



LESSON X.—DECEMBER, 5.

Christ's Humility an Exaltation.

Philippians ii., 1-11. Read the Epistle to the Philippians. Commit verses 5-8.

GOLDEN TEXT.

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

Home Readings.

- M. Phil. ii., 1-11.—Christ's humility and exaltation.
- T. John i., 1-14.—'The Word was made flesh.'
- W. John xiii., 1-17.—Christ doing a servant's work.
- Th. Matt., xi., 16-30.—'I am meek and lowly in heart.'
- F. Isa. liii., 1-12.—'Despised and rejected of men.'
- S. Acts. ii., 22-36.—'By the right hand of God exalted.'
- S. Heb. ii., 1-18.—'Crowned with glory and honor.'

Lesson Story.

The Epistle to the Philippians, from which our lesson is taken, is one of the sweetest of Paul's short letters. The keynote is joy. Rejoicing and thankfulness pervade the whole epistle. Paul the aged, imprisoned in Rome, counting all things but loss for the name of Jesus, having suffered much in every way, exhorts the Philippians to rejoice with him. 'Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice,' (Ch., iv., 4). Having none of those things which are naturally dear to the human heart—home, friends and liberty—counting himself a living sacrifice, his heart is filled with joy, as he says, 'I joy and rejoice with you all. For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me.'

Years before (Acts xvi., 25.) Paul had been filled with joy in Philippi, when in prison there with Silas. Probably writing to the Philippians reminded him of God's wondrous deliverance, thus filling his heart with joy and thankfulness.

Paul exhorts the Christians at Philippi to be of one mind, united in Christ, knit together by love in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Love means self-effacement, and excludes all idea of strife and vain glory. Love sees the best and makes the most of the good in others. All Christians should have the lowly mind of Jesus, who, though he was God, in all the majesty and greatness of omnipotence, yet he emptied himself that he might take upon him the form of a servant.

Christ became a man that he might understand and know all the trials and difficulties of humanity—he is perfect in humanity. He is perfect in divinity also, which alone made the sacrifice of his humanity a perfect atonement for sin. Having made himself a man—a servant, he became servant of all. As a sublime service to all generations of all peoples of the world, he 'became obedient unto death'—the most humiliating and dreadful death that could be devised.

'Wherefore, God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.'

Lesson Hymn.

Majestic sweetness sits enthroned
Upon the Saviour's brow;
His head with radiant glories crowned,
His lips with grace o'erflow.

No mortal can with him compare,
Among the sons of men;
Fairer is he than all the fair
That fill the heavenly train.

He saw me plunged in deep distress,
He flew to my relief;
For me he bore the shameful cross,
And carried all my grief.

To him I owe my life and breath,
And all the joys I have;
He makes me triumph over death:
He saves me from the grave.

Since from his bounty I receive,
Such proofs of love divine,
Had I a thousand hearts to give,
Lord, they should all be thine!

Lesson Hints.

The letter to the Philippians was written from the hired house in Rome in which Paul was kept prisoner, A.D. 62. It was sent by Epaphroditus, who seems to have brought to Paul some gift from the Church at Philippi. (Ch., ii., 25.) He had received several such gifts previously, (Ch. iv., 15, 16, 18: II. Cor., xi., 9, 10.) and rejoiced in the love that prompted these acts of kindness.

'Comfort'—from the Latin word 'confortare'—to strengthen much, to invigorate, to fortify, to encourage. Comfort is both consolation and strength. 'If any bowels and mercies'—kindheartedness and sympathy. If these things exist among you, 'fulfil ye my joy'—give me reason to rejoice, make me joyful by being 'like-minded'—thinking the same things, being 'of one mind.'

'Unity in essentials,
'Liberty in non-essentials,
'Charity in all things.'

a good old motto. All Christians cannot see alike as to non-essential doctrines. A perfect apple is not exactly like a perfect orange, yet each is a perfect fruit, and as such pleases the gardener. There are many different denominations, but they all unite in the essential doctrines of faith.

- One sole baptismal sign,
- One Lord below, above,
- One faith, one hope divine,
- One only watchword, love:
- From different temples though it rise,
- One song ascendeth to the skies.

'Vainglory'—conceitedness, vanity. Selfishness and pride are enemies of all harmony and unity.

'Being in the form of God'—being one with God, (I. John, i., xvii., 5, 21.)

'Robbery,' the Revised Version has it, 'counted it not a prize (or, 'a thing to be grasped') to be on an equality with God.' That is, he chose to lay aside for a time the glories of omnipotence, that he might become a bondservant, to save men. Counting it a more glorious prize to humiliate himself than to be exalted. (Heb. ii., 1, 2)

'Highly exalted him'—(Heb. i., 2-3: Eph. i., 20, 23: Col., iii., 1: Acts vii., 55, 56: Dan., vii., 13, 14: Rev. i., 5-7, 13-18: Rev. vii., 23, 23.)

Primary Lesson.

'Before honor is humility'—that was said by a wise man named Solomon, thousands of years ago. Jesus Christ chose humility rather than greatness, and so made humility honorable and glorious.

Did you ever hear any one say—'O, I would not do such work, I am not a servant!' Some people seem to think that it is a horrid thing to be a servant. But our Lord and Saviour does not think so, though he was King of Kings and Lord of Lords, he chose to be a servant to all that he might save men.

It is a much greater and more glorious thing to be really humble than to have all the honor and glory the world could give you. It is not easy to be humble, our old heart is filled with pride, but Jesus gives us a new heart to serve him, we must ask him to fill us with humility so that there will not be any room for pride. Pride is always hateful and hurtful, and just the opposite of Christ-like. The world is full of the false glory of its pride, but followers of Jesus will be crowned with the true glory of humility.

Search Questions.

Give six passages in which Jesus Christ asserts himself as God.

SUGGESTED HYMNS.

'There is a green hill! 'Praise Him!' 'Out of my bondage,' 'Light after darkness,' 'More holiness give me,' 'At the feet of Jesus,' 'Thy life was given for me,' 'Rock of Ages.'

Practical Points.

Dec. 5th. Philippians ii., 1-11. A. H. CAMERON.

The comfort Christ gives is like that of a mother to her child. His love is better than wine. His fellowship, more desirable than communion with angels, and his compassion is proverbial. Such a mind we may have in manner, though not in degree. Verses 1, 2.

Nothing but the Christ-spirit will cast out the demon of selfishness. Verses 3, 4, 5.

A clear view of Christ's humility and obedience will keep us from climbing the hill of vanity, or being imprisoned by Giant Despair. Verses 6, 7, 8.

Christ's exaltation gives authority to his name. Verse 9. Matt. xxviii., 18: Rev. Ver.

Every eye will see Jesus, but every heart will not love him. Every tongue shall confess him lord, but every soul shall not rejoice in his salvation. Verses 10, 11: Tiverton, Ont.

Christian Endeavor Topic.

Dec. 5.—'Not to be ministered unto, but to minister.'—Matt. xx., 20-28.

Junior Prayer-Meeting Topic.

Dec. 5.—'Serving others, and its rewards.'—Matt. xx., 20-28.

Bible Study.

(Rev. H. A. Bridgman.)

We surely do not want to substitute books about the bible for the bible itself, but we may make profitable use of the results reached by men who have grown gray in bending over the pages of Holy Writ. While the bible is simple enough to be understood by an ordinary mind, it is also true that we do not get at its richest lessons and inspirations unless we are willing to use our mental faculties upon it in the same way in which we apply them to the study of general history or literature.

My experience with Sunday-school classes has shown me that what the average young person needs most is an actual knowledge of the contents of a given passage. How few there are who can narrate accurately such familiar stories as that of the prodigal son or of the good Samaritan. We glide over the surface of scripture. Frequent reading of it in the house of God secures from us only a mechanical attention. Study your bible until you actually know how, in its broad outlines, the gospel of Luke differs from the gospel of John; what Paul is trying to teach in Galatians as over against his instructions to Timothy; what the book of Joshua actually tells about the conquest of the Holy Land. It is little short of a disgrace that intelligent Christians know so little of what the bible sets forth in the way of historical fact. Any kind of criticism is worse than such dense ignorance as to what the pages of the bible contain.

We are to study the bible to obtain food for our spiritual lives. No Christian can be strong for service who does not keep in constant contact with God's revelation of himself through the scriptures. Intellectual mastery of the argument in Romans for justification by faith, is worth much, but a simple, child-like surrender to Christ is worth more. A discernment of the overruling providence that guided the steps of the children of Israel is important, but of still more importance is it to obtain a sure sense that as God was with the fathers so is he with us.

Of Moody and Sankey's work in Edinburgh in 1873, Mr. J. MacPherson writes: 'A mighty power was obviously at work: what was it but the power of God? Multitudes of all classes, from the highest to the lowest, attended the various services, noon, afternoon, and night. Many were converted. Students, sceptics, prodigal sons, drunkards, persons of every type of character, and of all ages and ranks, sought the Lord and found him. Some went to scoff and remained to pray.'