



LESSON,—SUNDAY, MAY 31, 1908.

Jesus Risen from the Dead.

John xx., 1-18. Memory verses 15, 16.

Golden Text.

I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore. Rev. i., 18.

Home Readings.

- Monday, May 25.—John xx., 1-18.
- Tuesday, May 26.—Matt. xxviii., 1-15.
- Wednesday, May 27.—Mark xvi., 1-11.
- Thursday, May 28.—Luke xxiv., 1-12.
- Friday, May 29.—Luke xxiv., 13-32.
- Saturday, May 30.—Rom. vi., 1-12.
- Sunday, May 31.—II. Cor. iv., 6-18.

FOR THE JUNIOR CLASSES.

Have any of you got gardens of your own? Of course you have, and now they are beginning to be very interesting. When you were getting your flower beds ready though, they did not look like they do now. The earth was all brown and dull, and you just had a lot of plain brownish or greyish looking seeds to put in it. How did you know anything at all would come up? Because the seeds were alive you say, they were not really dead and useless as they looked. But how do we know that seeds have life in them? Why, because we have tried it, and when we have planted seeds before, the flowers have come up and shown that the seeds were alive. When we say that people die, and when we bury their bodies away is that the end of them? Sometimes when you have dug up a little seedling by mistake you have found the empty seed shell still clinging to the roots; the beautiful new life of the plant has grown out into the sunshine and left it behind in the earth, because the plant is the real life of the seed. And so it is that a beautiful new life comes for all those who trust Jesus, even from the dark grave where we bury their bodies. But how do we know this? Have we ever seen this new life as we see the life of the plant? No, but there have been men who have seen it, and it is about this wonderful thing that once happened that our lesson is to-day. Who is it that has risen from the grave and told us about this new life? Yes, Jesus. In our last lesson you know we learnt how our dear Saviour died and was buried, and to-day we are to learn how he rose from the grave again.

FOR THE SENIORS.

The burial of our Lord took place on the late afternoon of Friday, and the long, dark Sabbath that followed passed without any sign from the closed tomb. It is evident that the placing of the Roman guard and the sealing of the tomb (Matt. xxvii., 62-66) were unknown to the followers of Christ, or the women could never have contemplated finishing the uncompleted task of embalming the body. The four accounts of the happenings on the following morning, as given by the various gospels, supplement one another, but make it a little difficult to correctly place the events. It was evidently at a very early hour on the first day of the week that our Lord arose, for although the women sought the tomb 'while it was yet dark,' they arrived to find the tomb open and empty, and seem to have been too late to encounter the fleeing guard or hear anything of the earthquake (Matt. xxviii., 2). As to what occurred during the silent day in the tomb there is but the slightest reference of rather obscure meaning (I. Pet. iii., 19, 20; iv., 6). The time spent in the tomb is reckoned three days, according to the Jewish custom, since

it was part of Friday, Saturday and part of Sunday. Mary Magdalene, although the only one John mentions by name, was evidently one of the group of women who went together; her cry, 'We know not where they have laid him' (verse 12), indicates that she was not considered by John to have been alone. She evidently returned in great haste to Jerusalem, leaving the other amazed women at the forsaken tomb, where they in her absence saw the angelic vision (Mark xvi., 5). Their wonder and fear seem to have sealed their lips (Mark xvi., 8) in spite of the angelic command, and it was not until after they had seen the Saviour himself that they dared believe and carry on the news. They had fled when John, Peter, and Mary returned, running to the tomb in such haste that no one could await the other. Peter and John in the deepest wonder and questioning seem to have left the tomb speedily to consult with the others while Mary remaining, not only saw the angels, but was granted the first vision of the risen Lord. After assuring her, the Saviour met and revealed himself to the other company of women who were still on the road, doubtless in the greatest of perplexity as to what report to carry to the disciples. Peter and John having returned, seem to have hastily gathered the other disciples together for consultation, for it was to the assembled company that the jubilant women came with their report of having seen the risen Lord. This, however, was too much for the men to credit. Truly the tomb was empty; John believed, by a supernatural exit of the Lord, as the folded cloths left behind would indicate, but some of the others deep in despair and unbelief such as Thomas, could see in the disappearance of the body only added cause for gloom, and looked upon the words of the women only 'as idle tales, and they believed them not' (Luke xxiv., 11). It was still early morning, for the tomb was but a little way out from the city and the road could be quickly travelled in the silence and desertion of the early morning hours. The guards seem to be still in consultation with the Jewish officials (Matt. xxviii., 11, 12), and the lie they were told to proclaim was not yet started on its infamous way.

(SELECTIONS FROM TARBELL'S 'GUIDE.')

The Jewish lie examined.—'The sepulchre is sealed, and a guard is set, with instructions to keep watch until the third day. They are Roman soldiers, and they all sleep at the critical moment. The timid Apostles form a design to steal the body, they surprise the soldiers—the guard still sleeps—they roll away the heavy stone from the entrance to the tomb—the guard still sleeps—they remove the body—and the guard sleeps on. The sleeping guards testify that the Apostles stole the body while they slept, and thus the denial of the resurrection rests upon the testimony of men who swear that they were asleep when the event that they swear to transpired. If the Jews believed this, if the Romans believed this, why were not the Apostles punished for defying the power of Rome? What foolishness, united with temerity unheard of, for the Apostles, who fled when Jesus lived, to steal a dead body and proclaim a falsehood in the teeth of their enemies.' It is neither possible to conceive of men who preached and practiced every virtue deliberately manufacturing the accounts they gave of Christ's appearances after His crucifixion, nor of their willingly suffering for the sake of what they knew to be false, such persecutions and death: as were theirs.

The resurrection of Christ is proven to-day by the Church on earth, with its ordinances, its living ministry, its Gospel of grace, and the marvellous victories won in every age, and in every land by its toil, in spite of its weakness and its worldliness. The Church of Christ is the supreme credential of Christ.—G. Campbell Morgan, the 'Crises of the Christ.'

How does the honor done to women confirm the narrative? They were 'last at the cross and earliest at the tomb.' Remembering the slight honor paid to women in those days, and still in Eastern and non-Christian lands, it is very striking to note this feature of the Gospels. Certainly any fictitious narrative would make the risen Christ appear

first to John or Peter or James, or to the terrified Sanhedrim or Pilate.

Verse 17.—On the disputed phrase, 'Touch me not,' a study of the original gives some light; 'The verb primarily means to fasten to, hence it implies here, not a mere momentary touch, but a clinging to.—Prof. M. R. Vincent. 'For I am not yet ascended to my Father?' To imply that, since he had not yet withdrawn himself from earth, there would be time enough for expressions of affection, and she would not lose the opportunity by going quickly now to his brethren, the disciples, with the glad news.

Bible References.

- John xiv., 19; I. Cor. xv., 20; II. Tim. i., 10; Acts ii., 24; I. Cor. vi., 14; I. Thes. iv., 14; I. Pet. i., 3, 4.

Junior C. E. Topic.

Sunday, May 31.—Topic—Home missions: Alaska for Christ. Isa. lx., 11-12.

C. E. Topic.

- Monday, May 25.—God made the birds. Gen. ii., 19.
- Tuesday, May 26.—Man has power over them. Ps. viii., 6-8.
- Wednesday, May 27.—We can learn from them. Job. xii., 7-10.
- Thursday, May 28.—They are God's birds. Ps. l., 11.
- Friday, May 29.—God feeds them. Job xxxviii., 41.
- Saturday, May 30.—God knows when they die. Matt. x., 29.
- Sunday, May 31.—Topic—God's thought for the birds. Matt. vi., 26.

Personal Work.

The most effective workers in the Church of Christ are those who do the most personal work. They not only work, but they seek opportunities to reach souls by individual contact. A superintendent may speak to his school, a teacher to her class, a pastor to his congregation, in a general way, and yet do no personal work. Nathan's 'Thou art the man' carried more conviction with it than his fine rhetorical figure. Paul made it a point to preach from house to house. One might suppose that the great, indefatigable apostle could find no time for personal work, but he did. One might think that the Lord Jesus, with the multitudes ready to hear, could not find time for personal work, but He did. The miracles of healing and resurrection were all personal and not by the wholesale. Zaccheus, Mary Magdalene, the young lawyer, and others, came into personal contact with Him. An eminent minister once said, that, of the first thousand conversions under his ministerial labors, all but three were first moved by personal, private conversation.

The Sunday-school worker who is satisfied with generalities is certain to accomplish much less than he would by impressive, direct, personal appeals. Some one has said that 'tradition has the very plausible story of the Romans changing, every half hour, the soldiers who guarded St. Paul, lest they should be converted, and that, even then, many confessed themselves Christians in so short a time. We know that this was the way in which Paul worked, "warning every man, and teaching every man," that he might "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."—Living Epistle.'

Always There.

The teacher ought to be regular in his attendance at every session. I have known teachers who kept away from Sunday school for the most trivial cause. This is wrong—Selected.

Sunday School Offer.

Any school in Canada that does not take 'The Messenger' may have it supplied free on trial for three weeks on request of Superintendent, Secretary or Pastor, stating the number of copies required.