

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

AN EASTER LESSON.*

Time and Place—First Corinthians was written probably in the year 57 A. D. by Paul, from Ephesus in Asia Minor, to the church at Corinth in Greece. Corinth lies almost immediately opposite to Ephesus across the Aegean Sea.

Connecting Links—The apostle had heard of some Christians in Corinth who did not believe in the resurrection of the body. They believed, indeed, in the bodily resurrection of Christ, but held that the resurrection life of believers was of the spirit alone, and not of spirit and body re-united after the separation made by death. In the Lesson chapter, Paul first gives reasons for believing that Jesus rose from the dead, and then shows that the bodies of believers will rise, as certainly as did that of their Lord.

1. Error, 12-19.

Vs. 12-14. The apostle preached that he rose. The Christians in their preaching laid special stress upon the resurrection of our Lord. It was their strongest proof that He was the long promised Messiah, and that He was able to save from sin. (See Acts 3:15, 4:33; 17:31; Rom. 1:4.) No resurrection.. Christ not risen. If it is true that the bodies of believers do not rise from the dead, then the body of Christ did not rise. All must stand or fall together. Christ..not risen..preaching vain..faith..vain. The only Saviour able to save, is a risen, living Saviour.

Vs. 15-19. False witnesses of God. The apostles were witnesses of the resurrection, and, in fact, no one could be qualified to become an apostle, unless he had actually seen the risen Saviour, ch. 9:1. Faith..vain..yet in your sins. If there is no resurrection, there is no Christ, no redemption, no forgiveness, no salvation. Perished. Those who had "fallen asleep" had, in their death, hope of resurrection and eternal life. But if this new teaching be true, they were deceived, and have disappeared into nothingness. Of all men most miserable. This does not mean that believers in the resurrection will fare worse than others, if their belief turns out to be false; but it describes their bitter disappointment, should their hopes prove to have no foundation. There is nothing so humiliating as to be victims of a lifelong delusion.

II. Truth, 20, 21, 55-57.

Vs. 20, 21. Christ risen. No fact in history is more certain. First fruits; the first sheaf of a great harvest made up of all believers. When the first-fruits appear, we know the harvest will follow. By man..death, by man..also..resurrection. Death was introduced among the human race by Adam, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Vs. 55-57. Sting..victory. The victory over death of Jesus Christ carries with it the victory of every one who believes in Him. The Christian can face the king of terrors without trembling. Sin..law. It is sin and the consequences of sin now, and beyond the grave, that give death its dreadful character. And sin makes afraid because of the penalties which the law denounces against the sinner. Victory through Christ. The gospel delivers us from sin, and from the fear of its consequences. It also assures of eternal life through the resurrection of Christ, and so gives us the victory over death.

*That He rose again the third day. 1 Cor. 14:4.

III. Duty, 58.

V. 58. Steadfast, unmovable. The hope of a blessed resurrection and of eternal life is one of the great practical motives to a life of steadfastness in duty, and of willing self-sacrifice for righteousness' sake. No such life will prove to be in vain, but must have its abundant reward.

AN EASTER SONG.

The golden sun climbs up the sky,
The shadows flee away,
Oh! weary heart, forget to sigh,
God sends the Easter Day!
Long was that night, chill was the air,
And grief o'er brooded long,
Yet is the new world white and fair,
Uplift thine Easter song!

The cross that bowed thee with its weight

By strength of prayer is stirred,
Till it shall bear thee soon or late,
As wings appear the bird.
The life that thrills from star to star.
And beats in leaf and stem,
Is wider than the heavens are,
And blesses thee from them.

Wert thou cast down, wert thou dismayed,
Dear child of One above,
Behold the earth in light arrayed,
The light of deathless love.
Oh! listen to the word that wakes
In every budding flower,
And take the bread the Master breaks,
In His triumphant hour.

For those who hear, and hearing yearn,
The King hath secrets sweet;
Their hearts within them thrill and burn,
They wait His coming feet,
Then swift the sun climbs up the sky!
The shadows keep away!
Oh! weary heart, forget to sigh,
God sends thee Easter Day.

THY STEWARDSHIP.

Property is a divine trust. Things are tools, not prizes. Life is not for self-indulgence, but for self-devotion. When instead of saying, "The world owes me a living," men shall say, "I owe the world a life," then the kingdom shall come in power. We owe everything to God, but our sins. Fatherland, pedigree, home-life, schooling, Christian training—all are God's gifts. Every member of the body or faculty is ours provisionally. There is no accomplishment in our lives that is not rooted in opportunities and powers we had nothing to do with in achieving. "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" If God gives us the possibilities and the power to get wealth, to acquire influence, to be forces in the world, what is the true conception of life but divine ownership and human administration? "Of thine own we render Thee." All there is of "me" is God's estate, and I am his tenant and agent. On the day of our birth a new lease is signed. On the day of our death accounts are closed. Our fidelity is the interest on God's principal. "That I may receive mine own with interest," is the divine intention. So live, that when the summons comes to give an account of thy stewardship, it may be done with joy, and not with grief.—Maltbie Davenport Babcock, D. D.

A light that doesn't shine beautifully around the family tables is not fit to take a long distance or to do great service somewhere else.—J. Hudson Taylor.

THE MEANING OF EASTER.

By Rev. J. B. Silcox, Toronto.

To write what Easter means to the Church and to the whole world in a few words is not an easy task. It is like trying to condense a volume into a paragraph. The resurrection of Jesus is the most precious heritage of the Church to-day. The fact that He rose from the dead carries with it great meanings to mankind. It assures us that death is but a covered way that opens into light. It is the assurance to the world that life is something more than "a narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities."

This world is a brighter world because the light of that first Easter morning shines on with undimmed splendor. The grave has been robbed of its terrors, and death of its gloom, because of our faith that Jesus died and rose again. That world beyond the grave is a real world to us, and the Father's house of many mansions stands out invitingly before us, because of the hope born at the open, empty grave of Jesus. Men and women take the death angel by the hand without fear, and go from us feeling that "to die is gain," because the resurrection of Jesus assures them of a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens.

This hope of a life hereafter has entered into human life and literature with radiant power and beauty. It has flooded the world with a glad and holy joy. Our great poets have sung this hope and joy, in confident strains. Browning could "Greet the unseen with a cheer," for he was assured that the soul survived the body, and would "carry high through death her cup unspilled." Tennyson knew that "The face of Death is toward the Sun of Life," and so "as he stands on the heights of life," he gets "a glimpse of a height that is higher" and with joy "turns again home." A faith that makes men nobler in life, and gives them hope in death, a faith that wipes away tears from hearts bereaved, and bids us expect to see again those faces which we "have loved long since and lost awhile," is a good gift of God to the world, and this faith is the faith of all who believe that Jesus died and rose again.

A PRAYER ON EASTER.

Spirit of Christ, Spirit in whose breath I live and move and have my being, reveal day by day the power of Thy presence within me. Reveal to me that the power of Thy presence is the power of my resurrection, the certitude of my immortality. Oftimes I stand aghast before the gates of the great mystery; I wonder what things shall be in the state after death. Teach me that the state after death already exists before death, that I need not taste of death until I have seen the kingdom of God. Teach me that my immortality is not to come, that it is here, that it is now. Teach me that the life eternal is not merely the life beyond the grave, but the life on this side of the grave. Reveal to me that I am now in eternity, that I am breathing the very air of those that have passed the gates. Let me feel that I am already immortal; that death could no more destroy my life than it could destroy Thine, because mine is Thine. Amen.—George Matheson.

Through obedience to Christ divine wealth is brought within the reach of all. A very Lazarus may be "rich in faith" and heir to an inheritance incorruptible and eternal.