort and conviction, and whose coming would expand its fulfilment of promised blessing "over the whole church and through all ages." They understand not the expediency of their loss of the Messiah in the flesh.

EXPOSITION.—Verse 7.—Nevertheless. The same word in the Greek is in verse 6 more exactly translated "but." It introduces a contrast and correction. "Sorrow hath filled your hearts" at my words, "but [you ought not to feel sorrow but joy rather, for] I tell you, etc. I tell you the truth; that is, in what I am about to say in the next clause. This reminds us of Heb. vi. 17, 18, and is spoken to increase the apostle's assurance in that which on its face seemed not only improbable, but utterly impossible and absurd. It is expedient for you that I go away. To the Father, etc., he had already explained such separation as exposed them to universal contempt, and crushed out their every hope of worldly power and empire in and through him. Yet his withdrawal in just this way he strangely, strongly declares is for their interest, advantage, good—a cause not of sorrow, as being a permanent bereavement; but rather of joy, as increasing their felicity. The pronoun "I" is emphatic in contrast with "Comforter." "I, the Christ after the flesh." 2 Cor. v. 16. "For." He treats them as "friends," not as "servants" explaining how his departure will be for their good, after assuring them that it will. If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you. It was determined that he should go away; but this does not prevent him from conceiving of a failure to go, and of the consequences of the failure. Just so does Holy Scripture depict the consequences of a Christian's apostasy, though it teaches that the true Christian will not apostatize. "The Comforter," the Paraclete, whose coming had been promised already. xiv. 16, 26; xv. 26. The Spirit was to be, and is a kind of advocate, taking up for God's people their cause, and managing it for them here in this world, counseling, guiding, strengthening, comforting. But if I depart, I will send him unto you. The departure of Christ was the completion of the Atonement, the purchase of salvation. The Spirit's operation and abode in man was to apply the atonement, and convey its results. Hence that departure had need to precede the Spirit's coming. Christ says, "I will send," as having authority.

Verse 8.—And when he is come, he will reprove [convince] the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. The Spirit should come to God's children, and should convince the world. This must be the world of wicked men in distinction from saints, as the use of the term world all through these chapters proves. The world and the saints were two parties in sharp antagonism, as the world and Christ had been, and were. Vs. 20; xvii. 6-19. The Spirit's work as toward the world of wicked men is presented here as simply that of conviction, and thus single. But this conviction is progressive and threefold. This is the statement of a theme which is unfolded very briefly, but regularly, in what follows. The aim of Christ is not here to give a complete statement of the Spirit's work.

Verse 9.—Of sin, because they believe not on me. The word "they" here means the individuals that make up the mass which in verse 8 is called "the world," and which is put in contrast to "you," that is, to Christians. "Believe not" is

a phrase which expresses the permanent and universal characteristic of each and all who make up the world just as to believe is the permanent universal characteristic of saints. The word "because" presents this unbelief, not as merely a form of sin, but as that which constitutes sin in its deepest roots, and from which spring the innumerable brood of sins, and of which all sins are somehow but manifestations. Not believing is a positive state of heart as toward God, a rejection, as faith is an acceptance. Christ, not God absolutely, is the object of this rejection, because God presents himself to men in the person of Christ for rejection or acceptance. In every way in which the Spirit holds and keeps Christ before the world, it convinces the world, it gives the world the sufficient evidence of the radical sinfulness, and hence the utter ruin of the world in its rejection of that Christ.

Verse 10.—[And] of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more. The "righteousness" here meant is said to have been Christ's own personal holiness, or perfection of character. Doubtless it was this, and yet he does not say "my righteousness," "my integrity," as though the great thing was for him to be vindicated. His righteousness in going to the Father was exercised and manifested, and came out in a work, and this work was vicarious—a sacrifice for us in our place and stead; and so the personal righteousness ceases to be regarded by Jesus as his own, and is spoken of generically as "righteousness." See Rom. iii. 21-26. In the same ways in which the Spirit keeps before the world evidence of the world's sin, it also keeps before the world the evidence of this saving righteousness.

Verse 11.—[And] of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. This world, that is, the world of wicked men. Its "prince" is Satan, the ruler in the kingdom of wickedness. Christ's arch-enemy. This prince "is judged," not shall be, that is, in the death of Christ, by which his "head" was "bruised," his dominion broken. The atonement was like the guiding pillar of the Exodus, blackness toward confirmed enemies, light toward God's people—judgment, curse, and condemnation toward the persistently rebellious—the Satan-party.

Verse 12.—Many things, etc. Respecting the doctrines of grace, which could not be understood until after his death, to which they related.

Verse 13.—The Spirit of truth. Called the Holy Spirit, as the author of man's holiness, and the Spirit of truth, as the revealer to man of the truth of the gospel, and not simply because of his own personal holiness and truthfulness. Will guide you. They using their own natural powers, and so coming gradually into the truth. All [the] truth; that is, the gospel in its completeness, as needed for man's salvation. Shall not speak of himself, etc. Shall not act as a separate agent to bring in something new, and without relation to the work and counsel of God, as shown especially in Christ. How sure should be our trust in the written word, given us by the Spirit. Will show you things to come. The outcome of redemption in this world and the next. See this in the book of Revelation.

Verse 14.—He shall glorify me, etc. To the apostles and New Testament prophets this promise was fulfilled in the way of revelation and inspiration; to us in the way of illumination, or the preparation of heart by which to understand the spiritual things of the Bible.

QUESTIONS.—Of whom is our lesson a study? Who plans our redemption? Who executes it? Who applies it? For what are the disciples sorrowful? Vs. 7. Why was it desirable for Christ to leave the world? What is the meaning of Comforter? What do the words "I will send" illustrate? Is the Holy Spirit ever called God? Acts v. 3, 4; 2 Cor. iii. 17. Are any divine actions ascribed to him? Acts x. 19; xiii. 2; xv. 28; 1 Cor. ii. 11; Rom. viii. 26; Eph. iv. 30. Vs. 8. What do the words "when he is come" indicate? Meaning of "reprove"? In what three respects does the Holy Spirit convince the world? Vs. 9. Is there a greater sin than unbelief in Jesus Christ? What kind of a disposition have unbelievers toward God? Ans. An absolutely rebellious, perverse, and self-righteous one. Heb. iii. 7-15. Vs. 10. In what character did Christ go to God? 1 John ii. 1. Vs. 12. Had Christ already taught his disciples as they were prepared to understand? Mark iv. 33. Do the Epistles teach truth not found in the Gospels? Ans. No. They unfold truth already received from Jesus. Vs. 13. What is meant by "guide you into all truth"? What by the words "he shall not speak of himself"? What by

"show you things to come"? Ans. The visions of the Apocalypse; and indeed everything pertaining to the kingdom of God, in time and eternity. Vs. 14. If spiritualism does not honor Christ, can the Holy Spirit be in it? See 1 Cor. xii. 3.

HOMILETICAL HELPS.

John xvi. The Gospel of John deals with the Divine side of Christianity. The terrible conflict waging in our world between sin and holiness is traced to its source, in the league of the powers of hell against the powers of heaven. It seems impossible; with this Gospel in the hands, to deny the Deity of Jesus. It seems equally impossible to deny the trinity of persons in the Divine nature.

Verse 7.—The Saviour did not comfort with deceptive hopes, nor soothe griefs by empty words. The personality of the Spirit is as real as that of Jesus, and his work as direct and important.

Verse 8.—Religion is not self-culture, or the development of latent forces in the soul, or the result of reflection. It is born of the Holy Spirit working in the heart, and giving vital power to truth.

Verse 9.—The final doom of men turns on their relation to Jesus: "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Verse 10.—Righteousness is born of a view of Christ's completed work. His departure was needed to finish his own work, no less than to secure the Spirit's aid.

Verse 11.—The prince of the world has no part in Christ, and his followers have no place in Christ's kingdom.

Verse 12.—The young disciple lacks the insight of a ripe Christian, and lacks also strength to do and suffer.

Verse 13.—The divine plan leads to perfection. Pilgrims may struggle in the Slough of Despond, and have hard battles with Apollyon; but they cannot fail of the Delectable Mountains or the Celestial City.

Verse 14.—Jesus is the central truth and life of Christianity, and those born of the Spirit recognize and rejoice in the fact. The history of Christian experience for eighteen centuries attests the truth of Jesus' promise. In the Book of Revelation worship is directed to the Lamb, and he leads the host to victory.

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, November 14th, 1875.—Jesus Interceding.—John xvii. 10-21.

Youths' Department.

THE ART OF NOT-HEARING.

The art of Not-Hearing should be taught in every well-regulated family. It is full as important to domestic happiness as a cultivated ear, for which so much money and time are expended. There are so many things which it is painful to hear, many which we ought not to hear, very many which if heard will disturb the temper, corrupt simplicity and modesty, detract from contentment and happiness,—that every one should be educated to take in or shut out sounds, according to his pleasure.

If a man falls into a violent passion and calls me all manner of names, the first word shuts my ears, and I hear no more. If, in my quiet voyage of life, I find myself caught in one of those domestic whirlwinds of scolding, I shut my ears, as a sailor would furl his sails, and, making all tight, scold before the gale. If a hot and restless man begins to inflame my feelings, I consider what mischief these sparks might do in the magazine below, where my temper is kept, and instantly close the door.

Does a gadding, mischief-making fellow begin to inform me what people are saying about me, down drops the portoullis of my ear, and he cannot get in any farther. Does the collector of a neighborhood scandal task my ear as a warehouse, it instinctively shuts up. Some people feel very anxious to hear everything that will vex and annoy them. If it is hinted that any one has spoken ill of them, they set about searching the matter and finding it out. If all the petty things said of one by heedless or ill-natured idlers were to be brought home to him, he would become a mere walking pin-cushion, stuck full of sharp remarks. I should as soon thank a man for emptying on my bed a bushel of nettles, or setting loose a swarm of mosquitoes in my chamber, or raising a pungent dust in my house generally, as to bring upon me all the tattle of careless or spiteful people. If you would be happy when among good men, open your ears; when among bad, shut them. And as the throat has a muscular arrangement by which it

takes care of the air-passages of its own accord, so the ears should be trained to an automatic dullness of hearing! It is not worth while to hear what your servants say when they are angry; what your children say after they have slammed the door; what a beggar says whom you have rejected from your door; what your neighbors say about your children; what your rivals say about your business, or your dress.

This art of not hearing, though not taught in the schools, is by no means unknown, or unpractised in society. I have noticed that a well-bred woman never hears an impertinent or a vulgar remark. A kind of discreet deafness saves one from many insults, from much blame, from not a little apparent connivance in dishonorable conversation.

There are two doors inside my ears, a right-hand door leading to the heart, and a left-hand door, with a broad and steep passage, leading out into the open air. This last door receives all ugliness, vulgarity, mischief-making, which suddenly find themselves outside of me.

Judicious teachers and indulgent parents save young urchins a world of trouble by a convenient deafness. Bankers and brokers often are extremely hard of hearing, when unsafe borrowers are importunate. I never hear a man who runs after me in the street bawling my name at the top of his voice; nor those who talk evil of those who are absent; nor those who give me unasked advice about my own affairs; nor those who talk largely about things of which they are ignorant.

If there are sounds of kindness, of mirth, of love, open fly my ears! But temper, or harshness, or hatred, or vulgarity, or flattery, shuts them. If you keep your garden gate shut, your flowers and fruit will be safe. If you keep your doors closed no thief will run off with your silver; and if you keep your ears shut, you heart will lose neither its flowers nor its treasures.

THE HOT TEACHER.

"I'm awful hot," said she, as she took her place in her class. Heat is contagious and the way she looked and spoke made all her girls hot, till perspiration seemed visible all around the class. "It was too hot to study, last week wasn't it, girls?" This was of course, the unanimous opinion of the girls. "Have you been out of town Jennie?" was the next question. Then Jennie gave an elaborate account of how she hadn't been out of town yet, but how her trunks were packed ready to go on Monday morning. She said she wished pa could have gone Saturday, and then she might have saved the bother of coming to this hot Sunday-school to-day. Then the other girls got into a free conversation about their going for the summer, and it turned out that nearly all of them were going, and that the teacher was going too. So the teacher said that as nearly all the class would be away, she wouldn't take the trouble to see if she could get any other teacher just for the few who would come, and that they might just as well stay at home, or else go into somebody else's class while she was gone, and she would be gone pretty much all summer. And then she wound up by saying, "O, O, O! I'm s. hot!" And that is about all that was done in that class that afternoon. The superintendent thinks that teacher might as well stay out of town altogether, when she goes.—Christian at Work.

LIFE LENGTHENED.

- 1. Cultivate an equal temper; many a man has fallen dead in a fit of passions.
2. Eat regular, not over thrice a day, and nothing between meals.
3. Go to bed at regular hours. Get up as soon as you wake of yourself and do not sleep in the daytime, at least not longer than ten minutes before noon.
4. Work always by the day and not by the job.
5. Stop working before you are very much tired—before you are "fagged out."
6. Cultivate a generous and an accommodating temper.
7. Never cross a bridge before you come to it, this will save half the trouble of life.
8. Never eat when you are not hungry, nor drink when you are not thirsty.
9. Let your appetite come always uninvited.
10. Cool off in a place warmer than the one in which you have been exercising; this simple rule would prevent incalculable sickness, and save millions of lives every year.
11. Never resist a call of nature for a single moment.
12. Never allow yourself to be chilled

through and through; it is this which destroys so many every year in a few days' sickness, from pneumonia, called by some lung fever, or inflammation of the lungs.

Whoever drinks no liquids at meals will add years of pleasurable existence to his life. Of cold or warm drinks the former are the most pernicious; drinking at meals induces persons to eat more than they otherwise would, as any one can verify, by experiment, and it is excess in eating which devastates the land with sickness suffering and death.

14. After fifty years of age, if not a day labourer, the sedentary persons after forty, should eat but twice a day, in the morning and about four in the afternoon; persons can soon accustom themselves to a seven hour interval between eating thus giving the stomach rest; for every organ without adequate rest will "give out" prematurely.

15. Begin early to live under the benign influences of the Christian religion, for it has the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Hall's Journal.

THE SABBATH SCHOOL, A GARDEN.

A childrens Sermon by Rev. Dr. McAulane of Finsbury chapel, London from a report in the London Baptist:

After the hymn, "Singing for Jesus," the Doctor arose, and, addressing the scholars as "My dear young friends," he proceeded to give them their sermon, which was indeed all for themselves. He said he wanted to talk to them that morning about a garden, a thing with which they were all more or less familiar, and to compare the Sunday-school to a garden. He might refer to any school but he would take their own in particular, and the first thing he wanted them to remember was:—

1. A garden may be made beautiful.—Suppose it were winter, and they took a walk with him into a garden. They would find the ground hard, they would not be able perhaps to see many flowers, the fruit trees would be all bare, and the atmosphere cold and chilly. It would not look very beautiful, and they would not care to stay there very long. But then that garden might be made beautiful; the hard ground might become soft, those vacancies might be filled with flowers, the trees might be clothed with leaves and fruit, and the garden become altogether very beautiful. So with a Sunday-school. There were many things in Sunday-schools he did not like to see. There is a little boy, and he has a very hard heart; but it can be made soft. There is a little girl, she is proud; but she can be made humble. There is a boy with a temper like a lucifer match; if you just touch it, it is all in a blaze in a moment. But all this can be altered, and the Sunday school may be made very beautiful.

2. But if a garden is to be made beautiful the cultivation must begin at the right time.—Having referred to the need of observing the proper time for planting and brought out that generally the spring-time—early in the year—was the best, he asked when is the best time to begin to make the Sunday-school beautiful? Next year? Next month? Next Sunday? No; now is the best time to begin. It was sin that destroyed the beauty of the Sunday-school; and sin was like a river, which was small at its commencement, and might be turned with ease then; but which, further on its course, defied all their efforts. Or like a stone at the top of a mountain, which, when it was once set agoing down the mountain side, must be stopped at once, or it might not be stopped at all. Sin prevents a Sunday-school being beautiful, and the sooner they dealt with it the better. This made the infant class such an important part of the Sunday-school.

3. If a garden is to be made beautiful, it must be ALL cultivated.—Suppose they had a garden divided into two sides, and five beds on each side. Suppose they cultivate one side, and let the other alone. The garden would not look very beautiful thus. Or suppose they cultivate three beds on either side and let the other two alone. That would not do. No; they must cultivate the whole of it. So of the Sunday-school. Say, there is a class, the scholars all come regularly and in good time, and are very attentive. Well he should call that a well-cultivated bed. But here is another class, where the scholars are irregular, late, and inattentive, and that spoils the beauty of the school. He was in the cemetery the other day; where his predecessor, Dr. Fletcher, was buried; and, as he always did when there he went to look at the monument that had been placed there to his memory. He noticed an ugly stain upon the monument, which spoils its beauty; but it was in the