

VICTORY OVER DEATH.

July 27th].

[1 Corin. xv: 50-58.

GOLDEN TEXT:—*Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.*—John 11: 25.

HOME READINGS:—M. Matt. 28: 1-20. T. John 11: 21-44. W 1 Cor. 15: 1-11. Th. 1 Cor. 15: 12-34. F. John 5: 19-19. S. 1 Cor. 15: 35-58. S. Daniel 12: 1-3.

In Acts 18 is an account of Paul's first preaching at Corinth. Referring to it he says, 1 Cor. 2: 3. Not very long after the formation of a Christian Church at Corinth, false teachers disturbed it greatly, and led some away into very erroneous views. One of them was that there is no resurrection of bodies. Some of them professed great spirituality of thought saying, "the resurrection is past already," 2 Tim 2: 18 that the only resurrection is that of souls from being dead in sin to newness of life. Corinth, as Paul well knew, was a place where the advancement of such views was peculiarly dangerous: for the Greek Sophoi—or wise men—laughed at the idea of resurrection of bodies, Acts 19: 32; and as far as their views touched the general mind, they would help the influence of false teachers of the Church on that particular point. But the resurrection of the body was to Paul a doctrine of the utmost moment, first, because the resurrection of the body of Christ was one of the great proofs of his Messiahship—of the truth of Christianity, and second, because personal resurrection is a great object of Christian faith and hope. From v. 3 Paul deals with two questions by which the false teachers opposed the doctrine of the resurrection. First "How are the dead raised up?" How can it be?" In answer, he represents that as a very foolish question in view of the wonderful changes of matter in other departments. v. 36-38. The 2nd question was, "With what body do they come?" and they argued that as the body is often now a clog to the soul the resurrection of it was not desirable. In answer, Paul set forth such views of the body after the resurrection as are completely opposed to the idea of any such influence, v. 50. At the resurrection, not such bodies as now, v. 42-44. "Spiritual," as opposed to "natural" not as opposed to material. 1 Cor. 10: 4, Phil. 5: 21. V. 51. By "we" is meant the godly from all the ages. Psalm 90 1, "we shall all be changed." The godly men alive on earth will be changed without dying at all, in immediate connection with the resurrection of the dead. 1 Thes. 4: 17. The dead in Christ shall first rise, then the living will be changed. It does not mean that the dead in Christ shall rise before those that die in their sins. V. 52-54. Ex. 22: 16 Matt 24: 31. "Death is swallowed up in victory" no traces of it left, as a vessel swallowed up of the ocean leaves not a trace behind. Rev 21: 4. V. 55. Hosea 13: 14. V. 56. The guilt of sin fills death with terrors: but "if sin be pardoned, I'm secure: death has no sting besides." "The strength of sin is the law." Rom. 4: 15; 5: 13 7: 5. 13. V. 57. Rom. 7: 25 and 8 37—1 John 4: 4. Rev. 12: 1. Paul personifies death and the grave, and represents the righteous as praising God—victoriously, in a spirit of triumph over both. V. 58. 2 Pet. 3: 4. "Steadfast and immovable" in the faith, 1 Pet 5: 9—2 Pet. 3: 17. "abundant in the work of the Lord." 2 Cor. 9: 8 and 2 Pet. 1: 8.

THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION.

August 3rd].

[2 Corin. v: 14-21.

GOLDEN TEXT:—*We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*—2 Cor. 5: 20.

HOME READINGS:—M. Matt. 10: 1-20. T. Mark 16: 14 20. W 2 Cor. 4: 1-18. Th 2 Cor. 5: 14 21. F. 1 Cor. 2: 1-16. S. 1 Cor. 4: 1-15. S. Col. 3: 1-22.

In v. 12 the Apostle alludes to the false teachers and those who were won over to them under their influence, 1 Cor 1: 43, and 3: 1. The opposers of Paul pretended to regard his ardent words and labors as signs of being "beside himself;" but by v. 13 he assured them that what the false teachers called madness was zeal for the glory of God, and a sober regard for the welfare of the people. In spirit the same as Acts 26: 25. He then proceeded to show that what his opponents treated as madness was a new life to which he had been borne onward by the influence of a Saviour's love.

V. 14, 15. "The love of Christ constraineth us," 't' it constrained him to judge and feel that mankind must in their state by nature be in a most seriously necessitous condition: for "if one died for all, then were all dead." The fact that Christ died for sinners loudly proclaims our need of such wondrous interposition. Rom. 3: 10—21. 2nd. It constrained him to feel "that they who live should live to him who died for them and rose again," and, as he was now experiencing a new life in Christ, he felt constrained to be devoted to his service. Phil. 1: 21. Gal. 2: 21. Rom. 6: 11 and 14 7: 8. V. 16. "Heretofore know we no man after the flesh," on account of his nationality, or ancestors, or station in life, Gal. 3: 28. Col. 3: 1. Eph. 2: 3, 14. "We have known Christ after the flesh"; i. e., as of the seed of Abraham, Gal. 3: 16—of David, Rom. 1: 3—of Hebræans, Rom. 9: 5. "Yet now henceforth know we him no more" after the flesh. We know him as "the man Christ Jesus," as "Immanuel (God with us)," a Saviour "who was made in the likeness of men." Phil. 2: 7, and proclaimed John 3: 16. V. 17. "Therefore, if any man," Jew or Gentile, "be in Christ he is a new creature." Rom. 6: 7. Gal. 6: 5. Compare Gal. 6: 15. Gal. 5: 1 and 1 Cor. 7: 19. Those who are new creatures in Christ have faith in Christ, love to Christ, and a spirit of obedience. John 4: 15, 21. Eph. 2: 0. As the life, nourishment, growth, beauty, and fruitfulness of the branches of a vine are all derived from the vine, so Christians are related to Christ. John 15: 5. "All things are become new," new affections, motives and principles of action relationships, Rom. 8: 17. V. 8. "All things are of God." 1 Cor. 15: 10. Rom. 5: 2. 21. Eph. 3: 2-7. "Who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ," brought us who believe into a state of pardon and peace with himself through Christ and him crucified. Rom. 5: 1. V. 19. "Reconciling the world to himself." Rom. 8: 7. Eph. 2: 16. Eph. 1: 7. "The word of reconciliation," the Gospel. V. 20. "Ambassadors" sent by authority to propose to rebels, to sinners, the gospel terms of forgiveness and reconciliation. "As though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." The word "you" twice introduced here in italics by the translators is not in the Greek. Paul did not call on the Corinthian Christians to be reconciled to God. They were addressed as being already reconciled. V. 18. Being Christians they were reconciled. Rom. 5: 10. In v. 12 he said, "Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men," and in this v. 20 instead of the word "you" should be "world" or "men." Paul's meaning clearly is this, God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself: we are ambassadors of the world. Mark 16: 15: as though God did beseech the world by us; we beseech men to be reconciled to God. V. 21. He hath made him to be a sin-offering for us. 1 Pet. 2: 24. Is. 53: 6. "that we," & Rom. 5: 19 and 10: 3-4. Does the love of Christ constrain us to love him? 1 John 4: 19, to yield ourselves to him? Rom. 12: 1, to live to him? 2 Cor. 5: 15.