

The Hour of Comfort.

SOMETIMES there comes within the life, This checkered life of ours, So much of loss and pain and strife That our sad eyes, with tear-drops rife, Look up and see no flowers.

A sudden sorrow clouds the day And the tired heart grows faint, For strength and courage die away, And lips that have been firm to pray Can only make complaint.

And life becomes at such a time An unattractive thing; There is no sound of cheery chime, The days move on in dreary rhyme And bring no heart to sing.

If some such time should come to thee— And somewhere in the years For every one its pain will be— Do not despair, but try and see Some sunshine through the tears.

And know that he whom sorrows teach Receives a gift from heaven; His tenderness some hearts may reach To whom the glad in vain might preach And joy through him is given.

Oh, then, be thou a comforter To some more sad than thee; And while thou thus dost minister, Strange bliss in thine own heart shall stir And grief forgotten be.

—Illustrated Christian Weekly.

LESSON NOTES.

THIRD QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE WRITINGS OF JOHN.

A.D. 30.] LESSON X. [Sept. 5.

JESUS THE TRUE VINE.

John 15: 1-16. Commit vs. 4-6.

GOLDEN TEXT.

I am the vine, ye are the branches.—John 15: 5.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Abiding in Christ is the source of the Christian life, its fruits and blessings.

DAILY READINGS.

M. John 15: 1-16. Tu. John 15: 17-27. W. Psalm 80: 1-19. Th. Isa. 5: 1-7. F. 1 John 2: 1-14. Sa. 1 John 4: 1-21. Su. 1 John 5: 1-15.

TIME.—Thursday evening, April 6, ten or eleven o'clock, immediately after the last lesson.

CIRCUMSTANCES.—At the close of the last chapter, the whole company arose and prepared to leave the room; but Jesus had more to say, and while they were standing, he spoke chaps. 15 and 16, and uttered the prayer in chap. 17.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—1. True vine.—The source of life to all his disciples. Husbandman.—The founder and owner of the vine, who cares for it, and whose is the fruit. 2. Every branch.—Each individual Christian, each church, is a branch. Purgeth it.—Cleanseth it, by pruning, by taking away any insects or fungus that hinders it, by culture, by new life. So Jesus does with his disciples. He gives new life, trains and teaches, and removes whatever hinders fruit-bearing. 4. Abide in me.—By believing, by loving, by communion, by obedience, by studying his Word. 5. Much fruit.—The fruits are a holy character, good life, noble deeds, the conversion of others, the world made better. 7. Ask what ye will, etc.—This promise is to those who abide in Jesus and live according to his Word, for such will ask what is right and wise. 9. Continue ye in my love.—By obedience (v. 10). 11. My joy.—Joy of doing good, of loving, of free, healthy activity, of communion with God, of faith and submission, of heaven and all its delights. 15. Henceforth I call you not servants.—They were to do his will; but not in a servile manner, because they must, or merely from a sense of duty. I have called you friends.—He tells them his plans; he works with them as friends, and they serve him because they love him.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—The analogy of the true vine.—What is abiding in Christ.—The fruit they are to bear.—How to continue in his love.—The joy of religion.—Not servants, but friends.—For what God has chosen us.

QUESTIONS.

Give the time and place of this lesson. How is it connected with the last lesson?

SUBJECT: ABIDING IN CHRIST.

AN ILLUSTRATION (vs. 1-4).—To what is Christ compared? Who is the husbandman? Who are the branches? What was done to the branches that did not bear fruit? What to those which bore fruit? What is meant by "purgeth it"? In what way does he do it? What is it to abide in Christ?

I. FIRST EFFECT OF ABIDING IN CHRIST.—Fruit (vs. 4-8).—What is the fruit the branches are expected to bear? Why cannot they bear fruit unless they abide in Christ? What becomes of those who will not abide in him?

II. SECOND EFFECT.—Answer to Prayer (v. 7).—What promise is made to them? What must they do to claim it? Why can only those who abide in him have the certainty that their prayers will be answered?

III. THIRD EFFECT.—A proof of discipleship (v. 8).—How is the Father glorified in his children? What would prove them the true disciples of Jesus? Why?

IV. FOURTH EFFECT.—Abiding in the love of Jesus (vs. 9, 10).—How much does Jesus love us? What comfort and help in this? How may we continue in his love? How does he show this by his own experience?

V. FIFTH EFFECT.—Fulness of joy (v. 11).—What was one reason he had spoken these things to them? What is Christ's joy? Is this the highest and truest joy? How much joy may we have? Does religion make us happy?

VI. SIXTH EFFECT.—Love to one another (vs. 12-14).—What is the great commandment of Jesus? When did we study about this before? (ch. 13-34.) How much should we love one another? What is it to lay down our life for others?

VII. SEVENTH EFFECT.—True service (vs. 14-16).—Is it our duty to serve Christ? What is the difference between serving him as a bond-servant and as a friend? How may we know whether we are his friends? (v. 14) How has he chosen us? What for?

REVIEW EXERCISE.

3. To what does Jesus liken himself? Ans. To a vine bearing clusters of grapes. 4. Who are the branches? Ans. All his true disciples. 5. Why are they so called? Ans. Because all their life, strength and usefulness is for him. 6. What blessings flow from abiding in him? Ans. (Repeat the headings of the lesson.)

A.D. 30.] LESSON XI. [Sept 12.

THE MISSION OF THE SPIRIT.

John 16: 5-20. Commit vs. 8-11.

GOLDEN TEXT.

He will guide you into all truth.—John 16: 13.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

The mission of the Holy Spirit is to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, and to guide disciples into all truth.

DAILY READINGS.

M. John 16: 1-20. Tu. John 16: 22-33. W. Acts 2: 1-21. Th. Acts 2: 22-43. F. Acts 24: 10-27. Sa. 1 Cor. 15: 1-20. Su. John 14: 15-31.

TIME.—Thursday evening, April 6, A.D. 30. The night before the crucifixion, immediately after our last lesson.

PLACE.—An upper room in Jerusalem.

INTRODUCTION.—This lesson is a continuation of the discourse in our last lesson. HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—7. It is expedient for you that I go away.—Why? (1) Because only when glorified in heaven could they see him as he is in his divine nature. (2) In bodily presence he could be with but few at a time; now he can be with all alike at all times. (3) By his going away the Comforter came. (4) Because they needed to be trained to live by faith, not by sight. (5) Only by going away (by the cross) could he make atonement for sin. The Comforter.—The Advocate. One who pleads, convinces, instructs, as well as comforts. I will send him.—First on Pentecost, two weeks later, and ever after. 8. Reprove.—Convince, convict. 9. Of sin, etc.—(1) Rejecting Christ is rejecting all goodness, for he is the sum of all. (2) It is rejecting God. (3) Only a very sinful heart could resist his love. (4) Christ is a perfect standard, and by seeing him, we are convicted of our own shortcomings. (5) Unbelief shows great ingratitude. 10. Of righteousness.—Of God's goodness, and what we ought to be. (1) Jesus,

going to his Father, made men see his goodness in its true light. (2) By dying on the cross he showed perfect obedience. (3) By his death for us he showed how much he valued our becoming good. 4. By his going the convicting Spirit came. 11. Of judgment.—Their false views and standards, and God's true and just judgment, and that God will judge us for all the deeds done in the body. The prince of this world.—Satan. Is judged.—Condemned; the mark of disapproval put upon him; his plans thwarted and defeated. 13. Guide you into all truth.—So that they would be inspired in their writings, and in their plans for the new Church. Not speak of himself.—The Father, Son, and Spirit are all in harmony. The Spirit unfolds the things to come.—The Book of Revelation, and new developments of truth through all the history of the Church, unsearchable riches of Christ. 16. A little while, etc.—They would behold him no more in bodily form, but they would see him after his resurrection, and then in his Spirit of Pentecost, and his working all through the ages.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—Why expedient for Jesus to go away.—The work of the Spirit in the world.—Convincing of sin.—Of righteousness.—Of judgment.—His work in the disciples.—A little while.—Sorrow turned into joy.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Give the time and place of this lesson. Its connection with the last lesson. The circumstances.

SUBJECT—THE MISSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

I. THE PROMISE OF THE COMFORTER (vs. 5-7).—Why were the disciples filled with sorrow? What did Christ promise them for their comfort? Give reasons why it was expedient for him to go away. Who is meant by the Comforter? Why is he so called? When was this promise fulfilled?

II. THE WORK OF THE COMFORTER ON THE WORLD (vs. 8-11).—What three things does the Spirit do for the world? What is meant by "the world"? Meaning of "reprove" here? How does the Holy Spirit convince of sin? What is the need of being convinced of sin? Is unbelief so great as sin? Why? What is it to convince of righteousness? What is the need of this? What is it to convince of judgment?

THE WORK OF THE COMFORTER FOR THE DISCIPLES (vs. 12-20).—Why did not Jesus tell his disciples all they needed to know? (v. 12.) Who would guide them to all truth? How does this teach us the inspiration of the New Testament? What would the Spirit teach them? How is this a test of influences whether they are from the Holy Spirit? May we have this guidance? What must we do to receive it? What did Jesus mean by "A little while and they should behold him no more"? When should they see him again? In what ways? (1 Cor. 15: 5-8; Acts 2: 32, 33; Comp. John 14: 16-18; Acts 1: 11.) How many texts can you find showing the work of the Holy Spirit?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

- 1. Sorrow comes at some time to all. 2. But the sorrows God sends are expedient for us, for only through them can come the fulness and perfectness of joy. 3. One great need of the world is to be convinced that they are sinners and need salvation. 4. Then they need to be convinced that there is real goodness, and that it is possible for them to have it. 5. They need to be convinced that judgment will come upon them unless they forsake sin and become righteous. 6. The greatest sin, the source of many sins, is refusing to believe in Jesus Christ. 7. Those who wholly commit themselves to the guidance of the Holy Spirit will be guided into all truth. 8. We can test whether we are guided by the Spirit, because what the Spirit teaches always agrees with the teachings of Christ.

REVIEW EXERCISE.

7. Where was Jesus soon going? Ans. To his Father in heaven. 8. Whom did he promise to send to his disciples? Ans. The Holy Spirit, the Comforter. 9. When was this promise first fulfilled? Ans. On the day of Pentecost, two weeks after the promise. 10. What does the Holy Spirit do for the world? Ans. (Repeat v. 8.) 11. What does he do for Christians? Ans. (Repeat v. 13, f. c.)

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