

The Christian Messenger.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1875.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, October 31st, 1875.—Friends and Foes of Jesus.—John xv. 11-19.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Whoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." James iv. 4.

ANALYSIS.—I. Mutual joy. Vs. 11, 12. Brotherly love. Vs. 12, 13. III. Christ's friends. Vs. 14, 15. IV. A divine calling. Vs. 16. V. Reason for brotherly love. Vs. 17-19.

EXPOSITION.—Verse 11.—These things have I spoken unto you. (vs. 1-10), the words which furnished our last lesson with what had been said at the table. There is probably some emphasis to be laid upon the word "you." To you disciples only, not to a mixed throng; and to you the eleven apostles from among the disciples, as destined to be my special representatives, and the "foundation" of the church. And yet we must take care not to separate them from other Christians, so as not to apply to other and all Christians these words of Christ; for if the eleven specially represented Christ to the church, they more fully represented the church before Christ.

That my joy might remain in you. He speaks here of joy as that which he aimed to produce, because it was an hour of sorrow; but, as he soon shows, the joy is dependent on the life, or spiritual condition, and its fruit. Jesus was indeed "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," characteristically, pre-eminently such; yet not the less, nay, all the more for that, permanently and pre-eminently filled with joy. He lived a two-fold life. He was in the world with a world-life. He was in God his Father with a divine life. In his earthly external experiences, sorrow abounded. In his communion with God, joy was inexpressibly great and sweet and holy. The identity of the life, and thence of the joy of the believer with the Lord's life and joy, follows from the doctrine of our vital union with him. And that your joy might be full. Fullness of joy in one sense comes to no one in this life, but awaits the completion of our redemption in glory. Yet in another sense our joy is full, or may be. We have the gospel in all its completeness, a full salvation fully revealed, and, as compared with those who before Christ had only types and shadows, the believer is complete.

Verse 12.—This is my commandment. Called in xiii. 34 "a new commandment." Not new as to its substance. In this respect the Old Covenant and the New are one. New as to expression. Christ is now in position to give the law in its rounded fullness, and so to call the commandment or the full law, in a single precept, distinctively his own—"my commandment." That ye love one another as I have loved you. What to do and how to do it. The how, or manner, is the new element. That could not be given till Christ himself was on earth, nor even then till his love had come out in deed, and in the final deed of self-sacrifice. Hence this statement of the law, or commandment, is reserved for this last hour. Christian life is Christian love, coming most to consciousness and to view in brotherly love, and the joy is but the fruit, result, manifestation, of this life of love. Hence he is here telling how to have bliss; and it is the only way heaven's bliss ever did or ever will get and keep place on this earth.

Verse 13.—Greater love, etc. Compare Rom. v. 7, 8, where the death of Christ is viewed as for those not yet become friends, and as intended to make them such. In our lesson Jesus is speaking to disciples, those who have become friends. It is true that voluntary death for an enemy is more wonderful than for a friend; yet the point in our verse is the degree of love, and there is no degree beyond self-sacrifice, whether for friend or foe. This love of one another is not love for our brethren simply as men, or individuals. It is for them as members of the body of Christ; it is for Christ as in them; it is for them as the church of the living God.

Verse 14.—Ye are my friends if ye do, etc. This shows that in the preceding verse he had in mind his own love as the pattern of theirs, and that he was not merely stating a general principle. He now tells them plainly that it is for them that he bears and shows such love, that thus they may take comfort, and have joy in him. Yet they need to remember that duty is inseparable from privilege, and that friendship is necessarily reciprocal, both giving and receiving. Note the connection

between this verse and verse 12. There the commandment is summed up in love such as his own. Here he speaks of things commanded. There it is the whole state of the heart, loving devotion. Here it is the acting out of this devotion, in whatever ways the circumstances require. There, principle; here, its manifestation. Christ does not sink his authority of lordship in his friendship of fraternity, but preserves both. Knowing how to be both our Brother and our Sovereign, one with us, yet supreme above us—Friend and Lord.

Verse 15.—Henceforth I call you not servant, for the servant knoweth not, etc. Christ continued to call his disciples "servants" (Rom. i. 1, and often), and does it indeed in this very discourse (vs. 20.) He means that henceforth they are not to be servants, or slaves merely, but to be taken now into the counsel of God, and have a more complete knowledge of salvation. The contrast "henceforth" is between the time before his death and the time after the Spirit's descent; or, in general, between the Old Dispensation and the New. It is not meant that the Old Testament saints were mere slaves or servants, knowing nothing of God's will and counsel, blindly obeying, and not standing as friends, and even sons. The Bible is clear against such a mistake. It is that there was then far less knowledge of God and fullness of communion. But I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard, etc. The change in name and relation is founded on a change in revelation and consequent knowledge. "All things." The gospel of God stood forth in its wholeness as a "finished" thing, the fulfilment of types and "the whole counsel of God."

Verse 16.—Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained [appointed, set apart] you. This refers primarily to the selection of the eleven for their apostolic work. God's choice, Christ's choice and election, precedes and determines ours. We elect him who elects us because he elects us. That ye should go, etc. Specially to apostolic labors in founding the church of God, and completing the volume of inspiration.

Verse 17.—Summing up in practical lesson what had preceded (see on vs. 12), and the natural starting point for the comfort given in the following verses.

Verse 18.—If the world hate you, ye know, etc. This brings to view another relation consequent on the maintenance of those already dwelt upon. Love of God, of Christ, and of Christ's, will result in hate and antagonism—in sharpest conflict between those who love and those who do not. Here again they find in their Master's experience that which they are to expect. He had suffered, they must. Jesus shows beforehand both sides.

Verse 19.—If ye were of the world, etc. This explains first of all that which so puzzled them, Christ's rejection—his seeming failure; and then it explains what will be the severity of their lot. We must take our choice between the friendship and the good of this world, and God's friendship and blessing.

QUESTIONS.—Vs. 11. What does Christ mean by "my joy"? What by "remain in you"? What by "might be full"? Have these last words ever been fulfilled? Acts xiii. 52; Rom. xiv. 17.

Vs. 12. What did the law of Moses make the measure of brotherly love? Lev. xix. 18. What is the Saviour's measure of brotherly love? Why does Jesus call it "a new commandment," as in chap. xiii. 34?

Vs. 13. How did Christ's friends become such? 1 John iv. 19. Ought Christians to lay down their lives for each other? 1 John iii. 16. How ought they not to love? 1 John iii. 12.

Vs. 15. With what title had Jesus commonly addressed his disciples? Matt. x. 24, 25; John 12. 26. In what sense does he now say, "I call you not servants"?

Vs. 16. What doctrine is illustrated in this verse? 1 John iv. 10; Rom. ix. 16. Against what are these words designedly a guard? What is a condition of all acceptable prayer?

Vs. 18. How ought Christians to feel when the world hates them? Matt. x. 24; 1 John iii. 1; 1 Peter iv. 12, 13. Can we love the world and God too? Matt. vi. 24; 1 John ii. 15.

HOMILETICAL HELPS.

Friends and Foes of Jesus.

Verse 11.—Jesus' love for his people foresees their needs, and turns sorrow into joy.

Verse 12.—Whoever shares Christ's glory must share his character. Power of love is a test of Christian manhood.

Verse 13.—Human love rises no higher than to cheerfulness in dying for friends. Christ's rose to a higher stage: "When we were enemies, Christ died to save."

Verse 14.—Attachment to Jesus will seek out ways of pleasing him, and will find delight in obedience. After conversion, the yoke is easy and the burden light; and duties once irksome, become delightful. A loving heart finds joy in obedience; an unloving heart murmurs at prohibitions and penalties.

Verse 15.—Christians are promoted from servants to friends. Jesus unfolds to them the Father's will and purposes, that they may enter into cordial sympathy, and be fellow-workers with God.

Verse 16.—All good begins from the divine, not from the human side. Men love God, not from their own spontaneous impulses, but because Jesus has loved them, and gives them his Spirit.

Verse 17.—Love to Jesus will beget love to his disciples. A young convert finds himself strangely loving many to whom he has a strong repulsion.

Verse 18.—The enmity of the world may be endured, because the Master suffered it first, and it is enough for the disciple to be as his Master. If Jesus, with his tender sympathy and miracles of love, was maligned and persecuted, no Christian need be surprised if his actions are traduced and his motives misrepresented.

Verse 19.—The Saviour gives a radical reason for the world's enmity. Its spirit and aims are in open antagonism with those of his kingdom. The world loves and praises its own. But those whom Christ has chosen renounce the maxims of the world and oppose its spirit, and thereby incur its hatred.

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, November 7th, 1857.—The Work of the Spirit.—John xvi. 7-14.

Youths' Department.

WHAT THE FLOWERS SAID.

BY LAURA HOLLIS.

Aunt Derby was walking one day in her little garden in the country, where the flowers were thrown about, helter-skelter, without any regard to size or color, when, she says, she heard a queer little voice from the ground; and on looking down was surprised to find just nothing at all but her flowers.

She was determined to know where the sound came from, and insist upon it that she found it to be a little blue violet in earnest conversation with its nearest neighbor, who was no other than a great sunflower.

The poor violet was almost buried in the shade which the leaves of its tall friend cast upon the ground, and its voice was very feeble; but she says she distinctly heard the violet say, "Dear me, what use is there for me to try and grow,—so small and fragile as I am at best? Who would see me down behind these tall, healthy neighbors about me? I am almost discouraged, for it is too hard to try to live.

The great sunflower answered, in a loud, rough voice, "Come, cheer up, cheer up, little one, don't be down hearted. Shall I tell you what I heard a beautiful girl say this very day about you? She said, 'You sweet little flower, do you know how much good you do me?—so modest and humble, yet so fragrant and pure, I must try to be like you.'"

The violet dropped its tiny head, unable to bear such high praise; but it soon raised its blue eyes in thanks to the great stock by its side. Then, the roses, and pinks, verbenas and mignonette, and many other flowers, cried out with one voice, "And me, did she mention me? What did she say?" And the great yellow face beamed on them, and nodded kindly to each and all.

"Yes, my dears, the sweet young lady spoke of you all. You were all beautiful to her, and she wished she could be like you all, in one way or another. And she was thoughtful even of me, for she tapped me with her pretty hand; and though she laughed in my face, she said, 'You are a noble fellow, after all.' And that was all I could expect." And the flowers all brightened up, and after a short, whispered consultation they all agreed, that if the sunflower had no great beauty or fragrance, it had a generous heart, and was the encouragement of the whole garden, with its bright face and cheering words,—so far from envy, and so full of charity and good feeling for its neighbors and friends.

The next day when Auntie went out again to care for her garden friends, she was surprised to see how much they had grown in one day and how bright they were. They had never seemed so beautiful before, and she wondered what had

helped them so much, until she happened to think of the pleasant talk she had heard the morning before, and she said, "Ah I know, I see how it is,—it is a kind and cheering word that does good to us all." —Repository.

THE CRITIC SILENCED.

On one occasion Tom Marshall heard R. J. Breckinridge preach, and falling in with him after the service, accompanied him home. "Why don't you preach better?" said Marshall. "I do as well as I can," answered Breckinridge. "Why don't you preach as the Savior did?" continued Marshall. "That's hard to do," rejoined Breckinridge, "I have as high an opinion of your talents as any body else has, and I set a higher estimate on your reading and information than most people do. I defy you to make a parable, and I defy you to find one in all literature—outside of the New Testament." "Nonsense!" exclaimed Marshall; "I can make fifty, and I can find a hundred." "Well, try it, and let me know," replied Breckinridge. Shortly after they met again. "Well, Bob," said Breckinridge, "What about those things—the parables? I have tried my best, and I can't make one; I've looked everywhere, and I can't find one. What does it all mean? I give it up." "You see," replied Breckinridge, "why I don't preach in parables. I can't do that."

AN ARGUMENT FOR RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE.

The following is a characteristic incident in the life of Deacon Bolles, who was an eminent type of the age in which he lived, for personal and private worth, both as a man and Christian.

When the Baptists of Hartford began to hold public services, an over zealous member of Dr. Strong's society called upon him and asked him if he knew that John Bolles had started an opposition meeting.

"No," said he, "when, where?"

"Why, at the old Court-house."

"Oh, yes, I know it," the doctor carelessly replied; "but it is not an opposition meeting. They are Baptists, to be sure, but they preach the same doctrine that I do. You had better go and hear them."

"No," said the man, "I am a Presbyterian."

"So am I," rejoined Dr. Strong; "but that need not prevent us from wishing them well. You had better go."

"No," said the man with energy, "I shan't go near them. Dr. Strong, aint you going to do something about it?"

"What?"

"Stop it, can't you?"

"My friend," said the doctor, seriously, "John Bolles is a good man, and will surely go to heaven. If you and I get there we shall meet him, we had better, therefore, cultivate a pleasant acquaintance with him here." —Church Union.

TEACHERS MUST NOT GROW OLD.

There are some things which a teacher must do, and there are some things which a teacher must not do. He must not grow old. He must have access to the fountain of perpetual youth. It is said that there is a prejudice against old age in the pulpit. It is an unreasonable one. It cannot be tolerated in the school-room. There is no valid objection to gray hairs. The common opinion that gray hairs may be accompanied by wisdom is not altogether without foundation.

Gray hairs may not, in all cases, be injurious; but they must be covering of a brain that shelters a young mind. The body must grow old; the ear must become dull; the eye must become dim. The mental eye may be kept undimmed. Decreasing strength of body may be accompanied by increasing strength of mind. If the mind is used as it ought to be used, it will lose none of its vivacity, freshness and force, till near the time when its tabernacle is to be taken down.

Men's minds grow dull as years roll on, because they fail to give them due exercise. They have acquired, it may be, a competency, and are not compelled to exert mind and body, or they have become indolent. The man of business forms habits that are well nigh mechanical, which interfere seriously with mental exertion. He may continue his business, though his mind grows old.

But this is not the case with the teacher. His mental powers and susceptibilities must be kept young, or he cannot act by sympathy on the minds of the young. No

mind can confer any considerable amount of benefit on other minds unless it is in sympathy with them. The great power of the teacher is the power of sympathy.

The teacher need not grow old. His constant contact with the minds of the young, the exercise of mind necessary to rouse, stimulate, direct and control the mental activities of his pupils, will prevent his mind from losing the vigor, freshness and sympathy characteristic of a young mind.

If it is a common remark, which must be the result of common observation, that teachers grow dull as they grow old. The remark, as a general rule, is not true of teachers truly so called. It is true of some who occupy the positions of teachers, and who think their business is to communicate knowledge by reading lectures to their students. When these lectures were first composed, they were interested in them, and hence their delivery awakened interest in others; but as time rolled on they lost their interest in truths so often repeated in the same form, and of course became dull.

The same effect will follow the continued repetition of any form of instruction. The teacher who would not grow old, should never use the same illustrations and thoughts over and over and over. He must study and prepare for each lesson, separately fully, freshly.—S. S. Times.

The following is from a correspondent of London Baptist:

DEATH OF THE REV. R. ELLIS (CYNDDELW) OF CARNARVON.

Another bright star in the ranks of Baptist ministers in Wales has disappeared. Many thousands who enjoyed the preaching and read the several works of Robert Ellis, will feel regret to hear of his rather unexpected death. Our friend did not feel well for the last six months, but no one thought that his disease would so soon hasten his death. When taken seriously ill he was on a tour to South Wales, to Sirhow Esteddfod, where he was to fulfil the office of an adjudicator. The funeral took place the following Tuesday, and was attended by upwards of 600 friends. The procession started from Garth Eryn at 11 a. m., and reached Glynceiriog at 4 p. m., after a journey of twelve miles. Mr. Ellis, who was better known throughout the Principality of Wales by his bardic name, Cynddelw, was a man of considerable ability, wit and wisdom. He has added to almost every branch of Welsh literature, and although a self-taught student, he was famed through the country as one of our best Welsh scholars. Scarcely could his equal be found as an antiquary, bard, and commentator. His commentary on the New Testament will be read and studied for many years to come. May his footsteps in piety and zeal be followed by the eighty ministers who paid his mortal remains their last tribute.

One shout among the highlands is echoed and re-echoed from hill-top to hill-top, as if the heights were glad of our presence, and wanted all the mountains to know we were in their midst. Multiplying the sound, they give it back to us in a thousand sweet and varied accents, so as to make our hearts exultant with rapturous emotion. One activity for Christ is caught up in its influence and carried from heart to heart, as if to let all the world know the goodness of God. Coming back to us in purer thoughts, nobler desires, stronger aspirations for heaven, it multiplies both our faith and joy a hundred fold.

DANGER IN TRUTH.—The Duke of Queensbury was once conversing upon the writings of some assailants of the constitution, Paine included, when a sycophant remarked, "And so false, too." "No," said his Grace, "not at all: they are true, and that is their danger, and the reason I desire to see them put down by the law; were they false, I should not mind them at all."

We never knew a scolding person that was able to govern a family. What makes people scold? Because they cannot govern others? Those who govern well, are generally calm. They are prompt and resolute, but steady and mild.

In Sweden, a sheaf of wheat is set on the roof at Christmas time, that even the little birds may have a part in the feast spread in memory of the birth of Him who came to break for all, "The Bread of Life."

Love labor; if you do not want it for food, you may for physic.