



LESSON XII.—DECEMBER 19.

John's Message About Sin and Salvation.

I. John i., 5 to ii., 6.

Read the First Epistle of John. Commit verses 1., 8-10.

GOLDEN TEXT.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.—I. John i., 9.

Home Readings.

- M. I. John i., 1-2: 6.—John's message about sin and salvation.
 T. I. John ii., 7-29.—'This is the promise . . . Eternal life.'
 W. I. John iii., 1-12.—'Sin is the transgression of the Law.'
 Th. I. John iii., 13-24.—'He laid down his life for us.'
 F. I. John v., 1-21.—'God hath given to us eternal life.'
 S. Rom. v., 1-21.—Reconciled to God by Christ's death.
 S. Rom. viii., 1-17.—'Free from the law of sin and death.'

Lesson Story.

John, 'the Apostle of Love,' writes a letter brimming over with love to all disciples of Jesus. His first words are of Jesus who was with God from the beginning, and who was manifested in the flesh, that all men through him might have eternal life.

John proclaims the message he has heard from the Son of God, that God is light; and in him is no darkness at all. Darkness can not exist in light, therefore if we are walking with God we are not walking in darkness. Those who walk in the light and love of God are drawn to each other by the same love and sympathies, we have fellowship with each other in Jesus. And the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.

Those who say they are not sinners in need of a Saviour are deceiving themselves and making a fearful mistake. Jesus has promised to forgive all repentant sinners and his word can not be broken. He longs to forgive the sins which he has already atoned for in his own body on the tree. But without confession and repentance there can be no acceptance of pardon. If we will not acknowledge our sin and need of pardon we practically say that his word is not true. If we have not sinned there was no need of Christ's atonement. If there was no need of Christ's atonement, then there is no sin or sorrow in the world, nor ever has been.

For all sinners, Jesus Christ stands before his Father as Advocate, being himself the propitiation for their sins. If we know him we must keep his commandments. If we do not obey him, it is a lie to say that we love him. He who keeps the word of God thereby shows his love to God. He who says he abides in Christ, must prove it, by living as Christ lived here.

Lesson Hints.

John is supposed to have been the youngest of the twelve apostles. He speaks of himself as 'the disciple whom Jesus loved,' implying that between these two there existed a tender sympathetic intimacy such as none of the others could understand at the time.

John was an old man when he wrote these epistles, probably between eighty and ninety-five. The date of writing is rather uncertain, and the place was either Ephesus or Patmos, to which island John was banished during the latter years of his life. From Patmos he wrote the wonderful Book of Revelation.

'Message'—a word meaning promise, wherever found in the New Testament.

'God is light'—God's nature is expressed by the three most potent forces of the universe, Light, Life and Love.

'Fellowship'—friendship. Abraham was

called the friend of God, because he believed and obeyed him. There can be no fellowship where there is the darkness of insincerity and disobedience.

'Do not the truth'—our lives as well as our words are false.

'Walk in the light'—in the presence of God, 'keeping close' to our Guide, Jesus Christ. 'We have fellowship one with another'—

Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, Our comforts and our cares.

'The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin'—'Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.' (Matt. i., 21.) 'Without shedding of blood is no remission. So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.' (Heb. ix., 22, 28.)

'For if the blood of bulls, and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?' (Heb. ix., 13, 14.)

'He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of Grace?' (Heb. x., 29.)

'Cleanseth'—is continually cleansing those who abide in Christ from all sin, known and unknown, conforming us to his own image.

'We make him a liar'—No opinions or suppositions of our will ever alter God's word. We have the distinct statement that God cannot lie, it is impossible, 'yea, let God be true, but every man a liar.' (Rom. iii., 4.) 'God's word is truth, and everything contrary to it, false.'

'If any man sin'—the enemy is constantly laying pitfalls and snares for us, the slightest deviation from the right path leads us into sin.

'Advocate'—The word in the Greek is the same as 'Comforter,' one called alongside of to help and strengthen.

'Jesus Christ, the righteous'—'All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.' (Isa. lxi., 6.) 'I count all things but loss . . . that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is of the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.' (Phil. iii., 8, 9.)

Lesson Hymn.

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds,
 In a believer's ear;
 It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
 And drives away his fear.

It makes the wounded spirit whole,
 And calms the troubled breast;
 'Tis manna to the hungry soul,
 And to the weary rest.

Dear name! the rock on which I build,
 My shield and hiding-place,
 My never-failing treasury, filled
 With boundless stores of grace.

Jesus, my Shepherd, Guardian, Friend,
 My Prophet, Priest and King;
 My Lord, my Life, my Way, my End,
 Accept the praise I bring.

Weak is the effort of my heart,
 And cold my warmest thought
 But when I see thee as thou art
 I'll praise thee as I ought.
 —Rev. J. Newton, 1779.

Primary Lesson.

'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'

When an animal is first caught in a trap or cage it feels very much frightened, and makes many efforts and struggles to be free. But after it has been there for some time it settles down more quietly. Whether it has been numbed with the restraint, or wearied by its useless struggles, or injured in some way we cannot tell.

Suppose we loose the trap, open the door of the cage and give liberty to the captive, will the bird immediately fly upward with a glad song? Will the squirrel at once bound over the grass to the nearest tree, and then high in the leafy branches chatter with glee over his escape? That would seem the most natural thing to do would it not? Yet some of these little creatures are so foolish that they do not seem to know when they are free and so stay in trap or cage long after the door has been opened, and the way made for them to escape.

Does that remind you of anything you ever heard before?

Little children, as well as older people, are often caught in Satan's traps of temptation. Jesus comes and opens the door of their prison, making a way for them to escape from their sins. Yet some are as foolish as the little birds who stay in the cage after the door is opened—they will not come out of their bondage. Bondage means being a slave to some one. Those who will not obey Jesus are in bondage to the enemy of their souls. Those who think they can be good enough themselves without trusting Jesus to save them, do not even know that they are in a trap.

Those who see that they are sinners and confess—that is, tell Jesus that they are sorry for all their sins, will be at once forgiven. Jesus bore the punishment of all our sins by dying on the cross for us, so he has power to forgive our sins and wash away all the stain of guilt. With his own precious blood he cleanses us.

Practical Points.

A. H. CAMERON.

God and truth and heaven are associated with light, while Satan, sin and hell, are always enveloped in darkness. Verse 5: Jude 6-13.

Profession without possession is hypocrisy. Possession without profession is disloyalty to the King. Verse 6: also Rom. x., 9.

Close communion with Christ is the best antidote to sin. Verse 7.

Sin and truth are sworn enemies, and truth ever leads her followers to victory. Verses 8 and 10.

While sometimes 'open confession is good for the soul,' there are trials and temptations that should be told to Jesus alone. Verse 9.

Only One was connected with sin, without becoming contaminated, and that same one is our only deliverer from the love and dominion of sin. Verses 1-2.

Obedience is the test of discipline, and love is the mainspring of obedience. Verses 3, 4, 5: also, John xiv., 15. Revised version.

The manhood of Christ is the only safe model after which to fashion our lives, while his Godhead we may trust and admire. Verse 6: Coloss. ii., 9.
 Tiverton, Ont.

SUGGESTED HYMNS.

'Weeping will not save me,' 'What can wash away my sins?', 'Jesus, thy blood and righteousness,' 'Blessed be the fountain of blood,' 'I heard the voice of Jesus say.'

Search Questions.

How many references are there in the Epistles of John to the Gospel written by him?

Christian Endeavor Topic.

Dec. 19.—Our sins and how to get rid of them.—Luke xiii., 23-30.

Junior Prayer-Meeting Topic.

Dec. 19.—What are some of our sins and how can we get rid of them?—Luke xiii., 23-30.

Sunday-schools ought to be made to embrace the entire younger population of every community. With the International Lesson Papers and the multitude of aids provided by expert writers, there ought now to be no difficulty in securing sound instruction even in obscure schools. It ought to be considered a moral and intellectual disgrace to any family not to send its children to Sabbath-school.—Joseph Cook.