

The Sunday School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON XXXIV.

AUG. 24. } THE MIND OF CHRIST. } Phil. ii.
1879. } 1-13.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."—Phil. ii. 5.

HOME STUDIES.

- M. John xiii. 1-17. "I have given you an example."
T. 1 Pet. ii. 18-25. That ye should follow His steps.
W. Phil. i. 1-20. Fellowship in the Gospel.
Th. Phil. i. 21-30. In one spirit, with one mind.
F. Phil. ii. 1-13. The mind of Christ.
S. 2 Pet. i. 10-21. Exhortation to diligence.
S. Heb. ii. 1-18. Jesus crowned with glory.

HELPS TO STUDY.

The Epistle to the Philippians, like that to the Ephesians, was written by Paul while he was a prisoner in Rome. The church to which it was addressed was situated, not in Asia like most of the churches founded by the apostles, but in Europe. Philippi was an important city in Macedonia which now forms part of Turkey. In Acts xvi. 9-40 we have an account of Paul's first visit to this city, of the extraordinary call which led to that visit and of the wonderful things that happened during his stay there. We find a second visit mentioned in Acts xx. 6. This second visit is supposed to have been made about seven years after the first. The main thought of our lesson—Christ, the believer's joy and example—runs through the whole epistle, and the Philippian Christians, as well as Christians of all lands and of all times, are exhorted to foster the dispositions and follow the line of conduct which ought to arise from such a rich source of comfort and such a bright example. We find in the lesson the following topics: The Christian's *Consolation*, The Christian's *Pattern*, The Christian's *Anxiety and Encouragement*.

I. THE CHRISTIAN'S CONSOLATION.—vers. 1-2. The "ifs" in the first verse, although there are four of them, do not express any doubt. The passage asserts, more strongly if possible than a direct statement would, that consolation, comfort, etc., are to be found in Christ, for it takes for granted that every Christian in Philippi knew this to be the case. The knowledge of what Christ has done, of what He is, and especially of what He is to him, consoles the Christian under every loss and comforts him in every sorrow and trial; the fellowship of Christ is to him the best of company in his otherwise most solitary and dreary hours; and the bowels (a figurative term used frequently throughout the Scriptures to mean compassion) and mercies of Christ excite his liveliest gratitude. In these four "ifs" are summed up the joys of the Christian life. We say then that the consolation that is in Christ is brought before us (a) as the source of the believer's happiness in this life. But it is also presented to us (b) as the believer's motive, or inducement, to proper feeling and action; for in the second verse, which reads along with the first and should be separated from it only by a comma, the apostle says, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like minded. If anyone possesses these joys he will be like minded. If he is consoled and comforted by Christ, he will console and comfort others; if he enjoys fellowship with Christ, he will seek the society of those who enjoy it in common with himself; and if he has experienced the compassion and mercies of Christ, he also will be compassionate and merciful. The following passages may throw light on this part of the lesson—2 Cor. i. 5: "Our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." 2 Thess. ii. 16: "Hath given us everlasting consolation." 2 Cor. xiii. 14: "The communion of the Holy Ghost" (fellowship of the Spirit). Rom. xii. 16: "Be of the same mind one toward another." Rom. xv. 5: "Like-minded . . . according to Christ Jesus." 1 Cor. i. 10: "Perfectly joined together in . . . same mind."

II. THE CHRISTIAN'S PATTERN.—vers. 2-11. Christ is the Christian's pattern (a) in fellowship and sympathy: Having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. If Christ, the "King of kings and Lord of lords," condescends to hold communion with the meanest or poorest believer, then what distinctions of worldly rank or wealth are sufficient to justify one Christian in despising another? "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren;" and if the Master condescends to hold fellowship with the servants, why then should not the servants be friendly with each other? Why should not their sympathies be in active exercise? Why should they not "rejoice with those that do rejoice, and weep with those that weep?" But Christ is also set before us (b) as our example in humility: Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. The infinite height and dignity from which the Son of God descended and the depth of humiliation which He reached are strongly, but not too strongly described: Being in the form of God—having the same power and glory as the Father; thought it not robbery—claimed nothing but His own, for He is God; made Himself of no reputation—veiled His glory for a time; took upon—willingly: servant—one whose place is to obey; not ruler; likeness of men—by assuming "a human body and a reasonable soul;" obedient unto death—voluntarily submitting to death in its most shameful and painful form (Gal. iii. 13)—All this shews that he was as He Himself said (Math. xi. 39) "meek and lowly in heart," or in mind; and the lesson which He taught His followers then, "learn of Me," is the very lesson which the apostle repeats and em-

phasizes. Those who follow Him in His humiliation shall share in His exaltation. He could not rise to higher glory than He had formerly enjoyed—at least His Divine nature could not—but there was a fresh manifestation of His glory as the conqueror of sin and Satan and death, the risen Saviour, the successful Mediator. The most wonderful thing connected with His exaltation, however, and the fullest of promise and hope to us, is the fact that the very human nature down to which He humbled Himself He also took with Him to His state of exaltation; the fact that humanity, in His person, sits at the right hand of God; the fact that a man—a living man, though more than man—now rules the world, and draws men and women and children to Himself; and that all humanity found united to Him shall ultimately share His glory.

III. THE CHRISTIAN'S ANXIETY AND ENCOURAGEMENT.—vers. 12, 13. The Christian is anxious, not to have himself justified—he knows that he is justified by Christ's finished work—but to have himself sanctified. He finds that sin clings to him; he is anxious to get rid of it; and he works out—as an instrument in God's hands—his own salvation from it with fear and trembling. He works as hard and feels as anxious as if his salvation depended upon himself, and at the same time he knows that the work is God's work, and he gives Him all the credit of it. Paul does not tell the Philippian to work for their own salvation but to work it out. The Christian's fear and trembling does not turn him away from the work, but urges him on to have it accomplished. He fears and trembles lest, through the imperfection of the instrument, the work should be hindered or spoiled. But he has abundant encouragement to diligence and perseverance—for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure. If God begins the work of sanctification in any soul, He will not leave it half done; He will carry it through to the end; but how does He do it? Chiefly by keeping the person hard at work fighting against sin and striving after holiness. A writer who has recorded some of his meditations on this passage says: "Let me tremble to encounter . . . temptations in my own strength—tremble, even as the child would do to let go the support of his nurse's hand; and lean as he would on that God who can alone work in us effectually both to will that which is right and to do that which is right . . . God works in us to set us aworking, not that we may stand by and do nothing, but that with the utmost vigilance and fear—lest we should forfeit His aid—we may work out our own salvation."

Official Notices.

CONGREGATIONAL COLLEGE OF B.N.A.—The forty-first Session will be opened with the usual public service on Wednesday, September 17th, 1879. Candidates for admission are requested to forward to me their applications, with testimonials of pastors and recommendations of churches, without delay, that there may be time for necessary correspondence. My address till September 10th will be box 28, P.O., Cacouna, Que. GEORGE CORNISH, LL.D., Sec. Congregational College, B.N.A. Cacouna, July 15th, 1879.

Around the Table.

THERE IS AN EYE.

There is an Eye that never sleeps
Beneath the wing of night;
There is an Ear that never shuts
When sink the beams of light.

There is an Arm that never tires
When human strength gives way;
There is a Love that never fails
When earthly loves decay.

That Eye is fixed on seraph throngs;
That Ear is filled with angel's songs;
That Arm upholds the worlds on high;
That Love is throned beyond the sky.

COUNSELS FOR CHILDREN.

BY REV. DR. PLUMER.

REMEMBER always to live in peace. It is a dreadful thing to be at war with those around us. Be kind to everybody. If you cannot live quietly with any one of your companions, withdraw from him. It is a sad sight to see boys or girls engaged in disputes or quarrels. The Lord Jesus never quarrelled with anybody, though He was oftentimes cruelly treated.

Be very kind to the weak, and poor, and the unfortunate around you. God long ago said, "Ye shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child." He also said, "Thou shalt not

curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind." It is both mean and wicked to take advantage of the infirmities and misfortunes of those around us.

Use your best efforts to become wise. "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom." If you do not know a thing, ask others. This is scriptural. God said to the Jews: "When your children shall say to you, what mean ye by this service? ye shall say, it is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover." We should think before we speak, and not thoughtlessly ask silly questions. "Better is a poor and wise child than an old and foolish king."

Watch your lips. "Keep your tongue from evil, and your mouth from speaking guile." "Life and death are in the power of the tongue." Ask yourself if it is right for you to say anything; then try to speak kindly and truly and soberly. Childhood and youth spent in sin are a great vanity. Beware of evil speaking.

Be not too fond of play. Life is a serious business. It is right that young people should have their time to play. But some hate work and hate their books, and love their ease and would rather play all the time. Learn to find your joy in doing your duty. It may be hard for you to do some things, but try your best, and by degrees they will become easier.

Obeys your parents. Obey them promptly, cheerfully, in all things that are lawful. I hope they would not command you to do a wicked thing. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right." "Honour thy father and mother; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth." It is safe for old or young to do anything that God bids them. It is very unsafe for them not to do what He commands.

Let your conduct towards God be very humble. We are all sinners, and you are no exception. God hates a lofty spirit. "Ye ought all to be humble, and never lift up our heads in pride."

Be thankful to God. He has done a great deal for you. What a mercy it is that He did not let loose the passions of bad men against you, as He did against those children in Bethlehem, when a voice was heard, lamentation, and weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and would not be comforted, because they were not.

Be very kind and respectful to old people. Never make fun of them. Their age itself should protect them. You remember the children that mocked the old prophet, Elisha, crying "Go up, thou bald-head; go up, thou bald-head." And you remember how God sent forth two she bears out of the wood, and tore forty and two young persons. Children may often be gay without a sin; but let them never make merry over the appearance or infirmities of old people, and especially of aged ministers.

Do all you can to be like Jesus Christ. He was the best model that children ever had. He is the best friend they now have. When