

Sabbath School.

BIBLE LESSONS.

FOURTH QUARTER.

(Condensed from Peloubet's Notes.)

LESSON IV. Oct. 25. John 14: 1-3, 15-27.

CHRIST COMFORTING HIS DISCIPLES.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"I will pray for the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter that He may abide with you forever."—John 14: 16.

EXPLANATORY.

I. COMFORT THROUGH FAITH.—Ver. 1. "Let not your heart be troubled." We have in this passage a precious remedy against an old disease. That disease is trouble of heart. That remedy is faith. Heart-trouble is the commonest thing in the world. No rank, no class, or condition is exempt from it. No bars, or bolts, or locks can keep it out. Jesus saw that His disciples were troubled (1) by the treachery of one of their number; (2) by the foretold fall of another; (3) by the number and intense hatred of their enemies; (4) by the knowledge that soon their hearts would be taken away; (5) by their disappointment that the kingdom of God was not set up in the open and glorious way they expected; (6) by their dread of the unknown future.

Notes that He who comforts them is himself no stranger to trouble. Only a day or two before He said (12: 27), Now is My soul troubled; only a few minutes before (13: 21), when about to predict the betrayal, He was troubled in the spirit; and these expressions were but the prelude to the trouble in the garden of Gethsemane only a few hours later. In that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted (Heb. 2: 18).

"Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." The Greek verb has the same form for the second plural indicative and the imperative. The passage may therefore mean ye believe in God and believe in Me, or ye believe in God and believe in Me. We somewhat decidedly prefer the latter. The disciples believed of course, in God and Jesus; but they needed a firmer hold on the hand of God as they walked through the terrible and tempestuous darkness just before them.

II. COMFORT FROM THE ASSURANCE OF A HEAVENLY HOME.—2. "In My Father's house are many mansions." This does not mean, as in our modern use of mansions, many separate houses; but the image is of separate rooms in one great house or palace. The palace of the Vatican, for instance, contains more than 4,400 rooms. There were many rooms for priests and for various purposes in connection with the Temple. The idea here is, plenty of room in the Father's house for all His children. The term mansions is derived from the Greek verb to abide, and hence implies the idea of abode, rest, stability, home. . . . Earth as well as heaven is to the child of faith a part of that house; abiding-places are here as well as there. The universe, in short, is presented to us by our Lord as one house over which the Father rules, having many apartments, some on this side, others on the other side, the grave as well as the life; the believer dwells now, and the Father and the Son come unto him, and make their abode with him (ver. 23); in another of them he will dwell hereafter. When, therefore, Jesus goes away, it is not to a strange land; it is only to another chamber of the one house of the Father. The main thought is that wherever Jesus is, wherever we are, we are all in the Father's house; surely such separation is no separation. "If it were not so, I would have told you." If our separation was to be an eternal one, I would have forewarned you; I would not have waited for this last moment to declare it unto you. His teaching would have been entirely different from what it had been. He would not have invited them to a place where there was not room and a home for all. . . . "I have prepared a place for you." There is prepared a place not merely for all, but for you, a personal preparation in glory for each child as by grace in each child; a room, a house, for each nature adapted to its needs. Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people.

3. "And if, or since, if does not here imply doubt. 'I will come again, and' (the effect will be) 'to receive you unto Myself.' This coming is (1) His return to the earthly realm by His resurrection; (2) the beginning of His kingdom on the day of Pentecost, when He came through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit; (3) the words refer to His constant spiritual presence in their midst; whereas the reception of them to Himself is to be understood of the complete union which will accompany that spiritual presence. (4) To the day of our death, when Christ comes to take our souls to His own home; (5) to the final coming of Christ, when all His people will be received unto Himself in the glorious manifestations of His kingdom. 'That where I am, ye may be also.' Being with Jesus, they would enjoy His beautiful home, His heavenly Father, His perfect love, communion, and friendship with Him; they dreaded the separation which the next few hours would bring, but Jesus assures them that it would be but for a little time.

III. COMFORT FROM THE PROMISE OF THE COMFORTER. 15. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." (Rev. Ver., ye will keep, i. e., lay you in your hearts and preserve by careful watching.) The test and proof of love is obedience to the teachings of their Master.

16. "And I will pray (ask) the Father," in behalf of those who prove their love by their obedience, for no others are able to receive the gift in its fulness. "And He shall give you another Comforter." Another, not a different sort of, than Christ who had been their Comforter up to this time. The Holy Spirit was to take His place in His absence from them. The Comforter. The original word inadequately rendered in our English version by the word Comforter, is simply untranslated. (And hence often it is simply translated as Paraclete.) It is composed of two Greek words, (para kato), to call to one's side; and signifies one who is called to one's side. And this etymological significance of the word indicates the office of the Holy

Spirit in His relations to us: He is our present help in every time of need, the one with whom we walk, our Consoler, our Strength, our Guide, our Peace-giver, our ever-present God. "That He may abide with you for ever." Not leave as Jesus their present Comforter was about to do. Jesus in the body, could not be with each one of the disciples all the time as they went on their missions in different parts of the world. But the Holy Spirit would be with each one all the time.

17. "Even the Spirit of truth." The Holy Spirit is so called because (1) His nature is true and sincere; (2) He knows all truth, even as God knows it; (3) He imparts His truth loving nature to those He influences; (4) The truth is the instrument by which He does His work in the souls of men. He convicts and converts by means of the truth. He shows men the truth about themselves, their character, their needs, their danger; and also the truth of God's love and promise. (5) He teaches the truth, guiding men into all truth; He reveals the truth offered by inspiring those who are to teach. (6) He guides our daily conduct, our judgment, so that we may walk in the truth. "Whom the world cannot receive." Because they have been unwilling to undergo the spiritual training which is absolutely necessary to receiving Him. They shut their hearts to Him; they refused to do His will. Only by His qualities, by faith, love, humility, spiritual life can He be known. "Because it seeth Him not." Shuts his eyes, does not really believe He exists. "But ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you." He has been working in your hearts all these years. "And shall be in you," indicating the progressive development of the Christian life.

IV. COMFORT FROM THE ABIDING PRESENCE AND LOVE OF JESUS.—Vers. 18-24. "I will not leave you comfortless." Literally, orphans, fatherless, and hence desolate, unloved for. "I will come to you." I come. I am coming to you, lest they should think the Spirit was exclusively to take His place. "The world seeth Me no more." Even at His resurrection Jesus did not appear to the world. "But ye see Me," in His spiritual presence. He was real to them as if they saw Him with their bodily eyes. "Because I live, ye shall also live." Jesus is the fountain and source of life, and from His life gives life to His followers. If Jesus perished when He was crucified, then there was no hope of resurrection or eternal life for His followers. The power that could give them no more.

20. "At that day." The day when He comes, by His resurrection, by His Spirit, by His presence in their hearts. "Ye shall know." They had very little knowledge of Jesus, while with Him in His bodily presence, compared with their understanding of His nature and work after His resurrection and Pentecost, and their life-long experience of His presence in their work for His kingdom. "That I am in My Father," one with Him in essence, in power, in purpose, and in glory. "Ye in Me, and I in you." "Ye sharing My purposes, and seeking My honor, and sympathizing with your infirmity, and strengthening your hope."

21. "He that hath My commandments" has received them into his heart in their spirit. "And keepeth them, he is that loveth Me." See it in ver. 15. "He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him." Every disciple may thus become a beloved disciple. For the love here spoken of is not that love of compassion which the Father and the Son have for the world (1: 10), even while it is dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2: 4, 5), but the love of spiritual fellowship and personal friendship (15: 14, 15; Gal. 4: 7).

22. "Judas saith . . . not scariot." Jude, the writer of the Epistle, and brother of James, the Apostle, who speaks here. He is called elsewhere Lebbeus and Thaddeus. "How is it," etc. This is a natural question if Jude understood the manifestation of Jesus to be one outward and visible to the bodily eyes. Jesus therefore explains again His meaning in the next verse.

23. "If a man love Me, he will keep My words." My word (singular), the Gospel message in its total unity, and not as broken up into separate commands. Jesus repeats, and thus emphasizes the condition on which alone He can be repeated to men. "And make our abode with Him." This promise is more than the preceding one (ver. 21). There Christ promises simply that the obedient disciple shall see His Lord; here that He shall become a temple in which His Lord will manifest Himself to the soul; here that the Father and the Son shall dwell in the soul.

24. "Keepeth not My sayings," words, the plural of the same original as words and word, in vers. 23, 24. The test of obedience is again emphasized by being put in the negative form. "I do not Mine" (see 7: 16), of My own devising or commanding, in which case it might have been rejected with impunity. "Called me to the city." (2: 4), so that in rejecting My word you practically reject Him.

V. COMFORT FROM THE TEACHING AND GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. 25. "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you." That is, as far as this I am able to carry My instructions, but no farther; the Spirit shall complete them.

26. "But the Comforter which is the Holy Ghost." The Spirit who is holy, and whose work is to make others holy. By what follows, we see that Comforter includes much more than Advocate (see on ver. 16). "Send in My name." That is, Christ, who is the Father's agent, manifest His glory, and lead men to trust in His grace. In My behalf, carrying forward My cause. "He shall teach you all things," etc. He was to teach them all things, not as though Christ's teaching was incomplete, but inasmuch as it was imperfectly understood. He was to bring all things to their remembrance, not merely as enabling their memories to retain the actual words and matter of their Lord's teaching; but as illuminating their minds to see and hold fast all that was contained in it.

VI. THE COMFORT OF PEACE.—Ver. 27. "Peace I leave with you." The customary salutation, as of one who is about to go away and says good-night and leaves his blessing. The Lord takes the common words and transforms them. Peace is not merely quiet upon the surface,

but a deep-seated rest of the inner life. Sickness cannot destroy it; poverty cannot rob it of its incorruptible riches; bereavement only makes it more real, and the approach of death more deep. CHRIST'S PEACE. "My peace I give unto you." A peace which is not dependent on circumstances, but which is to be gained in the same way with His Peace that flows from His abiding presence and love. Peace which is characteristic of His kingdom. "Not as the world giveth." (1) Not in promise merely, but in reality. (2) Not outwardly, but inwardly. (3) Not depending on circumstances, but enduring under all circumstances. (4) Not for a brief time, but forever. (5) Not the best at first, but growing better. (6) Not meagrely, but in overflowing abundance.

To the Youth. I desire to say a few words. Listen to a man who feels a deep interest in your welfare and remember when I was young and can appreciate the increasing danger which you are exposed to as our country becomes more densely populated. Love, honor and obey your parents. From them you received the first kind attentions of humanity, by them you have been fed, clothed and preserved until God from your helpless infancy to the present moment. During your more tender age, when you know no care, felt no anxiety and realized no blessings, their anxiety, care and love impelled them to watch over you and provide for you numerous and accumulating attentions. They have opened the quarry of ignorance in which your intellect lay concealed and aided in bringing your mental powers from the darkness of nature to the light of intelligence. If your parents are Christian they have taught you the necessity of alighting all vice and of reposing your trust in the Immaculate Redeemer. For all this your hearts should swell with gratitude; you owe them a debt you can best pay by loving, honoring and obeying them and departing from all evil and walking in the way of wisdom, virtue and truth. Improve your minds by acquiring a good store of useful knowledge. If the tree put forth no blossoms in the spring we gather no fruit in the autumn. If the springtime of your lives passes without the sprouting of the noblest and most trifling amusements of this deceitful and deceiving world engross your minds to the exclusion of salutary improvements, the darkness and ignorance will remain stamped upon your mental powers and will ever tempt you to the murky waters of shame and disgrace. At the week-day and Sabbath school improve your time, love your teacher and fellow schoolmates, endeavor to be first in your class, and live in harmony and peace with everyone. Shun every vice, every temptation, every wrong, and bear in mind that you will soon take our places—become fathers, mothers, teachers, ministers, statesmen, governors, presidents—and that the responsibility of preserving our country and race will soon devolve on you. Let these reflections raise you above the trifles that only amuse without benefiting you. Learn to be men and women while you are boys and girls. Above all, study the Bible. Seek religion, and remember your Creator in the days of your youth, when you may yet be long, prosperous, useful and happy.—George A. Smith, in Western Christian Advocate.

The Basket of Flowers. I wrote last week about 'giving thanks always in all things.' Alas! how sadly this duty is neglected. Why, we do not thank God for the gifts that we receive most highly. We receive them as if His sending them was a matter of course, and as if He would continue to send them whether we manifested any gratitude for them or not. Paul writes to the Philippians: 'In everything by prayer and thanksgiving, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.' He means that we should never pray for what we want or need without thanking God for what He has already given us. Thanksgiving is an essential element in all true prayer. Had I any objection, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.' He means that we should never pray for what we want or need without thanking God for what He has already given us. Thanksgiving is an essential element in all true prayer. Had I any objection, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.' 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