



LESSON,—SUNDAY, APRIL 12, 1908.

The Raising of Lazarus,

John xi., 32-44. Memory verses 43, 44. Read John xi., 1-57.

Golden Text.

I am the resurrection and the life.—John xi., 25.

Home Readings.

- Monday, April 6.—John xi., 1-17.
- Tuesday, April 7.—John xi., 18-38.
- Wednesday, April 8.—John xi., 39-57.
- Thursday, April 9.—Luke vii., 11-23.
- Friday, April 10.—Luke viii., 41, 42, 49-56.
- Saturday, April 11.—Acts ix., 32-43.
- Sunday, April 12.—II. Kings iv., 8-37.

FOR THE JUNIOR CLASSES.

Recall some of the texts recently studied in which Jesus proclaims his power, such as 'I am the bread of life,' 'I am the light of the world,' and last Sunday's text, 'I am the good shepherd.' All these texts tell us how Christ will take care of us during this life, how he feeds us, guides us, and cares for us all the time, but do you think that is all that they refer to? You know how the twenty-third Psalm tells of the shepherd leading his sheep by the quiet waters and in the green pastures, but there is somewhere else that the sheep all have to go at some time, and that is called 'the valley of the shadow of death.' But here too we find the shepherd is with his sheep, and although they cannot see him they can feel the guiding touch of his staff to keep them safely until they come out of the dark valley. You know that is what death is really like to anyone who has Jesus to go through the valley with him. In our lesson to-day we learn about someone who had gone right into this valley, he was one of Jesus' sheep, a man named Lazarus. Lazarus and his two sisters, Mary and Martha, lived in a little village called Bethany near Jerusalem. They all loved each other very much and loved Jesus too, and very often Jesus had gone and visited them in their home. Last Sunday, you know, we learned how angry the Jews were with Christ and how they tried to stone him, so that Jesus had to leave Jerusalem and go away into a quiet place. It was while he was here that he got news that his dear friend Lazarus was very ill.

FOR THE SENIORS.

The time between this and last Sunday's lesson was spent in Perea, and the two months so spent are therefore called the Perea ministry. Christ had escaped the anger of the Jews, not because he feared death, for his aim in coming from Galilee was to meet the death he expected, but because his time had not yet come and he would not prematurely expose himself to danger. The disciples were with him and from Thomas's gloomy remark (verse 16) it would appear that Christ had again been trying to prepare them for the coming trial. However, before the terrible strain on their faith which he saw his death would be in spite of all he could say, he desires to show them that he is nevertheless master of death; that it is truly only because he wills it (John x., 1, 18) that death has any power at all. This seems to be the only explanation of the seemingly strange delay (verse 6) after the receipt of the news. The great coming miracle was necessary to strengthen the faith of the depressed disciples (verse 15). The fact that this necessity had occasioned the

sisters such sore grief would explain the Saviour's tears (verse 35). Death, which he knew already was in his power, as his use of the past tense in verse 41 would show, could have no terror, bring no sorrow to him. He knew what lay beyond, and that a passing from this life to be with God was nothing to grieve over, but the sore distress of the sisters, his friends, and the pitiful intimation that it was his own delay which had caused it must have moved the Saviour deeply. Even here where were his truest, most comprehending friends, he could not find perfect trust, but a wild abandonment of grief such as was customary in Palestine. He had had to cause the sisters pain, and the knowledge that it was so soon to turn to joy did not prevent his loving heart from bending under this burden.

(SELECTIONS FROM TARBELL'S 'GUIDE.')

Alike in its intrinsic importance, and in the effect it produced on the policy of the Sanhedrin, the raising of Lazarus may be regarded as the culmination of the Saviour's ministry. At first sight its absence from the Synoptic Gospels seems almost inexplicable. But we are less surprised at this when we remember (1) that the occurrence was not one which came within the cycle of events recorded in those Gospels, and (2) that they relate other miracles of a similar nature which are not contained in the Fourth Gospel (Mark v., 32; Luke vii., 11). It is also to be borne in mind that in the preaching of the Gospel the significance of this miracle was completely overshadowed by that of Christ's own resurrection and death. Then the hostility of the Jewish authorities, which this miracle did so much to intensify, may have rendered it advisable for some time not to give the episode a place in the teaching of the catechists, lest it should involve Lazarus and his sisters in continued persecution (xii., 10). In keeping with this is the fact that there is no mention of any member of the family by name either, in Matthew or Mark, and although Luke introduces the names of the sisters into his narrative, he does not give the name of the village in which they resided (Luke x., 38). —J. A. McClymont, in the 'New Century Bible.'

Christ brought Life and Immortality to Light.—Whilst human instinct and reason declare for immortality, the subject at last is left in deep uncertainty. Whilst we listen to human reason and testimony we feel that it may be illogical, fanciful, mistaken, we may be the dupes of our imagination, it may be nothing more than guess work and illusion, all is vague, confused, unsatisfying. But when Christ comes all is changed. He makes eternity a fact; He looks, He breathes immortality. You cannot come into contact with Him without tasting the powers of the world to come, and feeling the eternal hope awake in your soul. He brought life and immortality to light. We pass from dubious twilight to clear day, to knowledge, assurance, hope. It is the same change that we witness when we see alchemy changed into chemistry, when we see astrology changed into astronomy; a vague, wavering, visionary speculation passes into a definite, demonstrated, fruitful science. In Christ the dream becomes a reality, the inference a certainty, the desire knowledge and experience. In Christ at last the race attains the clear consciousness of its high nature and its vast destiny.—W. L. Watkinson, Noon-day Addresses.

The greatest sorrow in life for beings like ourselves would be to have no sorrow.—William L. Watkinson.

If you would have the gift of sympathy you must be content to pay the price; like Him, you must suffer.—F. W. Robertson.

O love divine, that stooped to share
Our sharpest pang, our bitterest tear,
On Thee we cast each earth-born care;
We smile at pain while Thou art near.
—Oliver Wendell Holmes.

As we must spend time in cultivating earthly friendships if we are to have their bless-

ings, so we must spend time in cultivating the companionship of Christ.—Henry Drummond.

BIBLE REFERENCES.

Col. iii., 4; I. Cor. xv., 54, 55; Rom. xii., 15; Isa. liii., 3; Dan. xii., 2; II. Cor. i., 3; Matt. ix., 18, 19, 23-26; Luke vii., 11-17.

Junior C. E. Topic.

Sunday, April 12.—Topic—Temperance meeting: Lessons from the life of John B. Gouga. II. Sam. xxii., 17-27.

C. E. Topic.

- Monday, April 6.—Blessedness of humility. Prov. xvi., 19.
- Tuesday, April 7.—Blessings for mourners. Isa. ix., 1-3.
- Wednesday, April 8.—God's thought about the meek. I. Pet. iii., 4.
- Thursday, April 9.—Blessings for the thirsty. Isa. lv., 1.
- Friday, April 10.—God remembers the merciful. Heb. vi., 10.
- Saturday, April 11.—Keep thyself pure. I. Tim. v., 22.
- Sunday, April 12.—Topic—Lessons from the Beatitudes. Matt v., 1-12.

Stick to the Text!

Many a time we have listened to some speaker who rambled all around the subject, and left us at last with a feeling of having wasted our time and his own as well. There are men and women who think sticking to the text one of the first requisites in a minister, and yet they teach in the Sunday School in the most hit-or-miss fashion imaginable.

A young college student who is an enthusiast on the subject of art cannot teach a single lesson without bringing in the—to him—fascinating theme. It has grown to be a joke among the members of his class, and they speculate Sunday after Sunday as to how long he can talk without telling of the beauties of some work of art. It would probably astonish him greatly to know how many times he neglects the lesson to take up his favorite subject, but he is surely wasting his opportunities to work for the Master.—'S. S. Times.'

An Important Point.

Sabbath School teachers sometimes neglect the more spiritual features of the lesson. They do not press home the great need of the personal salvation of those committed to their care. The chief reason, doubtless, is a want of real heart experience on their own part. They often talk fluently and volubly on non-essentials, while some of their scholars are sighing for the bread of heaven. A bright young girl remarked: 'Our Sabbath School teacher never talks about Jesus; she only asks the questions in the Book. I wish she would talk to us about becoming Christians.' Surely that teacher failed in real duty, and lacked in both mind and heart preparation.—'Christian Globe.'

The Superintendent.

The ideal superintendent is not a man necessarily of unusual talent in half a dozen different directions, but a man who realizes to the bottom the importance of Sunday School work, and who is willing to give himself to it. The time was when a man was chosen for the office of superintendent because he could 'talk well;' now, some schools make effort to select a man for superintendent who cannot 'talk well.' A superintendent who cannot talk, but can live and do things, is worth infinitely more than the one who can talk but who is weak and purposeless in Christian life and work.

Next to the work and discipline of the Sunday School hour comes the need of personally knowing the pupils and of encouraging sympathy and helpfulness among the workers. The teachers' meeting is opportunity for a superintendent coming into close touch with the individual teacher and his work, and opportunity also of mutual acquaintance and sympathy in the discussion of common interests.—'Ev. S. S. Teacher.'