

## Nov. 26. THE CHRISTIAN HOME.

Lcs. Col. 3 : 12-25.  
Mem. vs. 23-25.

Gol. Text, Ps. 101 : 2.  
Catechism Q. 67-69.

Colosse was a city in Phrygia, Asia Minor. Paul never visited there, Col. 2 ; 1, but perhaps had a part in directing the founding of the church, and he took a warm interest in them. This letter was written when he was a prisoner at Rome, and was sent to them by Tychicus and Onesimus, who at the same time carried a letter to the Ephesians and one to Philemon, a Christian living at Colosse.

This letter was on this wise. Epaphras, the minister or missionary of this church, and who also had charge of the congregations at Hierapolis and Laodicea, (Col. 1 : 7, 8 ; 4 : 12) visited Paul at Rome, a long, long, journey, and reported to him the condition of the church. This report led Paul to write them, giving advice and instructions. The letter like that to the Ephesians is very practical.

I. General instruction, vs. 12-14. *Elect*—God's chosen ones are holy in character and are beloved by Him. *Bowels*—A heart of compassion, Rev. ver. *Kindness*—In heart and manner. *Humbleness*—Instead of conceit. *Meekness*—Under provocation. *Long suffering*—toward other's faults. *Forbearing*—Putting the long suffering into exercise. *Forgiving*—There is but one cure for all the occasions of quarrel that arise, viz. the spirit of forgiveness. *Charity*—love, which as a bond keeps all other graces in their place.

II. How to cultivate the Christian graces, vs. 15-17.

*Peace*—Given by God, John 14 : 17 ; peace with Him ; peace like His. *Rule*—If it rule, disturbing passions will have no sway. *One body*—The Church of Christ. *Thankful*—Cultivate the spirit of thanking God rather than finding fault with men. *Word*—Prayerful study of God's word, and meditation upon it, will, by His Spirit, help to foster these graces. *Whatever*—Let everything—work and worship, play and prayer, business and recreation, be done as to Christ for his sake, in His Spirit, to His glory.

III. Special duties in different relations of life, vs. 18, 19, wives and husbands.

*Submit*—Not as to a superior, but working in loving harmony with the official head of the home. *In the Lord*—Where duty to husband and duty to God conflict, the latter must be supreme, and the former is enjoined only in so far as it coincides with the latter.

*Love*—As Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it. There can be no bitterness where such love rules.

Vs. 20, 21. Children and parents.

*Obeys*—So great is the importance attached to this command that God gave it a place among the ten. *In the Lord*—As the child grows old enough to know of God, a higher character is given to obedience. It is "in the Lord" as to Him. And then the lower obedience must if necessary yield to the higher. *Provoke not*—By injustice, harshness, severity, oft rebuke and scant praise.

Vs. 22-25. Servants and masters.

*Eye Service*—Working merely because they see. Remember that God sees and work as in His sight. *Unto God*—How this enables the most menial service. The first verse of the following chapter should be taken to complete the lesson, study it.

Love to God and man should rule in heart and life. This love should show itself in kindly care for others in every relationship.

## Dec. 3. GRATEFUL OBEDIENCE.

Lcs. James 1 : 16-27.  
Mem. vs. 26-27.

Gol. Text., 1 John 4 : 17.  
Catechism Q., 70-72.

James, the son of Zebedee, had long been dead, Acts 12 : 2. This letter is written by James "the brother of the Lord," James the Just, head of the Church at Jerusalem, very devout, both as a christian and in the temple services, and greatly respected.

Many from other lands had been at times in Jerusalem, and many from Jerusalem were widely scattered, and thus many that had been for a time under his ministry were in different lands, and like a careful pastor he does not forget them but writes this letter to comfort and instruct them.

I. God gives the new heart vs. 16-18.

*Err*—Be not deceived, Rev. ver. referring to what has just been said. Do not blame God for your sin, what He gives is good. V. 17, *Good gift*—Act of giving. *Perfect gift*—The thing given. *Lights* All light, mental, moral, spiritual, is from Him. *No variableness*—Ever the same in His hatred to sin, His justice, love, mercy, truth. Thus we can depend both upon His warnings and promises. V. 18, *Will*—It is of God's gracious purpose that we are made new in Christ. *Begat*—the new birth. *Word*—The agency by which the Spirit works. *First fruits*—The whole creation which groaneth under the curse shall be delivered, and the Christian is the beginning of this deliverance.

II. Man's changes at renewal, vs. 19-22.

V. 19, *Swift*—To hear the word of truth, also to learn from all sources. *Slow*—Not eager to spread abroad half formed opinions. *Wrath*—This dishonors Christ. V. 20, *Worketh not*—Man's wrathful zeal for truth, if he allow it to lead him to strife in debate does not advance God's cause. V. 21, *Filthiness*—Of thought. *Superfluity*—Rather "overflowing" of foul thought in all word or deed. *Meekness*—In a docile, teachable, not contentious, spirit. *Ingrafted*—Implanted, as an ingrafted branch brings forth different fruit from the natural stem, so in our spiritual experience.

III. The new life not only hears but does, vs. 23-25.

V. 22, *Doers*—He has spoken to them about hearing, and now he turns to doing. Be doers, as an occupation, constant. Religion is not mere theory, but practice as well. *Deceiving*—How many deceive themselves with the thought that because they regularly attend church and hear the word, all is well. Vs. 23-25, *Glass*—No permanent picture made, either on the glass or the mind. *Looketh into*—Stoopeth and looketh intently into. *Liberty*—The Bible which so many represent as a bondage, is the law of the only true liberty. *Continueth*—Spasmodic doing is not true doing. *Blessed*—The constant doing of the word is a well-spring of joy.

IV. Tests of the new life, vs. 25-26.

V. 25. The use of the tongue, not in profession, but in kindly, loving words is a test of religion. If the tongue be not controlled, Christ does not rule in the heart. V. 26, *Visit*—In the East the widow's lot was hard, and "visit" includes all needed help. The same principle covers all real want and all true help.

1. Our blessings all come from a loving Father.
2. The tongue a fountain of blessing, giving happiness, or a source of evil, creating misery.
3. Religion does not prove itself true by words but by deeds.
4. Every deed of love to man is an act of worship toward God.