

train. The raising of Lazarus coming, as it did, so near the close of Christ's life, when tremendous events were culminating and the movements were rapid, there has not been proportionate attention given to this preliminary passage of the portals of the grave. We are really with the forward column of a heavenly host in its attack on the strongholds of death. We hear the shock of that first assault on the tomb, which was succeeded by the struggle in Joseph's garden.

The raising of Lazarus displayed all the great principles and powers of all resurrections.

"Our friend Lazarus is fallen asleep; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." Here was a declared purpose on the part of Christ to perform this mighty work. Jesus expressed Himself as glad that He and His disciples were not present at the departure of the Spirit, in order that they might believe. The raising up of this man was to be a conspicuous event in the training of the staff of the Commander.

There was a deliberation about the whole action which indicates the teaching trend of the transaction. A delay of two days intervened between the time of the message of the sisters regarding the illness of their brother and the start of the relief expedition. Jesus explained that He knew already of the falling asleep of Lazarus. We know of no second courier coming with sad haste to give the fatal tidings, but the Master knew that life had departed and when it went. He was keeping track of spirits in their flight beyond their earthly resting-place. He marked them wing their way in the unseen ether towards God as accurately as He departed to call them back again by His own majestic summons. The nature of the Christian's death was noted for the benefit of the disciples. It was a sleep. If men persisted in using the term, there was death. But to one who held the reins of spirits above and upon the earth there was but a slumber of the soul. A distinct challenge was given to death and its supports in human hearts by this miracle. It was performed in the face of the cross and the grave. Christ lingered for each of the sisters of the household to make her confession of faith in Him singly and to receive a higher message of the Master's mission and power. "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die." There is no declaration of the divine supremacy over death, even after Christ's own resurrection, which surpasses this. We look to these sublime utterances for our comfort and conception of immortality, given not after the angels had rolled away the stone of the tomb in Joseph's garden, but while the seal still lay upon the grave outside Bethany, and the heart of a loving sister sank at the separation till the Judgment Day.

This relation of Jesus to Lazarus was well known and recognized. The family knew it; the public were familiar with the facts. "Behold how He loved him!" said some. There was no mistaking of the sentiment which prevailed. Here was Christ with a deep affection for a man without illustrious name or calling. But on His part Lazarus was one to be loved. "Could not this man, which opened the eyes of him that was blind, have caused that this man also should not die?" Men thought of this brother as one who was a blessing to the community. They would vote to call him back if it would avail. The devotion of the sisters shows the kind of character it was of whom Jesus spake His memorable words of friendship. The very utter-

ance of that sentence, "Our friend Lazarus," is itself an assurance of something beyond for those who are thus united to Christ. If Jesus should speak of any human being in such terms it would be all we would need to know about the future. "Because I live, ye shall live also," is involved in that title, "Our friend." We do not need to seek for refinements of expression about heaven, or for a catalogue of detailed information. One who had a friend and had the power would see His face again.

When Jesus asked, "Where have ye laid him?" faith might well have followed Christ on the trail of death. If Jesus inquired about His dead friend there was in that very question an assurance. If the Son of man is interested to ask where our sacred forms lie, it is for no idle purpose, but it has a pregnant suggestiveness. The bystanders said of Mary that she had gone to the grave to weep, but they knew not the paths of comfort to the believing disciple. Instead of the cypress grove, she sought the shadow of the Master, and knelt at His feet. Faith always has its altar apart from the burial place. He who guards our hearts will watch our graves. Men should not worship their own sorrows in the cemetery. People spend the hours of holy Sabbaths among the tombs who ought to be praising Christ in His churches. "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep." Slowly and protestingly did the company proceed to roll away the stone at Christ's word. They did not realize the power that was in their midst. To-day faith often haltingly does the slight services which Christ asks as a prelude to a resurrection. Our hearts are shut and the door opens slowly to Him who is Lord of death and life.

The final victory of faith is to open the door of our hearts to Christ; He watches that no slumberer oversleeps in the great day of resurrection. He knows where the silent sleeper rests, and angels answer as of the Lord Himself, "He is not here, but is risen."—Rev. William Rogers Campbell, D.D.



LESSON 2.—APRIL 9, 1899.

The Anointing at Bethany.

(Lesson Text: John 12:1-11. Commit to Memory Verses 1-3.)
(Compare Matt. 26:1-13, and Mark 14:3-9.)

GOLDEN TEXT: "She hath done what she could."—Mark 14:8.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday: John 12:1-11. Tuesday: Mark 14:1-9. Wednesday: Luke 7:36-50. Thursday: Luke 10:38-42. Friday: Phil. 3:1-12. Saturday: Mark 12:38-44. Sunday: 1 John 4:10-19.

Our lesson to-day is most picturesque in its setting. Here, in the house of Simon, were gathered representatives of the future church, and of all the world in its relations to the church. Here, gathered in or about this little home of Bethany, were types of all mankind, from the most devoted disciples to the secret traitor and open enemy. The world has always contained these types of character. Perhaps it always will, until that day when He whose right it is shall reign.

It is significant, too, that all these types of character were determined by their relation to the one central figure, the honored guest in Simon's home. It is this same Jesus who has ever since been to the whole world what He was to the company that gathered in and about the home in Bethany. He is the world's central, regnant figure. The nations have gathered about Him in hate or love or curiosity. Consciously or unconsciously the world has done Him homage as its Lord.

Moreover, His character has determined all other