



LESSON VIII.—NOVEMBER 21.

The Christian Armor.

Ephesians vi., 10-20. Read the whole chapter. Commit verses 13-17.

GOLDEN TEXT.

'Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.' (Eph. vi., 10.)

Home Readings.

- M. Eph. vi., 1-24.—The Christian armor.
- T. Rom. xiii., 8-14. — 'Put on the armor of light'
- W. Ps. xviii., 30-50.—'Thou hast girded me with strength.'
- Th. I. Thess. v., 1-28.—'The breastplate of faith and love.'
- F. Col. iv., 1-18. — 'Continue in prayer, and watch.'
- S. Ps. cxliv., 1-15.—'Blessed be the Lord, my strength.'
- S. Eph. i., 1-23.—'The exceeding greatness of his power.'

Lesson Story.

Paul writes to the Christians of Ephesus a tender letter of advice. A letter which each of us would do well to ponder, studying, committing to memory, and absorbing its teachings into our very lives. Note especially the prayerful spirit running through the whole, bursting out in those wonderful, far-reaching, praise-inspiring prayers, giving such an insight into Paul's conception of what a Christian should be, by the grace of God.

Our lesson to-day is taken from the last part of this letter. After the exhortations to children and parents, servants and masters and all Christians in their relation to each other as well as to the world, he intimates that this excellence of conduct is not possible in their own strength, but that the Lord had provided strength for them. They must be strong in the Lord, and put on the armor of his strength, that they might be able to withstand, as did our Lord, the wiles of the evil one.

Paul is careful to make plain the fact that the Christian warfare is not against human enemies. The Christian standing in the world in the place of Christ, has Christ's enemies to deal with, Satan and his hosts. The enemy can not harm our Lord except as he can harm us, therefore he is our relentless foe, attacking us constantly in the most insidious and treacherous manner. As a defence against this continual danger we are to gird on the whole armor which God has provided for us. Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Faith, Salvation, are all given us through Christ for protection. The word of God is the sword which the Spirit uses to fight our battles. Prayer is another great weapon.

Paul beseeches his converts to pray much for him, and for all the saints. It is as important to pray that Christians may keep close to their Saviour and obedient to God, as that sinners should be converted.

Lesson Hymns.

Soldiers of Christ, arise,
And put your armor on,
Strong in the strength which God supplies
Through His eternal Son;
Strong in the Lord of Hosts,
And in His mighty power,
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts
Is more than conqueror.

Leave no unguarded place,
No weakness of the soul,
Take every virtue, every grace,
And fortify the whole.
To keep your armor bright,
Attend with constant care,
Still walking in your captain's sight
And watching unto prayer.

Stand then, in His great might,
With all His strength endued;
But take, to arm you for the fight
The panoply of God,—
That having all things done,
And all your conflicts passed,
Ye may overcome through Christ alone
And stand entire at last.

Lesson Hints.

The epistle to the Ephesians was written during the latter part of Paul's first imprisonment in Rome. The Church at Ephesus had been founded by Paul during his stay in that city seven of eight years before. It was a strong, zealous, faithful church at that time. About thirty years later we read that they had lost their first love and zeal, and were growing cold. (Rev. ii., 1-7.)

'Strong in the Lord,' as the branch draws its strength from the vine, (John xv., 4.), (Zech., iv., 6.)

'Armor of God'—(Rom. xiii., 12, 14.)
'Spiritual wickedness,—lit., wicked spirits. The higher we get in the Christian life, the more we will be tempted and tried. There is no more dangerous teaching than that which excludes the idea of a personal devil. The bad men of this world are actuated by some evil spirit, it would be as sensible to say that everyone is good as that there is no devil. (John viii., 44.)
Weapons—(II. Cor., x., 4, 5.)

Primary Lesson.

'Be strong in the Lord,' Did you ever try to keep yourself from doing anything naughty for a whole year? Or a whole month or week—were you ever perfectly good for a whole day? You know how hard you tried, and how you found you were not strong enough to keep perfectly good even for a day.

It is impossible for anyone to be really good in their own strength. A person may seem very good and act very nicely but he can not please God unless his heart has been made pure by the blood of Jesus. We can not please God in our own strength, how, then, shall we please him? We must ask God to put his Holy Spirit in us so that we will have to obey him. We must ask Jesus to put his strength in us so that we will be strong to fight against temptations.

What are some of the pieces of armor that Jesus will give us? There is the girdle of truth to keep us from wanting to say or act anything false or untrue. There is the breastplate of righteousness to make us hate the thought of anything wrong or mean. There are the shoes of peace to keep us from quarrelling or doing anything unkind.

There is the shield of faith to keep us from getting discouraged and thinking God has forgotten us. God never forgets us. He is always near though sometimes he does not let us feel him near us, so that we may learn to trust him without feeling. Faith is knowing God is near when we do not feel his presence. Faith makes us believe God's word. God's word is the sword of the Spirit with which our battles are fought. For this reason it is important for us to know what God's word says. We must study the Bible and learn verses by heart, asking God to make them plain to us by his Holy Spirit. So shall we be 'strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.'

Search Questions.

Who is supposed to have been sent with this letter to the Ephesians?

SUGGESTED HYMNS.

'Stand Up, Stand Up,' 'Watch and Pray,' 'Hear the Battle-cry,' 'There's a Royal Banner,' 'Faith is the Victory,' 'Onward Christian Soldiers.'

Practical Points

November, 21.
Ephesians vi., 10-20.

Only they who grow in grace will become spiritual giants. Verse 10.

Clad in the whole armor of God, the Christian may stand against all the foes of Christianity, for God and truth and native land, and with all other soldiers of the cross. Verses 11-13.

The girdle of God's truth will bind the armor together, and give the soldier courage in the conflict. The breastplate of Jesus' righteousness is the best protection for the penitent heart. Verse 14.

The Christian should ever pray, 'Take my feet, and let them be swift and beautiful for thee.' Verse 15.

Compare Isaiah lii., 7.
Without faith it is impossible either to please God or to parry the darts of the devil. Verse 16.

The Christian helmet is proof against

doubts and fears because it is the hope of salvation. (I. Thess. v., 8.)

The sword is double-edged it either converts or condemns. Verse 17. Compare Heb. iv., 12., also Rom. x., 17.

Paul knew the power and importance of prayer when he asked the Ephesian Christians to pray for him.

Thus may we inspire the life of a brother or sister by fervent effectual prayer. Verses 18-20.

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Christian Endeavor Topic.

Nov. 21.—Gratitude to whom? For what? how shown?—Luke xvii., 11-19. (A thanksgiving topic.)

Junior Prayer-Meeting Topic.

Nov. 21.—How can we show our gratitude to God? Luke xvii., 11-19. (A thanksgiving topic.)

Learn by Heart.

Time was, in the boyhood of some of us, when the faculty chiefly employed in both Sunday and day schools was the memory. Everything that it was at all possible to treat in that way was learned by rote, too often without any intelligent comprehension of the meaning, on the part of the learner. Have we not gone to the opposite extreme in these days? To refer particularly to the Sunday-school, are there not many among our readers who have found the select passages of Scripture that were then laid up in the memory, a store-house of both intellectual and spiritual treasure? How many of the children in the average Sunday-school of to-day can repeat from memory correctly a half-dozen psalms, or as many chapters of one of the Gospels or Epistles. The same question may be asked in regard to choice hymns or other selections from the best and noblest literature embedded in the language? May we not say, with full assurance that every reader will agree with us, that no child in a Sunday-school or Christian home ought to be permitted to reach his or her teens without having safely stored in memory every word of, let us say at the least, the Sermon on the Mount, and other of Christ's own discourses, a goodly number of the grandest psalms, and such other passages of Scripture as Paul's discourse on love, in the thirteenth, and on the resurrection hope, in the fifteenth of first Corinthians. Will not Sunday-school superintendents and teachers think about this?—Canadian Baptist.

How to Interest Scholars.

Many of you are Sunday-school teachers and it is to you particularly that I would make a few suggestions.

Would it not be pleasant and profitable to have your scholar spend an evening at your home once every week, two weeks, or as you judge would be advisable?

I am a teacher myself, and have tried this plan for almost a year, finding that it has been a grand success, and that it has been the means of binding the affections of teachers and scholars together in a manner which could not otherwise have been accomplished were it not for those pleasant evenings spent in each other's society.

True, we may sometimes inconvenience ourselves to have them come, but think of the pleasure it will afford them, and devote yourself entirely to them.

If they are fond of readings hunt up your choice selections and read to them. If they love music, why, though your knowledge may be limited in that direction, do the very best you can.

But by all means make them feel comfortable and at ease; and try to the best of your ability, to make the times pass profitably, as well as pleasantly, and I am sure you will succeed.

You don't know how much good you may do in this direction, or how much influence you may acquire over your scholars.—'Christian at Work.'

I have not taken up a collection in my church for many years, says a pastor. We make an offering to the Lord's work.