



LESSON VI—August 8.

Working and Waiting For Christ.

—I. Thessalonians iv., 9; v., 2.

Read I. Thessalonians iv. and v. Commit verses 16-18.

GOLDEN TEXT.

'If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also.'—John xiv., 3.

Home Readings.

- M. I. Thess. iv., 1-18.—Working and Waiting for Christ.
 T. I. Thess. v., 1-28.—'Let us Watch and be Sober.'
 W. Isa. liv., 1-17.—Deliverance out of Affliction Promised.
 Th. I. Pet. ii., 1-25.—Living for God's Glory.
 F. Matt. xxiv., 29-51.—'Therefore be ye also Ready.'
 S. II. Pet. iii., 1-18.—'The day of the Lord will come.'
 S. John xiv., 1-31.—'I will come again, and receive you.'

Lesson Story.

Three weeks ago we had the story of Paul's visit to Thessalonica, last week we learned that the Thessalonians had sent a contribution to Paul by Silas and Timothy. This week our lesson is taken from the first of the two letters which Paul wrote back to the converts at Thessalonica. It will be well to read the two letters through at a sitting as we would letters addressed to ourselves. Notice how the letters begin with thankfulness and praise, and express the great loving care Paul has for all his converts. The many short verses in the fifth chapter are very easy to learn and profitable to study and meditate upon.

Paul reminds the Thessalonians of the necessity of having brotherly love toward each other, praising them for their well-doing in this respect and exhorting them to 'increase more and more.' He then advises them to make it their ambition to lead a quiet, orderly and industrious life, with all honesty. Concerning those who had fallen asleep in Christ, he explains that they must not sorrow hopelessly for them, as the heathen did for their dead, for as sure as God raised up Jesus from the dead so he will raise up all who die trusting in Jesus. We shall all meet again when Christ returns to reign on earth. 'For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.'

This glorious truth is to comfort us, when our loved ones leave this earth we know that we shall meet them again very soon. But at what time, we cannot tell, we know not beforehand when we may suddenly be called to meet our Lord in heaven, or when he shall suddenly descend and meet us and take us to be forever with himself.

Lesson Hymn.

It may be at morn, when the day is awaking,
 When sunlight through darkness and shadow is breaking,
 That Jesus will come in the fulness of glory,
 To receive from the world 'His own.'

It may be at midday, it may be at twilight,
 It may be, perchance, that the blackness of midnight
 Will burst into light in the blaze of his glory,
 When Jesus receives 'His own.'

Lesson Hints.

'Brotherly love'—The Christian Church is all one family, one God and Father over all. 'One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren'—this is the bond that unites us all. 'Taught of God'—by the Holy

Spirit in our hearts. God is love, and his children must love each other. The brotherly love of the early Christians was proverbial among the heathen who had never heard of such affection.

'Increase more and more'—the nearer one comes to perfection the more one sees the need of improvement and increase in every virtue. Love is the greatest of all virtues, fulfilling all the law. 'Study to be quiet'—literally, 'be ambitious to be quiet.' Every idle word and action will be judged, time is too precious to be wasted. 'Do your own business'—few people attend to their own business so well that they can afford to meddle with that of other people. 'Work with your own hands'—as Paul had set them an example, yea, as our Lord has set the example. Work is honorable, and every one owes the world a certain amount of work. 'Honestly'—honesty is the only policy for Christians. There is no room for crooked ways in the narrow path.

'Asleep'—this expression was constantly used among the early Christians, expressing so well the surety of the resurrection. The heathen had no hope of ever again seeing their dead and sorrowed accordingly. 'Jesus died and rose again'—on this point hangs our faith. 'By the word of the Lord'—this was no splendid flight of imagination on the part of Paul, he knew whereof he spoke. The Lord himself had revealed it to him. 'Prevent'—come before, or precede. 'We which are alive'—not necessarily those Christians, but the Christians who are alive at the time. 'So shall we ever be with the Lord'—this is all of heaven's rapturous bliss, being with our loving Saviour, realizing the full extent of his love.

'Comfort'—we cannot sorrow long with this wonderfully precious hope in view. 'As a thief in the night'—suddenly, unexpectedly, without a word of warning. 'Therefore be ye also ready.'

Search Questions.

Give six passages concerning our Lord's coming.

Primary Lesson.

Do you remember the first lesson we had this year? On the first Sunday in January we learned about the Ascension, Christ ascended into heaven forty days after he rose from the dead. Before he left his disciples he promised them many times that he would return to the earth again and take them to be with himself (read the fourteenth chapter of John). Just after our Lord ascended, as the disciples stood gazing up into the clouds through which he had passed, two angels appeared to them renewing the promise that Jesus would come again from heaven, in the same way he had gone. We cannot know the day nor the hour that Jesus will come again, but we know that he will come, and perhaps quite soon. We do not know just what will happen after our Lord and king comes, but we know that his coming will set everything right. When Jesus comes every one will be happy, there will be no more sorrow nor sickness, nor sadness nor dying. The things that are crooked now will all be set straight then. We will all be good and useful, happy and loving when Jesus comes again. As we have learned, he may come at any time, and it will be very unexpected to us; you would not like to be doing anything that was not just right when he comes, would you? Then we must live every day as though we expected him at any moment, doing the things that he would be glad to find us at.

SUGGESTED HYMNS.

'Rejoice! Rejoice! our King is coming!' 'Forever with the Lord,' 'Till He come,' 'Are you ready for the Bridegroom?' 'Lo! He comes,' 'When Jesus comes to reward,' 'It may be at morn.'

Junior Prayer-Meeting Topic.

Aug. 8.—The comfort that comes from the bible.—Isa. xii., 1-6.—(A promise meeting.)

Christian Endeavor Topic.

Aug. 8.—Bits of comfort from the bible.—Isa. xii., 1-6. (A promise meeting.)

The Teacher's Preparation.

'Living Epistle.'

The teacher's preparation should be continuous. As soon as one lesson is disposed of, another should be taken up. It is a very poor plan to leave the lesson till the last of

the week, or perhaps till Sunday morning, and then glance hurriedly over it, and come to the class with no better preparation than that. A better way is to begin on Sunday afternoon or evening the preparation of the lesson for the following Sunday. It can then be meditated on during the week and ideas formed as to what is to be drawn from the lesson, and a plan formed for teaching it. The teacher will then be able to comment on the lesson and on the answers given to questions. Questions may be answered correctly, and but very little information gained, and little if any impression made on the mind of the scholar, when a few words of comment by the teacher would give the scholar a more definite idea of what is designed to be taught. The teacher should be so familiar with the lesson as to be capable of asking questions original with himself, and not confine himself to questions published in Sunday-school literature, which form a very good ground-work but do not always bring out all there is in the lesson. He should endeavor to keep in advance of his scholars. Without much study and prayerful preparation, a teacher will sometimes find it difficult to teach his most intelligent and studious scholars. It has been said by scholars, and with good reason: 'It is of no use for me to go to Sunday-school; I know more about the lesson than my teacher does.'

The most important part of the teacher's preparation is prayer. Above all things, he should ask God's blessing upon his studies and labors, and this with strong supplication and tears. Christ said to his disciples; 'Without me ye can do nothing.'

Lesson Preparation.

(Rev. C. H. Spurgeon.)

There may be some who think they will convert the world by philosophy, or that they can renew the heart by eloquence, or that they have some witchcraft of ceremonies by which they can regenerate the soul; but we depend wholly and simply and alone upon the Spirit of God. He alone worketh all our works in us; and in going forth upon our holy service we take with us no strength, and we rely upon no power except that of the Spirit of the Most High. We feel that we need this to prepare us for our work. I suppose you all do prepare. There is not a teacher here who goes to his or her class on the Sabbath Day without preparing the lesson. A minister once said, 'Sir, I go into the pulpit and preach and think nothing of it,' and the one to whom he made that remark said, 'And that is just what your people think of it.' If you can go to your class and teach as easily as possible without any preparation, depend upon it, as you think nothing of it, your children will think nothing of it. A great deal depends upon how the lesson has been worked into your soul. But it is not preparation by way of studying a lesson that I speak of just now. You want the light of the Spirit to shine within you, and to get into fellowship with the Father and the Son, and then you will be able to teach. Attach great importance to the literary preparation, but infinitely more to the spiritual preparation. When the heart is right the head will get right. When your soul is in communion with God himself you will soon get into communion with God's work. Be charged with the Holy Ghost. Receive to the full the Divine influence, and then go to your class fully prepared. There is no preparation for the work of God like being with God. Go up into the mount with Christ, and then when he calls you, you will be fit to go forth for him, and tell what you have seen with him in the Holy Mount.

Since the Spirit of God is not straitened, we must not straiten our labors. We must pray. Let us not straiten our prayers. Oh! let us pray more. Brothers, will you pray for your children, one by one? Sisters, do you pray always—before class, in class, and after class? Do you pray with each one alone? Praying with each child is a wonderful means of grace. Many young hearts feel private prayer with the teacher's arm about their necks more than anything else. Be much in prayer, since the Spirit of God is not straitened, and can work mightily. Be also much in effort. I cannot withhold the observation that although the work of salvation is all of God, he does bless effort.—C. H. Spurgeon.