

Sunday School Lesson for December 26.

1 John IV; 9-16.

God's Love in the Gift of His Son.

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INTRODUCTION.—We have come to that season of the year which more than any other, is devoted to exchanges of good will. The pleasure seeking of the summer time, at the sea shore and in the mountains, gives place to another kind of merry making, in which joy is found in the bestial rather than the reception of benefits. It may be that some will enter into these annual festivities without knowing their significance, presented thereby from their highest enjoyments of the occasion. But the Christian will remember that the church has commemorated a day as a memorial of the nativity of Jesus, observing that day for fifteen centuries with appropriate ceremonial. The value of Christmas as a religious institute is not diminished but increased by the fact that it was not enjoined by the Lord. The responses made by love are better than those that come from commands. Our lesson does not treat with the usual biography, but opens the Christ-idea, now rapidly gaining ascendancy among men.

MANIFESTATION.—Jesus was sent into the world by the Father. This implies His pre-existence (John viii, 58, stated elsewhere, John I, 2). As the only begotten Son He was superior to all created intelligences. (Heb. I, 3). But why did He appear on the earth? The full answer would occupy more space than can be allowed here and would explain innumerable mysteries in the plan of God. The answer in the lesson (verse 9) is found in close attention and involves two statements. He was sent as a manifestation of God's love to men, precisely what Jesus himself declared, John I, 16. This was the primary of procuring cause of His advent. Had He not come in a world never have known the love of God. But love is not a mere tenderness, it is an outgoing or benevolent impulse that seeks to bless the being toward whom it is directed. Hence the final purpose of Christ's coming, the end sought by divine love, was to provide that men might live, (John X, 10).

PROMPTITUDE.—There are many kinds of love, as complacency, communion, reverence—regard for those who are approved, as equals or superiors. The love that prompted the gift of the Son was mercy—regard for sinners whose dispositions and ways are offensive. This love is never found in the natural heart of man. Its abiding place is in the bosom of God. But divine mercy must harmonize with other attributes of God, especially with justice. The latter calls for the punishment of every violator of law. It is the police officer maintaining government for the honor of the ruler. How then shall mercy seek the transgressor and deliver him? The Son came into the world to be a propitiation (verse 10), so that justice and mercy might meet (1 Peter i, 18), and the two dispositions of God might find full expression. The fact alone is here stated. The philosophy is withheld, and men have vainly attempted to solve the problem.

DEDUCTION.—Having shown that the advent was prompted by the Divine love

for the ungodly, the apostle turns from the main line of his thought to state the bearing of his truth upon the followers of Christ. (Verse 11). If they have been so loved they ought to love one another. (1 John III, 11). This is a very legitimate deduction. Its utterance here in such close relation with the exhibit of the Divine character and conduct is highly suggestive. Evidently there was a purpose to bring down into church relations that exalted principle which lay at the basis of the Christian system, to guard for the government of men that which had controlled the deity in his treatment of men. What is this but the application of heavenly laws to earthly conditions? How quickly would it check the rising of evil tempers and transform and glorify humanity. The church should be a society in which mutual love is the dominating force. (1 Peter I, 22).

EVIDENCE.—The apostle is not able to discuss the subject of love in view with the mere statement of its obligation. He exhibits it because of its essential value. (Verse 12). Its presence in the heart is proof of two things. First, that "God dwells in us." A remarkable assertion! The intimate finding an abiding place in the heart! (1 Cor. III, 16). This inwardness is the more important because as man has never seen God, (John I, 18). Search the material universe through and He cannot be found (Job xxiii, 8 and 9), but the moment he believes he is united with His presence. Second, when Christians love one another the love of God is perfected. It is accomplished that which it seeks. (1 John III, 17). What the infinite Father, with the wealth of affection shown in Christ, aims to accomplish in this world by all the wondrous schemes of mercy, is to transform and rescue our fallen nature and make men like Himself, lovers of men. (1 John III, 11).

ASSURANCE.—It is never wise to hold an important doctrine by inference. While love for brethren is an evidence of Divine indwelling, the apostle presents a ground of absolute certainty. (Verse 13). "We know that we dwell in Him and He in us," he says, enlarging the thought of the union between God and His children, (John xii, 24). But how do we know? "Because He has given us His Spirit," (1 John III, 11). There is imparted to every child of God that which is the source of life and love, the Comforter, abiding presence of the Holy Ghost (John xiv, 16), promised by the Saviour before He went away. (John xvi, 7). He who has this Spirit shall be the witness within him, of (John xiii, 16), and need never doubt. This assurance does not render the evidence before mentioned unnecessary. The inward experience and the outward must concur. When the Spirit enters the love of God will be shed abroad in the heart (Rom. v, 5), and that love will have two elements, being directed toward God and toward man (1 John III, 7), so fulfilling the moral law. (Mark xii, 31).

TESTIMONY.—When a man receives the Spirit of God and is assured of this vital relation, he enters into a family with love for all its members. This is the

substance of verses 11, 12 and 13. Then follow many new conditions, one of which the apostle mentions. (Verse 14). "We testify," he says—there is a united testimony—that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." (1 John III, 12). That testimony is based on the fact that the persons who offer it are saved from sin and are entered into a new life. Their condition and relation, their mutual affection, their blessed union and communion, is ascribed by all of them to one source, (Rev. I, 5). It could have had no other origin. So many persons, of such differing dispositions, with such conflicting interests, are brought into a delightful brotherhood, that the spectacle itself is sufficient to attest the truthfulness of the assertion that in the coming of Jesus a world-wide purpose moved the eternal Father. (John III, 15). This is the highest service which the church renders to men. (John xvi, 20).

CONFESSION.—This brotherhood, formed through the Spirit, has a salutary influence upon its members. It enlarges their view of Christ, in whose name they are united. Whereas, once they believed Him to be the Son of God, as the result of a reasoning process, now they know it, and declare it in positive terms. "The knowledge which is out of a personal relation with Him," (John II, 11). This confession is the result and proof of the Divine indwelling. (Verse 15). Moreover, these same persons are able to behold in Christ "the love that God" has for men, and to perceive that He is essential love (verse 16), that all the attributes of His being by what name they may be known, are only modifications of this the highest attribute, even as all the colors of the prism unite to form a sunbeam. (John I, 9). The church, the household of God, the communion of saints, when love reigns in it, is the place where men shall see clearly and state boldly the glorious truth, notwithstanding the opposition of the world. (1 John III, 2), and they who are able truly to do this are children of God.

CONCLUSION.—How appropriate is that old hymn, "Joy to the World the Lord is Come!" What wonder the chorus of angels broke forth, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace to men of good will!" Jesus Christ, the eternal Son, was sent by a loving Father, that men might be saved from an enemy and striven to a life of mutual and holy love; that they might be brought into one company wherein affection rules, there to learn of Him, to be conformed to His love and glory. The congregation of saints, he who named it may be called, reaches the Divine ideal, when it shows forth in the world that Jesus can thus save, when it makes its members know what once they only believed. Ye seekers after redemption for society's ill, here is what you need! Ye weary and heavy laden come to Jesus, receive His Spirit, enter the brotherhood, confess the Lord and rest will be found. (Matt. XI, 28-29). When universal humanity shall know and accept the love of the universal Father, promise shall be fulfilled (Micah IV, 3) and earth shall celebrate its Messiah Christmas.

FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS.

Despite His Best Endeavor He Failed to Secure the Desired Results.

From the Cleveland Leader. Algernon Perkenham had for a long, long time loved Alice d'Orsay fervently—almost madly; but she had not seemed to return his passion with the enthusiasm that he could have wished. As a matter of fact, she had always seemed to become intensely interested in horses or golf or the latest novel whenever he had begun to verge upon the subject of love. This had disagreed with his digestion, and, consequently, the spirits of Mr. Perkenham. He quit hanging around the stage doors; cared nothing for the stories that were told at his club, and aroused the anxiety of his mother.

One day he got hold of a book in which he read that the surest way to win a woman's love was to appear indifferent to her; to treat her as if she were unworthy of being taken seriously, and to dispute everything that she said.

Algernon Perkenham's heart gave a mighty leap when he read this, inasmuch that his tonsils were almost knocked from their foundations.

"I'll begin tonight," he said to himself. "I'll make her think that I look upon her as the dust beneath my feet; I'll paralyze her!"

So, that evening he called at the d'Orsay palace, for, as he told his friends, he "had the onstray" there; the Perkenhams and the d'Orsays being mutually interested in the stock yards business.

The beautiful girl swept into the drawing room after the young man had waited half an hour and exclaimed: "Oh, good evening, Mr. Perkenham, I'm so glad to see you. It's a beautiful evening, isn't it?"

He threw one leg over the other, yawned, and replied: "Yes, it isn't too warm, it's just nice."

"Think so? Scarcely hotly to me!" "Why? Miss d'Orsay said, as she sat down in a chair that was plenty large enough for two, "you seem to have a grudge against the world this evening. I hope it is not because I had to keep you waiting? I assure you, I couldn't help—"

cheerful in my life. Fast is, I felt so good I can hardly keep from whooping' right out. As for your keeping' me waitin', I didn't mind. I was havin' such a good time here all by myself that if you hadn't come down for an hour I don't s'pose I'd have noticed it."

"Some folks seem to be mightily interested in the state of my health," he replied, maintaining his devil-may-care expression with some difficulty, for his impulses were to throw himself at the sweet maiden's feet and tell her that he could not live without her love. "My health has never been better'n it has been lately," he went on. "The reason I haven't called here very often is that I've had other engagements. I broke several pressin' ones just to come around this evening, for I s'posed you'd think it strange if I stayed away any longer, and I wouldn't have you worry about me for anything. Say, that's a beastly way you've got your hair done up. Makes you look forty years old. Now, if you'd wear your hair back further on your head it wouldn't make your nose seem to turn up so much at the end. If I—"

But she had suddenly arisen, and, without saying anything, hurried from the room.

A moment later the butler, who weighed 157 pounds, and had big fists with long tufts of hair on them, appeared in the doorway and said: "Miss d'Orsay says to turn youse out, and tell youse dat if youse ever come around here, wid amnudder jags she'll have youse run in."

Three minutes must have elapsed before Algernon Perkenham was able to gather himself up at the bottom of the marble steps, and flap away.

The Immortal Anecdote. "I'm sad, when you are getting bald, and growing slightly gray. To find so frequently revealed your youth that fades away."

"Is not the hair in dresses long, Nor boy with wisdom new, Who makes you feel the current strong Of time that carries you."

But when that tale you loved in youth With circumstance is told Of some new congressman as truth, You know you're getting old.

—Washington Star.

Did you ever hear of a physician recommending fat pork as a diet, of an epicure who enjoyed lard-soaked food—a chef who used lard in his most dainty dishes.

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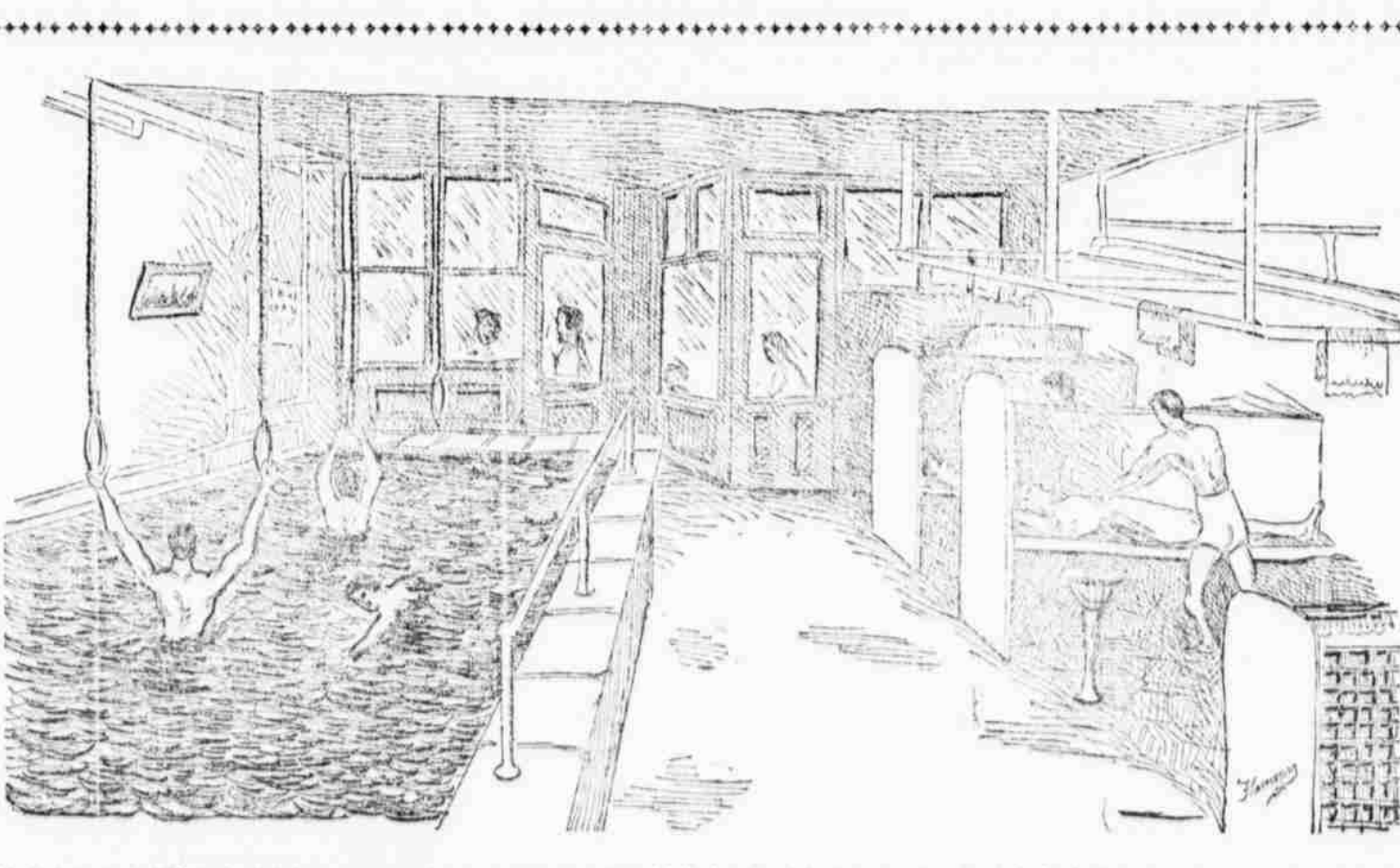
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PURCELL'S BATH HOUSE,

503 Linden Street, Opposite the Court House.

The baths are under the strict supervision of Mr. Purcell, who has had twenty-three years experience in the business. The days for ladies are Tuesday and Friday from 8 a. m. to 1 p. m., when Mrs. Purcell assumes charge. The baths are endorsed and recommended by the leading clergy and physicians of the city. In proof of this assertion they can almost always be found enjoying the benefits of the bath. Open day and night. Bath and bed, \$1.00. No extra charge for staying all night. No other bath house in the country can boast the same. Turkish, Russian, Roman, perfumed, medicated massage, sea salt, electric and vapor baths.



Perspiration Not Weakening. It is common to associate profuse perspiration with debility, and to imagine it to be weakening to the system. This is a mistake. Perspiration produced by passive means cannot be weakening. Travelers resort to the baths for refreshment and invigoration. Perspiration drains away no living tissue, but merely poisonous matter that is highly injurious to the system, and in the loss of which the bather is the gainer in many ways. The baths are endorsed by the most eminent clergymen and physicians, the press and public, to be the greatest relief and cure for all bodily ailments. The frequency with which the bath may be taken depends on the object in view. For those in health, once a week may be sufficient. For invalids, the frequency must be regulated by a medical advisor who understands the effects and proper application. Thus, important as it is, it is a great and powerful remedial agency requiring care and judgment. Telephone Service. The necessity of having a telephone in the bath parlors was a long felt want, and has been a source of great pleasure to my patrons. It very often occurs that some of our patrons desire to communicate to different parts of the city, and to meet this demand we have placed a telephone at their disposal.

Effects of the Bath. Its first physiological effect is to perfect the respiratory function of the skin to give a living and healthy cuticle. The skin is thus fitted for imbuing the oxygen of the atmosphere, throwing off the carbon from the blood. Two most important processes when we consider that the skin is provided with no less than seven million pores designed to assist the several secretory organs in discharging refuse matter from the system. Some idea can be formed of the importance of keeping it in a perfect state. To a person liable to take colds from exposure to slight draughts, the feeling of defiance to cold imparted by the baths is one of the most striking results. The habitual use of these baths remedy this, giving at the same time beauty to the skin, and health to the body.

Description of the Bath. The baths are composed of one of the finest cooling rooms in the state, every attention having been paid to proper ventilation. The lower floor comprising the Russian, Turkish and Roman Baths. Together with the Electric and other scientific treatments so highly recommended by the Physicians. All that can has been done to secure the comfort of the patron, and the visitor is assured of the utmost privacy. An inspection of the baths is desired by the proprietor in order to appreciate the advantages to be gained by frequenting them.

The baths are constructed on a system which combines complete ventilation with the highest available temperature, whether sought as a luxury or the alleviation of pain, must satisfy the most sanguine expectations. To those who are in the habit of using these baths, they know the beneficial effects they receive from them, and use their influence in getting others to go and do likewise. It is to those that have never enjoyed the pleasure and benefit that we must give our attention. We are often asked by those who have never enjoyed the luxury of these baths: Will it hurt us? Does it weaken a person? What does it do? Such questions to the proprietor seem ridiculous. Yet it should not be so when we reflect how little is generally known of the baths in this country, and especially by those who have no had the time and opportunity to avail themselves of the same.