



LESSON II.—APRIL 14.

Jesus Appears to Mary

John xx., 11-18. Memory verses, 16-18.
Read Matthew xxviii., 9, 10; Mark xvi., 9-11; John x., 1-18.

Golden Text.

'Behold, I am alive for evermore.'—Revelation i., 18.

Lesson Text.

(11) But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping, and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre. (12) And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. (13) And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. (14) And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. (15) Jesus said unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. (16) Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. (17) Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God and your God. (18) Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

Suggestions.

Mary Magdalene, one of the devoted followers of Jesus, one whom he had healed of a frightful affliction, was first at the tomb of her Saviour on that first beautiful Easter morning. Before daybreak she had hurried there with her load of precious spices with which she thought to perform the last kind offices for the One who had done so much for her.

But when she reached the tomb it appeared to be empty, the great stone was rolled away from the entrance. With wonder and fear she ran to find Peter, and told him and John that the tomb was empty, some one must have carried away the body of their Master. Peter and John at once set out for the sepulchre, and entering found that their Lord was not there, but the fine linen which had been wrapped round his body for burial was neatly folded and laid aside. They were filled with amazement. The Lord Jesus had told them that he must be crucified to make atonement for the sins of the world, and that he would rise again the third day—but they had not understood or realized the fact, and now when he had fulfilled his promise by rising on the third day, they were as surprised and perplexed as were the rest of the people. Their evident perplexity was sufficient to contradict the false statement which was speedily put in circulation by the chief priests that the disciples had stolen the body.

Peter and John went home after their visit to the empty tomb, but Mary stood outside the sepulchre weeping with the bitterness of inconsolable grief. As she stood there crying, she stooped and looked into the sepulchre again to make sure that it was not all a dream, to see if the dear dead body was really not lying there. In the sepulchre sat two bright-faced angels who asked with tender pity why she was mourning. But the sight only filled her with a fresh sense of her loss, and sobbing she answered, They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid him. Poor Mary, her heart was broken, she could not be comforted by the most beautiful angels,

she wanted Jesus himself, only he could comfort her.

And he did. He is always near those who are seeking him, no desolate heart need wander long amidst the cold sepulchres of dead hopes. Those who seek the Living One will find him close beside them wherever they are, but he is not in the tomb. He is never too far away to hear the sighing of a broken heart. But Mary had to turn away from the tomb before she could see him, and then she did not recognize him at first. Perhaps through the mist of tears she could not see his face, and even the sound of his voice failed to arouse her until in accents of divine love he spoke her name.

Oh, what a transformation then! With what ecstasy did she turn to worship him with the glad cry of, Master! So has it been to many another heart weeping in the bitterness of despair, Jesus has come with the comfort which only he can bring, but at first he was not recognized by the sorrowing heart. But when as by a flash of divine love he reveals himself to the soul, calling it by name, the soul in that glad moment turns with a cry of joy to worship him at last as her Lord.

Mary Magdalene was the first missionary to bear the news of the resurrection with the message from the risen Lord to the men whom he loved. Since that day there have been many noble missionary women who have carried the same glad tidings not only to the men and women in their own villages, but out in the highways and hedges, and away off to the uttermost parts of the earth, for in no country is there any soul for whom these glad tidings are not intended, and the Master's voice is still speaking to men and women and boys and girls who love him, and still the message is: Go and tell my brethren.

Questions.

Who was first at the sepulchre of our Lord? When did Jesus rise from the dead? How did Mary feel when she looked in the tomb? Could the angels comfort her? Who can comfort and heal broken hearts? Does Jesus hear the sighing of every lonely heart? What did the angels say? What did the Lord Jesus say? What message did he give to Mary for the disciples?

Lesson Hymn.

Mary to the Saviour's tomb
Hasted at the early dawn;
Spice she brought and rich perfume,
But the Lord she loved was gone,
For a while she lingering stood,
Filled with sorrow and surprise,
Trembling, while a crystal flood
Issued from her weeping eyes.

But her sorrows quickly fled
When she heard the Saviour's voice;
Christ had risen from the dead,
Now He bids her heart rejoice.
What a change His word can make,
Turning darkness into day!
You can weep for Jesus's sake,
He will wipe your tears away.

He who came to comfort her,
When she thought her all was lost
Will for your relief appear,
Though you now are tempest-tossed,
On His Word your burden cast;
On His love your thoughts employ;
Weeping for a night may last,
But the morning brings the joy.
—John Newton, 1779.

C. E. Topic.

Sun., April 14.—Foundations.—Matt. vii., 24-27.

Junior C. E. Topic.

BROTHERS IN THE BIBLE.

Mon., Apr. 8.—The first sons.—Gen. iv., 8.
Tues., Apr. 9.—Jacob and Esau.—Gen. xxxiii., 1-4.

Wed., Apr. 10.—Joseph and his brethren.—Gen. xxxvii., 1-4.

Thu., Apr. 11.—The leaders of Israel.—Ex. iv., 27-31.

Fri., Apr. 12.—Sons of thunder.—Mark iii., 17.

Sat., Apr. 13.—Disciples and brothers.—I. John. iv., 19-21.

Sun., Apr. 14.—Topic—Lessons from Bible brothers (Cain and Abel, Joseph, Moses, and Aaron, John and James, etc.).

Free Church Catechism.

41. Q.—What are the Sacraments of the Church?

A.—Sacred rites instituted by our Lord Jesus to make more plain by visible signs the inward benefits of the Gospel, to assure us of his promised grace, and, when rightly used, to become a means to convey it to our hearts.

42. Q.—How many Sacraments are there?

A.—Two only: Baptism and the Lord's Supper.



Hunger and Crime and Drink

She was young, only twenty-three years of age, of good looks and neat attire. She spoke low and sweetly, and her tones, though weak, discovered a person of superior education. She had been an orphan, had married, and but three weeks ago had looked upon the face of her first-born. And yet she stood in the dock of the Marylebone Police Court, hardly able to stand, not more than able to whisper the faltering words: 'I was hard pushed, or I would not have done it,' in answer to the charge preferred against her, that of stealing a pair of lady's boots, marked at 2s 11d, from a shop on Chalk Farm Road. Her child had been hungry, she had been hungry, there was nothing in her home in Kentish Town; in her despair she fancied she could pledge the articles, with the trifle advanced upon them, purchase some relief, and then when better days came she would be able to restore fourfold that which she was compelled so unceremoniously to take.

She fainted when her eyes opened to the realities of the case, saw herself a prisoner, gazed at the magistrate, heard the accusation. On being removed to a waiting-room the missionary attending the court procured milk and food, which brought back strength sufficient to enable her resume her trying position in the public place, but she fainted again. At length when the power of speech returned she said softly that she had been without food, and her husband had been out of work. The court was hushed, the magistrate expressed his deep sympathy, inquired as to the cause of her husband's being unemployed, but she screened the man she loved, and would speak no word which would cast discredit upon his name in the garish light of that place. But the sympathy of the gentleman on the bench, and the deep silence which pervaded the apartment, and the evident desire on the part of missionary and magistrate to know the whole story, unlocked the secret which an army could not have forced from her, and she spoke the word in private—she had been brought into her trouble through the drinking habits of the man who had vowed, a year before, to honor, cherish, and love her.

In the interests of Annie Jennings, the missionary bound himself over to bring her up for judgment when called upon, the magistrate accepted the arrangement, gave her some help, promised to send her to a convalescent home, and offered good counsel to the husband, who, we trust, will be strengthened against the network of temptations with which the government has surrounded the footsteps of the working man. —'Irish Temperance League Journal.'

The Boy's Enemy.

Boys, did you ever notice the gum running out of a peach tree, and the tree presenting a faded, withered appearance? If you take your pen-knife and scrape off the gum and carefully examine the under surface, you will very likely find a pure white innocent-looking worm quietly but persistently forcing its way into the vitals of the tree. Agriculturists term this insect 'a borer.' It very much resembles in its official capacity the nineteenth century pest that has attracted the youth of our nation, and has been designated 'coffin nails' or