



LESSON,—SUNDAY, MAY 10, 1908.

The Mission of the Holy Spirit

John xvi., 4-15. Memory verse 13. Read John xv., 26; xvi., 24.

Golden Text.

I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever. John xiv., 16.

Home Readings.

- Monday, May 4.—John xv., 26; xvi., 11.
- Tuesday, May 5.—John xvi., 12-24.
- Wednesday, May 6.—John xvi., 25; xvii., 8.
- Thursday, May 7.—John xvii., 9-26.
- Friday, May 8.—Rom. viii., 1-22.
- Saturday, May 9.—Rom. viii., 23-39.
- Sunday, May 10.—Gal. v., 16-26.

FOR THE JUNIOR CLASSES.

Last Sunday we were talking about the beautiful Heavenly Home which Jesus has gone to prepare for us. We spoke of it's being something like our going to a new earthly home, and how if mother had to leave you to go and get a new home ready here on earth she would not leave you alone. We learned last Sunday how Jesus told his disciples that he too would not leave them alone. He said 'I will not leave you comfortless,' 'I will pray the Father and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.' Just as mother would say, perhaps, 'I am sorry, dears, that I have to leave you for a while, but aunt Amy is coming over to take care of you while I am away, so that you won't be lonely.' Now today we are to study about the One whom Jesus has sent to Earth to be with his people until Jesus comes again. What a beautiful name Jesus calls Him, 'The Comforter.' This is the unseen spirit of God who comes into every heart where Jesus is loved and trusted. We can feel His gentle loving influence, although we cannot see Him. Just think how many times when you were going to say something angry or unkind and something in your heart said 'Don't, for Jesus would not do that.' Then afterwards you would be glad you had not said the angry words and you begin to feel comforted in your heart. That is the power of God's Holy Spirit in your heart, for Christ says He is our Comforter, and shall speak to us about Christ.

There could be no more difficult lesson to bring home to the minds of children, yet some such introduction may serve. No child in the Sunday School is too young to be conscious of unseen influences at work in his heart. The doctrine of the Trinity is one of the deepest of the Christian faith, yet earthly wisdom and knowledge are not necessary to a comprehension of heavenly things (Luke x., 21), and the earnest teacher may be used of God to reveal this mighty truth even 'to babes.'

FOR THE SENIORS.

In this wonderful address in the Upper Room preserved for us by John, Christ makes the first extended reference to the Third Person in the Trinity, and it is remarkable that he considers the disciples still unregenerate men (Luke xxii., 32). Earnest loving souls though they were, the personal, physical presence of Christ seemed to block their vision of him in his true spiritual significance. Truly if they ever were to understand the higher life it was expedient (verse 7) for the physical Christ to leave them. It is evident that there can be an intellectual perception of Christ, even a mental assent to the truth of his life and words, but unless man allows the spirit of God to enter his heart and life, this is not saving faith. If the apostles had stopped at the faith that was their's during the life of Christ, neither they nor the world, humanly speaking, could have been saved.

The enduement with real power from on high (Acts i., 4, 8) made all the difference in the lives and power of these men, so that Peter, the craven denier became the staunch and fearless apostle. The mission of the spirit as spoken of by Christ is in one phrase, to keep Christ before his people. He would take up the work where Christ laid it down (verses 12, 13), would bring to mind the words of Christ whose meaning had been lost on the disciples at the time (John xiv., 26), and will even throw light on the hidden word of prophecy, or Himself give us some inner foreknowledge of God's plans (verse 13).

(SELECTIONS FROM PELOUBET'S 'NOTES.')

'A single white ray of light falling on a certain object appears red; on another, blue; on another, yellow. So the different parts of one ray by turns become visible; each is a complete ray, yet the original white ray is but one. So we believe that in that Unity of Essence there are three living Powers which we call Persons, distinct from each other.'—F. W. Robertson.

'Christ loves us far better than we can love ourselves, and knows how to show that love. If it had been expedient for him to have stayed on earth among mankind unto this very day, he would have stayed.'—Charles Kingsley. 'Christ when upon the earth in physical form had only a local presence. If he were in one place he could not be in another at the same time. But now he is gone, and the Spirit has come, filling the hearts of his people, interpreting his word, carrying forward forever the triumphs of his kingdom.'—R. S. MacArthur, D.D., LL.D. 'While Christ our Lord tarried here in the flesh, his apostles who saw and conversed with him, who walked by his side, who rested at his feet, who lay in his breast, were further, immeasurably further from him than we may be, if we will. To them he was still an external example, an external voice, an external force. Christ in us is the hope of glory (Col. i., 27).'—Liddon.

'The position of the apostles is that which, in a certain sense, every true Christian must fill, as long as the world stands. We must all be witnesses for Christ. Wherever we live, in town or in country, in public or in private, abroad or at home, we must boldly confess our Master on every opportunity.'—Ryle. And in this witness-bearing we have the all-powerful help of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 3. Reprove (R.V., 'convict') the world of (R.V., 'in respect of') sin. 'By the world must be understood the yet unbelieving part of mankind, so denominated because it was far the larger part, when these words were spoken, as it still is.'—'American Commentary.' The verb has a double sense, 'of a convincing unto salvation, and a convicting unto condemnation.'—Alford. The sin of the world is because they believe not on Christ (v. 9). It is a notable proof of Christ's divinity that he, the meek and lowly, should select this unbelief in himself as 'the only sin worth mentioning. Yet, indeed, it is the root of all other sins whatsoever. It is the reigning as well as the damning sin of the world.'—George Whitefield. 'The essence of sin is living to self. Belief in Christ is the surrender of self.'—Alexander Maclaren, D.D. As belief of Christ is the beginning of all good for man, disbelief of him is the beginning of all evil.

Verse 11. 'However ludicrous vulgar superstitions may have made the notion, there is nothing ridiculous, nor anything which we have the right to call incredible, in Christ's solemn declaration that the kingdom of darkness has a King.'—Alexander Maclaren, D.D. 'The world might think that "the power of darkness" conquered at Gethsemane and Calvary, but the resurrection and ascension proved that what looked like victory was the most signal defeat: instead of conquering he was judged. This result is so certain that it is spoken of as already accomplished.'—Cambridge Bible.

The judgment that the Holy Spirit gives is not only a condemnation and casting out of Satan, but it is an enlightenment of the righteous, so that they can form a just judgment regarding the works of the devil. We see that 'to adhere to worldly motives and ways and ambitions is to cling to a sinking ship, to throw ourselves away on a justly doomed cause.'—'Expositor's Bible.' If the prince of the world is an outcast, how much more his followers!

Verse 13. Why is he described as guiding us into truth, rather than telling us the truth? Because we are not to be 'mere passive instruments, but living agents.'—'Pulpit Commentary.' Truth can never be poured into a man; he must travel forth to seek it, through difficult places where he needs a guide.

Verse 14. How does the Holy Spirit bear witness to Christ? In the days of the apostles, he bore witness through the gift of tongues and the miracles he enabled them to work. But he was also 'the fellow-witness of the apostles, mainly and permanently, by enlightening men in the significance of facts reported by them, and by opening the heart and conscience to their influence.'—'Expositor's Bible.' It is thus he bears witness still.

Bible References.

John xiv., 23; John iii., 34; Gal. v., 22-25; I. Thess. v., 19; Eph. iv., 30.

Junior C. E. Topic.

Sunday, May 10.—Topic—Being a Christian. I. In our work and our play. John v., 17; Eccl. ix., 10; Prov. xvii., 22.

C. E. Topic.

- Monday, May 4.—Take heed how ye build. I. Cor. iii., 10-13.
- Tuesday, May 5.—Building to abide. I. Cor. iii., 14, 15.
- Wednesday, May 6.—A good foundation. I. Tim. vi., 19.
- Thursday, May 7.—A sure foundation. II. Tim. ii., 19.
- Friday, May 9.—An everlasting foundation, Prov. x., 25.
- Saturday, May 9.—Christ the corner-stone. Eph. ii., 20.
- Sunday, May 10.—Topic—Two kinds of houses: which are you building? Matt vii., 24-29.

John XIII., 34.

Christ has given us here the phrase that makes His word the new commandment, 'Love one another as I have loved you.' To what point are we to love our neighbor? Up to the point of sacrifice. That is what Jesus did. 'Love one another as I have loved you.' Seek always, consistently, the welfare of your brother's life, and seek it till it hurts. 'As I have loved you,' said Jesus when the shadow of Gethsemane was falling on His brow, and when there was graven before Him in feature of flame the dread figure of the cross. Because we have divested the word love of those associations of sentiment and of affection which cluster around the word in our ordinary usage of it, will you not bear witness with me that we have deepened and strengthened its claim upon the human heart, when we interpret it to mean, 'Thou shalt consistently seek the welfare of thy brother's life up to the point of sacrifice?'—Rockwell H. Potter.

They Know the Difference.

A Sunday School teacher said the other day that whenever she was busy she never prepared the regular lesson. 'I just tell them Bible stories, and they never know the difference,' she explained. 'All this talk about having to do a lot of studying when you have a class of small children is pure nonsense.'

But children do know the difference, and indifferent teachers are responsible for much of the dislike boys and girls manifest toward the Sunday School as they grow older. Children are the keenest critics in the world, and they cannot be kept interested and eager to learn by a teacher who rambles all around the subject instead of teaching to the point. Stick to the text.—'S. S. Times.'

Sunday School Offer.

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