

FOR THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

International S. S. Lesson.

LESSON II.—NOW IS CHRIST RISEN.—APRIL 14.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept.”—I Cor. xv. 20.

MEMORY VERSES.—12-14.

What does “The Risen Christ” mean to the believing soul?

Dead by nature, it points Him away from the loathsomeness of death and the terror of eternal ruin to rescue and life, even Eternal Life, never ending for spirit soul and body, and from separation from God to everlasting fellowship with Him in Jesus Christ.

With eye fixed upon Jesus in His risen glory, He is the all satisfying object to the awakened sinner, who, having found Him has found in Him all he needs or ever shall need to satisfy the cravings of his immortal nature.

Thus Paul’s recapitulation of the Gospel which he preached culminates in the resurrection as to which he writes at length in the wonderful chapter from which our lesson is taken.

From the moment of our accepting Christ we become identified with Him.

1st. In His death and going down into the tomb, we become dead to self and the world.

2nd. In His being quickened and raised by the Holy Spirit.

3rd. In His ascension to Heaven as conqueror over Satan, sin and death.

4th. In intercession through Him and with Him.

5th. And those who have overcome with Him will finally sit with Him on His throne.

What a position and what a resting is here for the overcoming believer!

Paul takes pains to make clear the evidence of the fact of the resurrection of Jesus the keystone of his gospel, and which the Jewish teachers would fain have destroyed.

1st. It was “according to the Scriptures,” Ps xvi. 10, Luke xxiv. 46, I Pet. i. 2.

2nd. It was according to individual evidence, “He was seen of Cephas.” We don’t know to what occasion this refers, but we have the testimony of the eleven and their associates to the two disciples whom the Lord joined on the way to Emmaus, that the Lord had risen indeed and had appeared unto Simon.

3rd. It was according to the testimony of “the twelve,” that is of the disciples, Matthias possibly being present, Jno. xx. 19-26.

4th. It was according to the evidence of “five hundred brethren at once” probably on the mountain in Galilee, whither He had promised His disciples that after He was risen again He would go before them, Matt. xxvi. 32, xxviii. 7, 10, 16.

5th. It was according to the testimony of James, then of all the apostles, these probably comprising more than the twelve disciples, and being those, who like them had received teaching from his own lips.

6th. Last of all he was able to testify personally, having himself seen and heard the risen Lord, Acts xxii. 14-18, xxiii. 11, I Cor. ix. 1.

What a convincing combination of testimony.

In our own day.—In the little child who sits in Sabbath school, in the congregations who assemble on the one day all over the world to worship God, in the workman whom we meet on that day clad for a day of rest from daily toil, in the quiet of our city upon that day, and in the church bell that vibrates in the air of the still First day morning. We have in all these a witness to a recognized command, or to an event of some kind, compelling general acceptance in its authority, and bearing upon those living at the time, and to what point in history do these conditions converge, if not to an event which in its day must have been recognized as an uncontradictable fact, and history can in no other way account for the Christian Sabbath as we find it to-day, than by tracing it back to the morning of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

What we in Canada have in our Sabbath schools, in our churches in rest from labor, in the quiet of our cities upon the Lord’s Day, is due to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and we can never thank Him sufficiently that the Bible and the Lord’s Day have both been preserved for us with a freshness and power for everything that is pure, and that makes for joy and peace now and for the glory beyond. Let us value these as trusts from God, neither of them to be tampered with.

Here what God says in Isa. lviii. 13, 14, “If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure upon my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord: and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”

Let us all pray that Canada may not forfeit these blessings.

It is fine to hear Canadian children sing the glories of Canada, but they should never forget that the happiness and glory of their beautiful country are bound up with the keeping of God’s day jealously guarded from those who would degrade it to a day of mere fleshly rest and enjoyment, or to a day of toil for gain.

The preceding aspect of the Resurrection has more particularly to do with its bearing upon the action of Christians while in this sphere, but it is in its bearing upon the prospect, stretching away into the infinite of all that belongs to the future of the redeemed that it takes a place leading us on and up to that which eye hath

not seen nor ear heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man to conceive, that it becomes a truth which satisfies the cravings of the immortal spirit and becomes to it a never failing spring of joy.

Believers are identified with Jesus in His resurrection. As Jesus died they are dead in Him to sin and self, leaving these as He left the grave clothes in the tomb. As He rose to life they have taken on in Him the new life, the Holy Spirit giving them the same life as He gave to Him when He raised Him from the dead, and the same mighty power of God working in them which wrought in the dead body of the Lord, Ep. i. 19, 20.

Even when we were dead in sins, God, in the regeneration of the redeemed by His rich mercy and love, raised them up and brought them from death to life together with Christ, and it is in the energy of Christ’s life in them now while occupied in their every day work that they are privileged to live and be to the world so lightened by the indwelling of Jesus as to be as a “city set on an hill,” bright, rejoicing beneficent centres of attraction to others for the glory of Him who is Himself the light of His holy city as he is of His people.

The light from the redeemed who are temples of God should be God-like evidence of God dwelling in them.

Let us all examine our conduct to see how this is with us.

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR.

Resurrection.

First Day—From death—John v. 21-29.

Second Day—From sin—Heb. ix. 13-15, 26-28.

Third Day—From sorrow—Luke iv. 14-21.

Fourth Day—From weakness—I Cor. xv. 42-52.

Fifth Day—From worry—John xiv. 37-31.

Sixth Day—From failure—I Cor. iii. 6-15.

Seventh Day—RISEN WITH CHRIST; FROM WHAT?—Rom. vi. 1-12, 20-23.

PRAYER MEETING TOPIC, April 14.—“RISEN WITH CHRIST: FROM WHAT?”—Rom. vi. 1-12, 20-23. The idea of resurrection implies a condition of death, and a reviving power wholly outside and apart from the one resurrected. From study of God’s Word we find that such a condition is distinctly recognized, and taught as being the absolute necessity prior to newness of life in the regenerated spirit. St. Paul tells us in unmistakable language, and with emphatic reiteration, that he who would experience the risen life of Jesus Christ must first submit himself to crucifixion with Jesus Christ, to sin and to the world, (Rom. vi. vi. 3, 4, 6, 11 Col. ii. 20, Gal. ii. 20, vi. 14, 2 Cor. iv. 10, 11.) The truth so fully and so strongly expressed in these passages is one which we are only too apt to fight shy of. It involves so much. To reckon ourselves as crucified with Christ, and so indeed dead unto sin, means more of submission and surrender than many Christians are willing to make. And yet, if they only believed it, it means more of true happiness and peace than they can ever otherwise experience. Poor soul, struggling with temptation on one hand, and with the will of God on the other; fighting against sin, and yet refusing holiness; submit, surrender, die to all your self-efforts, to all your old sins, to all your old life, become as a helpless corpse, unable to move hand or foot in your own behalf; and let that same Spirit which raised up Jesus from the dead, come and breathe into you a new life, with new longings, new desires, new motives, everything renewed, (Rom. viii. 11.)

Come it is Easter, Resurrection day: you are weary of the old life, with all its failures, and frailties and disappointments; then reckon yourself dead to it all, and rise in the might of His Spirit to newness of life, to a life of overcoming instead of defeat, of strength instead of frailty, of triumph instead of failure. Hark! ’tis the song of a host of risen ones, “OLD THINGS ARE PAST AWAY; BEHOLD ALL THINGS ARE BECOME NEW!” 2 Cor. v. 17.

Junior Topic.

DARK THINGS BRIGHTENED.

First Day—Death—John v. 28, 29.

Second Day—Trouble—Luke iv. 18.

Third Day—Sickness—Rom. viii. 13.

Fourth Day—Worry—John xiv. 27.

Fifth Day—Sin—Heb. viii. 12.

Sixth Day—Weakness—I Cor. xv. 42, 43.

Seventh Day—WHAT ARE SOME OF THE DARK THINGS THAT JESUS MAKES BRIGHT?—Isa. xlii. 5-7, 15, 16. (An Easter topic.)

A Queen’s Prayer.

When Queen Victoria was a girl of but eighteen years, she was told that she was to rule over the mighty kingdom to whose throne she was heir. She received the announcement with deep solemnity. Though she had from infancy been destined to the honor, to her nature, distrustful of itself, the hour brought a feeling of responsibility that was overpowering, and she sank on her knees, clasped her hands, and faltered out, with tears: “God help me to be good.”

Her prayer has been heeded, and she will be remembered in all English history as Victoria the good. One need not be a queen so to pray. Our young people can emulate Victoria in this respect and receive help for the asking from the same source.

If you are trying to decide how to approach a man about his soul you may study his will; but if you are trying to decide whether to approach him or not you should study only God’s will.