

FOR THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

International S. S. Lesson.

LESSON IX.—THE RAISING OF LAZARUS.—MARCH 3.

John xi. 30-45.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"I am the resurrection and the life."—Jno. xi. 25.

CENTRAL TRUTH—Resurrection.

ANALYSIS—The HUMANITY of CHRIST v. 30-36.
DIVINITY v. 37-45.

TIME AND PLACE—The month of January, A. D. 80, in Bethany on the Mount of Olives, near Jerusalem.

INTRODUCTION.—Jesus had left Galilee for the last time before this incident, and His work was confined in a great extent to the district of Perea. He was at Bethabara beyond Jordan when the news of Lazarus' death reached Him. For the intervening history read Luke ix. 51; xvii. 10 and Jno. x. 1-42; xi. 1-80.

THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST, v. 30-36.—There was sorrow in the little town of Bethany. From lip to lip in a solemn whisper the sad news spread, that Lazarus was dying, and Mary and Martha were plunged in the depths of grief. In the beautiful home where lay the sick one, all was silence; with quiet movement the anguished sisters tenderly ministered to their weakening brother; they were rich, and every aid, every comfort money could purchase was provided, but it seemed all in vain. Suddenly the news was spread that the despairing sisters had sent a messenger to Bethabara to tell the Man of Nazareth, Jesus the Healer of His friends perils and to plead for the exercise of His power. The people of Bethany had seen Christ at the house of Lazarus before, and probably some of them had experienced His healing touch, so now they looked eagerly for His coming and wondered, "Will He be in time." But more eagerly than all waited Mary and Martha. With anxious hearts, they counted the hours that must intervene before they heard His footsteps. Their hopes were high. "If He but come in time, Lazarus need not die," they told each other, and then again they looked along the winding road and strained their eyes to gain the first glimpse of His coming. There comes some one round the bend; he is running, and alone—it is not He. But it is the messenger; what says he? Perhaps the Christ is following closely. "I left Him in Bethabara, and He gave me no promise." It was an awful blow. With shattered hopes they returned to the sufferer's bedside, and soon the breathing ceased and death came. Then the sad funeral, and the after grief of four long weary days. But suddenly the message came that Jesus had at last arrived, and Martha with heavy heart went out to meet Him. Then occurred that memorable conversation when Martha evidencing faith for the past and the future, but none for the present, yet made that sublime confession of her belief in Christ's Messiahship. In the house of mourning sat Mary, until the message came that the Master was calling for her, then she arose quickly and meeting Him fell at His feet exclaiming, "Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died." Beautiful, indeed, and full of comfort to our humanity is the human sympathy which the Master showed in this time of sorrow. He was troubled, and the burning tears coursed down His cheeks as He saw the distress of His friends. What a wonderful Saviour is this Jesus of ours, when the sorrows and distresses of our lives draw from His heart groans of sympathy, and from His eyes tears of tenderness that tell of One who can be and is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and has been tried and tempted in all points like as we are yet without sin.

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST, vs. 37-45.—Jesus wept, but He did not only weep. Beyond the sweet knowledge that the humanity of Christ can enter into and appreciate our sorrows and our joys, is the glorious fact that His divinity can transmute the leaden burdens of our souls into purest gold, and turn the stumbling blocks that strew our path, into stepping stones to the very gates of Heaven. Christ with His love might have soothed the sad hearts of Mary and Martha, and dried their weeping eyes even in His mere human capacity, but thank God He could do more than that, and did. Suffering with those who suffered round Him, He came, groaning in Himself, to the tomb, on the mouth of which lay a stone. Now from beneath His human form burst the authority and power of His divinity. "Take ye away the stone," He commanded, and in the face of Martha's faithless protest insisted on its being done. Then while the stone was being rolled away, He lifted His eyes toward Heaven, and thanked the Father that He had heard Him, that all around might realize whence He came, and from whom derived His power. There was a hush fell on the assembled mourners, all was silence and every eye was turned upon the Master; suddenly with a loud voice He cried, "Lazarus, come forth," and, lo! from the tomb, bound hand and foot, came he that was dead; and once again the Master spoke, "Loose him, and let him go." What a grand, glad, uplifting lesson is this! What Jesus did for Lazarus, He can and will do for you and I. "O, Death where is thy sting, O, Grave where is thy victory?"

Application and Illustration.

WHAT CAN I DO?

KNOW CHRIST'S SYMPATHY, v. 36.—How greatly in contrast stands the Christ with the deities of the heathen world. He becomes man, suffers with man and for man, enters into his sorrows and joys. Vincent tells us of the ancient gods that, "Homer's gods weep and bellow when wounded, but are not touched with the feeling of human infirmity." Mr. Gladstone observes: "No Homeric deity will ever be found to make a personal sacrifice on behalf of a human

olient." So Diana, when appealed to by Hyppolytus for sympathy replies, "I see thy love, but must not shed a tear."

GIVE EVIDENCE OF YOUR FAITH IN HIM, v. 39.—How ready we are to interpose objections! We profess faith in Christ, yet by our every action deny His power. A little blind boy was standing on a street corner with an expectant look upon his face. To the passer-by who offered to assist him across the crowded thoroughfare, he shook his head and said, "O no, thank you, I am waiting for my father." "Why do you feel safe with your father?" Raising his sightless eyes, with a sweet smile and look of perfect trust, the boy replied: "O, because my father knows the way. He can see, but I am blind." Why cannot we, in our blindness, show an equal faith in the all seeing Father? "He can see, but I am blind."—*Golden Rule.*

TAKE CHRIST AT HIS WORD, v. 40.—Martha has yet to have her faith perfected. She did not believe Christ immediately and fully. The story is told of Napoleon that one day he let fall the reins of his bridle, and his proud charger galloped swiftly away. A common soldier ran out of the ranks, caught the horse, and placed the reins again in the emperor's hands. "Much obliged to you, captain," said Napoleon. The man immediately believed the chief, and said, "Of what regiment, sire?" Napoleon, delighted with his quick perception and ready trust in his word, replied, "Of my guard!" and rode away. The soldier laid down his gun, saying, "He may take it who will; I am captain of the guard." God honors and delights in a like manifestation of faith.—*Golden Rule.*

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR.

Spiritual Death and Spiritual Life.

First Day—Eternal death—Matt. xxv. 41-46.

Second Day—Eternal life—Matt. xxv. 34-30.

Third Day—Death for all—Rom. v. 12-16.

Fourth Day—Life for all—Rom. v. 17-21.

Fifth Day—A death not to be feared—Matt. x. 10-32.

Sixth Day—A death to be feared—Matt. x. 33-39.

Seventh Day—SPIRITUAL DEATH AND SPIRITUAL LIFE.—Rev. iii. 1-3, 7-13, 20-22.

PRAYER MEETING TOPIC, Mar. 3—"Spiritual Death and Spiritual Life," Rev. iii. 1-3, 7-13, 20-22. As it was in the Church of Sardis in A. D. 96, so is it to-day in too many of the Churches of our own land; they have a name that they live, but in reality are dead. If this is the case in a church it is so because the individuals composing that church are lacking in spiritual life, so that the question resolves itself into a distinctly personal one. You say your church is dead, your O. E. Society is dead, your prayer meetings are dead, but how about yourself brother? Are you alive? Life begets life in the natural world, and as surely does it do so in the spiritual world also, so that if you as an individual member of an otherwise spiritually lifeless community or organization are yourself alive, the very fact should be sufficient, and will be sufficient to resurrect the vital principles and power of others. But what do we mean by spiritual life? We have the key to it in the twentieth verse of our topic passage. "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." To live with Christ and have Christ come in and live with, in and through you, that is spiritual life. Have you got it? Does Christ sup with you, and you with Him? Are you on such close terms of intimacy with your Saviour that the most commonplace phases of your life are sanctified by His presence and blessing? If not you need have no surprise that the church is dead, the Y. P. S. C. E. asleep, and the prayer-meeting drawy, for if life begets life, it is just as sure that death begets death, and therefore you yourself are responsible for the condition of the community you belong to, and the sooner you realize it the better.

Is It True?

Dr. Clark writes as below in the current *Golden Rule*; when answering the questions for him, we would be obliged if you would drop us a post card too.

Every now and then it is stated by the chronic critic, and sometimes by the critic who is not chronic, that Christian Endeavorers do not support their churches faithfully. More often it is insinuated in a sly way by some good brother, who is afraid that the young people will wish to write the firm name "John Smith and Father," instead of "John Smith and Son," if they are not frequently warned.

Now, if this charge is true, we Christian Endeavorers, beyond all others, want to know it, and want to correct the fault, for it is a serious and a radical one.

If it is not true, we also want to be able to refute it.

Take a postal card, write upon it answers to the following questions and drop it in the office, addressed to me, at 646 Washington Street, Boston. Questions can be answered by number if you choose.

1. How many active members in your society of C. E.?
2. How many active members habitually attend the Sunday evening service?
3. How many of them habitually attend the mid-week prayer meeting?
4. How large a percentage of all the members of your church attend the evening service?
5. How large a percentage of all the members of your church attend the mid-week service?
6. Are your leading active members also active in other branches of church work?
7. Are the young people generally more or less active in general church work than before the society was formed?