

even the most languid reader. In fact, for a popular work on music, it would be difficult to name a book equal to this. The writer's critical tastes are supplemented by an infallible instinct as to what points are of interest to the greatest number of readers, and by an easy conversational style which engrosses one's attention before he is well aware of it. The author's enthusiasm is another point in his favour. He is full of his subject, and his writing is evidently a labour of love.

THE CLEW OF THE MAZE AND THE SPARE HALF HOUR is the last issue in this series, by Mr. C. H. Spurgeon. The name of Spurgeon as an author is about as good a recommendation as a book can have nowadays. If any other were needed in this case, it is found in the subject treated—modern unbelief, the agnosticism of the day. He handles it without gloves, and in that striking, homely way that carries conviction to both heart and mind. Spurgeon's illustrations are something renowned on two continents. They abound in all simplicity and force in this little work. They reach all readers, learned and unlearned. The best single phrase we know of to express the character of the entire book is its "uncommon common-sense."

International Lessons.

LESSON 6.

May 11,
1884.

VICTORY OVER DEATH.

{ 1 Cor.
15: 50-68.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Death is Swallowed up in Victory."—vs. 54.

TIME. { See lesson 3, this quarter.—*Faul's Preaching.*
PLACE. {

Introduction.—This noble chapter, which with the chapter of the last lesson is deeply interwoven into the very fabric of the Christian faith, should be carefully read that the bearing of the argument in the former part of the chapter upon the portion containing our lesson may be thoroughly understood. In the first verses the apostle dwells upon the fact of Christ's resurrection; this he establishes by the testimony of all who were witnesses, himself last "as one born out of due time." If Christ be raised how then should some preach that there was no resurrection, if no resurrection then Christ not raised, if Christ not raised then preaching and faith altogether vain. But Christ being raised he is the "first fruits," the earnest and assurance of the resurrection of those who sleep in Him. Answering the question of one objector in verse 35, he goes on to speak of the resurrection body, and by several beautiful illustrations shows its character; the same and yet not the same, identical and yet distinct. This is a corruptible body, that will be incorruptible; this is a natural, that a spiritual body. This body needs food, sleep, and rest, is liable to disease and suffering; that needing not the former, and free from the latter. Upon the living and upon the dead alike, will come a wonderful change; the flesh and blood nature cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven, such alone belongs to the spiritual body. We know not what it is, though we may know much of its attributes; we shall be like Christ, for we shall see Him as He is, and seeing shall be transformed into His image. Here we reach our lesson.

Notes and Comments.—Ver. 50.—"Flesh and blood:" bodies such as we have here, man in his present

condition. "Cannot inherit:" or possess, as in the right of our relationship to the heavenly Father. "The Kingdom of God:" there are various uses of that phrase by our Saviour and His apostles, here it means the final, perfected, glorified state of the saved, it is entirely spiritual, natural in no part. "Corruption:" the body of this life. "Incorruption:" the life to come.

Ver. 51.—"A mystery:" a truth hidden until now; these great truths of the resurrection had been made known by the revelation of Jesus Christ, and until this Epistle much was still in darkness. "We shall not all sleep:" he is speaking to Christians, they are the "we." "Sleep:" that beautiful idea of death on which the early Christians loved so much to dwell, witness the inscriptions in the catacombs. "Changed:" as we must be from the natural to the spiritual, those who "sleep" through its agency, those who are alive, suddenly, in a moment.

Ver. 52.—"A moment:" the smallest possible space of time, repeated in another form that there may be no mistake or doubt as to the fact. "Last trump—the trumpet:" this language is highly figurative, like that of Matt. 24: 29-31, and 1 Thess. 4: 16; the trumpet was used for calling the people together, so God will summon the living and the dead to meet the coming Lord; so Psalm 50: 45. "Dead—incorruptible:" because corruption doth not inherit incorruption. Ver. 50. If incorruptible then immortal and so fitted for their inheritance. 1 Peter 1: 3, 4. "We—change:" this does not imply that he expected to be alive at the coming of the Lord. Paul constantly identified himself with the brethren.

Ver. 53.—"Must put on incorruption—immortality:" an absolute necessity or it cannot enter heaven; the new life is put on. 2 Cor. 5: 2-4.

Ver. 54.—"The saying:" by the prophet Isaiah, Chap. 25: 8; yet the prophet did not know the fullness of the meaning of his own words; spoken of God's work for His chosen people they had a larger and grander meaning in the deliverance of the race from the thralldom of death. "Swallow up:" completely lost in God's victory over it.

Ver. 55.—"O death:" a free quotation from Hos. 13: 14, death is addressed as a scorpion or serpent, conquered, and its sting torn away. "O grave:" Rev. reads "death" in both places and transposes the sentences; still the idea is better expressed by the received version. Death has the sting and gives to the grave, hades, the place of the departed, its victory, but the ransomed soul, raised in and by Christ Jesus, can look upon both as conquered foes and utter this sublime shout of victory, even before the final deliverance by faith in the Saviour.

Ver. 56.—"Sting of death is sin:" it is sin makes death terrible, but for that it would be nought; the "sting" would not have pierced us if we had not taken the scorpion, sin, to our bosom. "Strength:" Rev. "power." "The law:" bringing with it the consciousness of sin. Instead of men being justified by the law and made fit for God's presence it is their condemnation. "By it is the knowledge of sin," Romans 3: 20, under the law sin reigns, Romans 6: 14.

Ver. 57.—Notwithstanding that the law, and sin, and death, and the grave were against us, God is for us, and the victory is ours, so thanks be unto Him. Before the final victory come the life victories of faith over temptation, doubts, unbelief, fears, all conquered "through our Lord Jesus Christ," by His death destroying the power of death, and by His resurrection giving us the assurance of our resurrection and eternal life.

Ver. 58.—Now comes the practical lesson. "Therefore:" because of all these truths. "Steadfast:" firm in the faith of the Christ through whom you have this hope. "Immovable:" not to be moved from Him by all the powers of sin and hell; or, do not move away yourselves,