

Department of Christian Endeavor

"For Christ and the Church."

The April Consecration Meeting

BY THE EDITOR.

Topic: An Easter Sunday walk with Jesus.

Lesson: Luke 24. 13-35.

SELECTED HYMNS: "Epworth Praises," 188, 190, 192, 152, 128, 112, 103, 87, 56, 49.

(Try a few of these new pieces.)

The reader should recount the events of this first Easter morning that occurred previous to the time of our story. A careful reading of the accounts given by the Evangelists will show that before our Lord did as the record of our Lesson tells, He had been seen by some of His disciples, at least three times. These were: His appearances to Mary Magdalene (Mark 16. 9), to the other women (Matt. 28. 9), and to Peter (Luke 24. 34).

The events preliminary to the afternoon walk should be recounted, the natural dejection of the two disciples, their one topic of conversation on their journey, the interruption by the addition to their number, the friendly conversation of the stranger, their response and the ensuing discussion, the manifestation effected in them by the unexpected counsel they received, and the sequel—all these items in the story should be clearly stated, that the meeting may understand and appreciate the circumstances as fully as possible.

Then, if I were leader, I should have four persons show the fourfold light in which Jesus appears in the story, (1) A congenial companion, (2) A wise teacher, (3) A sufficient consoler, (4) A welcome guest.

Let four of your number divide the study in that way, and there need be no overlapping nor confusion, but clear and instructive statements which the leader will eventually sum up and apply. Do not preach, do not moralize, but tell the story.)

The first, who will picture Christ as a congenial companion to the dejected pair, will be able to bring out important human elements that show the social character and disposition of Jesus. He was really sorry for these discouraged men. He appreciated their feelings of disappointment. He understood their state of mind. He sympathized with their sorrow. In short, He so thoroughly *met* Himself with them that they freely opened to Him their innermost hearts. All sense of strangeness soon disappeared and as intimate friends they conversed together. (What lesson in personal approach may we as Christian workers, learn from this part of the story?)

The second, in showing Christ as a wise teacher, will describe the growth of confidence manifesting itself between the trio. Questions, more than are recorded, pass from the enquiring pair to the strange teacher, and are willingly answered. Jesus understood the Scriptures, He quoted them as typical and prophetic. He showed how they centred in the one whom they thought a failure because they had seen Him dead, and as His instruction proceeded, the truths of the

Word became clarified to both mental understanding and spiritual vision, and under His interpretation of the old time teachings, their hearts began to warm up and glow with hope once more. (What lesson in Scriptural interpretation is taught by our Lord's own use and application of the Old Testament?)

The third, describing the influence of Christ as a Divine consoler, will have abundant scope. The change wrought in the souls of the disciples was most marked. The story grows on one. From a friendly companion joining them in their walk, the sagacious teacher removing their intellectual difficulties, He moves on until He has driven away their distress by showing them that they really have no occasion for grief. He became more than human friend. He sees to the very heart of their trouble and removes all cause of their disorder. And not only does He see clearly and understand fully, but He supplies the needed remedy. Their minds became illumined, their hearts are strangely comforted, and once more they are satisfied and feel a great gladness. (What great object lesson is here for all workers among the sad and sorrowing?)

The fourth, brings the story up to its consummation, in telling how the stranger becomes the guest of the disciples in Emmaus. The sense of his overmastering personality grows on them. Drawn to Him so fully, they cannot express their appreciation too generously, and the truest hospitality unites them. Into the humble village home they go together, but it is quickly transformed into a palace, for the marvel described so simply in Verse 30, explains it all to them as they became conscious of the identity of their divine guest. (What is this breaking bread together, teaches us an important lesson in social service?)

The leader, should now point out the consequences of these various progressive scenes. The sequel is full of fire and enthusiasm of holy zeal founded on strong conviction. The two are no longer fearful and discouraged. Study verse 33 until the scene lives before you. What new men they became! and why? Because they have a new vision of Christ.

The application is easy, and if the leader has given due attention to preparation for the summing up, he can surely make the meeting fruitful in consecration.

LESSONS FROM THE INCIDENT.

Christ may come to us and not be recognized. Why?

Christ is still a living reality in our lives. How?

Christ has not lost interest in the affairs of His Kingdom.

His presence is ample remedy for all our fears.

His instruction in the Scriptures is supreme.

With Him, life becomes to us a glorious and blessed experience.

Our greatest need is His abiding presence.

For Him, who is so essential to us, we cannot give or do too much to show our loving regard.

What we know of Him, we are bound to tell others.

Loving testimony for Him knows neither weariness nor fear. Love hastens our ministry as duty never can.

FOR FURTHER STUDY.

What may we learn from the following facts shown in the story?—

1. That Christ Himself was the theme of His disciples' conversation.
2. That Christ Himself was the expositor of His own sufferings.
3. That Christ Himself was the guest of His humble followers.
4. That Christ Himself was the occasion of His own recognition.
5. That Christ Himself was the inspirer of the most heroic testimony.

He Is Not Dead

Loud mockers in the roaring street
Say: "Christ is crucified again;
Twice pierced His gospel-bringing feet,
Twice broken His great heart in vain."
I hear, and to myself I smile,
For Christ talks with me all the while.

"No angel now to roll the stone
From off His unawakened sleep
In vain shall Mary watch alone;
In vain the soldiers vigil keep."
Yet while they deem my Lord is dead
My eyes are on His shining head.

"No more unto the stubborn heart,
With gentle knocking, shall He plead;
No more the mystic pity start.
For Christ, twice dead, is dead indeed."
So, in the street I hear men say:
Yet Christ is with me all the day.

—Richard Le Gallienne.

The Third Person in Every Friendship

The account of the appearance of Christ to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus is referred to by Mark 16. 12, but is otherwise peculiar to Luke. The narrative is apparently derived from an eye and ear witness.

While the disciples talked and inquired about the Passion and the reported resurrection of Christ, they were overtaken by a Third Person, who reveals himself as the Risen Christ.

These two disciples enjoyed the companionship of opinion: "We trusted that as he that should restore the kingdom of Israel."

There are grades of companionship. The lowest is where men like to be with one another, to sit in the same room, to walk the same way. This is the companionship craved by the most superficial part of all of us.

Next higher is the companionship of identity of work and occupation. To be with another man means to engage in the same tasks. This is the companionship of business men, of men of the same profession, when there is nothing more personal behind their professional relation.

Next higher still is the companionship of opinion, when men think alike and are so thrown into the advocacy of the same measures and policies. This is the essence of all partisanship, the association of men about a common thought, however different may be their reasons and their ways of thinking it.

Beyond all these lies the highest companionship, which is the companionship of character, a sympathy in the final purpose of life, a resemblance in fundamental qualities, which is so essential that it may even do without the others, and may exist between those who are far apart in place, whose works are wholly different, and who hold very different opinions.

These are the grades of human companionship: 1. Physical nearness; 2. Common employment; 3. Similar opinions; 4. Sympathy of character.

"Christians are either living Bibles or living libels."