

the Gospel is to be the great means in the hand of God for the evangelization of the world. We are warranted then in expecting that the progress of the Christian Church in its effort to evangelize the nations will at once fulfil and throw light on many of the passages in Old Testament and New that speak of the future conquest of the world through the power of the Word of God working by His Spirit—and so it is. The isles are to wait for His law; the ends of the earth are to fear Him; all nations are to be blessed in Him; the heathen are to become His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth His possession, all things are to fall down before Him and all nations serve Him. All these promises for the complete establishment of Christianity in the world have been realized or find their hope of realization in the success of evangelistic work among the heathen in our own and other lands. Does not every missionary journal tell us how the isles are waiting for this law, or how the nations are being blessed in Him? Where could we have a better illustration of a nation born in a day than Fiji or Japan, and have not the most brutalized savages proved that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved? Vivid as are such illustrations of the fulfilment of explicit prophecies, we must not fail to direct our attention to the fact that in the light thrown upon God's Word at large by the missions of the present century, many a passage is seen to yield a new and fruitful meaning; indeed whole chapters are seen now to bear a missionary application of which this was wholly unsuspected a hundred years ago. In short it may be said that the whole Bible stands forth now as bearing a missionary character, a fact which besides its bearing on the subject under consideration has affected in a profound degree some other departments of theological study.

Of a less direct but not less important character is another service which the Christian missions of recent days have rendered to the defence of Christian truth. Theological controversies find but a precarious lodgment in hearts that have been set on fire with missionary zeal. Battles have often raged hotly around questions that were of theoretical interest rather than practical consequence; but the vigour of such a battle languishes when the combatants find their interests enlisted on behalf of the needy at home or the unevangelized abroad. Where are controversies about the philosophical aspects of doctrine less likely to arise, or having arisen elsewhere, where are they less likely to excite interest than among those who have their hands full of the work of making known the way of life to those who sit in the region and shadow of death? The interests of theological truth are nowhere likely to receive more candid attention or to be treated with a greater degree of sanctified common-sense than by those who bring every truth to a practical bearing on the issues that never cease to stare the missionary in the face. There is no time here for hairsplitting; no interest here in parsing down the saving doctrines of the Gospel; no admiration for the man who juggles with eternal verities which the onlooker is daily endeavouring to commend in their simplicity to those who by this very process have lost conscience and truthfulness. Indeed some of the heresies of by-gone days, which would not down in spite of the ponderous tomes of good men who fought them only with arguments, have been thrice slain, trodden out of all semblance of vitality and buried fathoms deep in the eagerness of the Church to expend her energies in some effort for the spreading of the good news.

It is in a line with this to mention other helps the Christian Church has got from the reflex action of missions. The endeavours put forth by the home Churches for their maintenance have relieved the tendency to routine and that absorption in merely selfish interests which has always been one of the most insidious foes against which the Church as an organization has to contend. The need of a proper maintenance and development of missions has led to a systematizing of the methods of giving for Christian work and has done much to help those servants to whom the Lord has vouchsafed riches to realize for what purpose the Great Giver has so blessed them in basket and in store. Nowhere is the unity of the Church so readily recognized as on the mission field; nowhere have its practical advantages been more abundantly proved, and the eyes of Christians who long for the visible unity of Christ's body may well be turned to heathen lands where the diminishing ties of denominationalism and the increasing feeling of sympathy between all those who love the Lord Jesus not only point in the direction of Christian union but have in several cases led the way and set an example to the Churches at home.

It will not be amiss to indicate in a few words the qualities which must mark the Gospel that is to do the Lord's work, whether it be in China and the isles of the sea or in

the scattered out-posts of the prairie to which the missionaries of this college are most likely to go. It must be the Word of God—the full Word—the message of the Most High in all its length and breadth. I suspect that missionaries are often tempted to present partial views of the truth—perhaps because some aspect of the truth has been specially helpful to themselves—perhaps from the spirit of accommodation that prompted Uffilas to suppress the wars of Joshua when he translated the Bible for the Goths, who, he thought, were too fond of fighting already or with the motive of the missionary to our own Indians who refuses to tell those whom he wishes to cure of polygamy about the wives of the Hebrew patriarchs. Whatever be the view of the expedience of such suppression, there must be no minimizing of the essential features of the Gospel. The power of it depends upon the purity with which the missionary transmits the message from the author to the hearer. "Thou art the organ whose full tones are thunder and I the keys beneath thy fingers pressed. The only music is when the organ itself speaks, if the keys scratch or jar or put themselves into the music in any way, the result is a breaking of the harmony. The end is reached when the divine message is brought without let or hindrance directly into contact with that element of religion which is found in every man. The most ignorant and erroneous religious sentiment—to use a modern phrase—is mightier than all other forces in the world's history. It is like some of those terrible compounds of modern chemistry—an inert and innocuous-looking drop of liquid. Shake it and it flames heaven high, shattering the rocks and ploughing up the soil. Put even an adulterated and carnalized faith into the hearts of a mob of wild Arabs and in a century they will stream from their deserts and blaze from the mountains of Spain to the plains of Bengal. Put a living faith in Christ and a heroic confidence in the power of His Gospel to reclaim the worst sinners into a man's heart and he will out of weakness be made strong and plough his way through obstacles with the compact force and crushing directness of lightning." In order to communicate such a force from one man to another a missionary must bestow himself with his message, and so his gift like mercy is twice blessed, it blesses him that gives and him that takes, and this blessing adds to his ability to give himself to the next seeker. The missionary of all men must be a man of sympathy. In his case as in Sir Launfal the coin he indifferently or contemptuously or through a sense of duty throws to the beggar is worthless gold. It is only when the power of an overshadowing, all-embracing love fills his heart and prompts his act that the blessing comes. And what a blessing it is! His eyes are open and he sees the wretched beggar to whom he offered his dole transformed into none other than the glorious Christ and hear His words—

Not what we give but what we share,
For the gift without the giver is bare;
Who gives Himself with His alms feeds three—
Himself, His hungry neighbour, and Me.

Sabbath School Teacher

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS

Dec. 13,
1891.

CHRIST RISEN.

{ John xx.
1-13.

GOLDEN TEXT. It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again—Rom viii. 34

INTRODUCTORY.

Jesus died on the afternoon of Friday. The body was given to Joseph of Arimathea for burial. The preparations were hastily made as it was the day before the Sabbath. It was the intention of the friends to embalm the body after the sacred day was past. Meanwhile it was laid in the rock-hewn tomb with a large stone rolled against the opening. To make certain that the body should not be removed by His friends or disciples, the Jewish leaders had put a seal on the stone closing the entrance to the grave and to make assurance doubly sure they had gone to Pilate for soldiers to watch.

I. The First Visitors to the Tomb.—Mary Magdalene and the other women, as mentioned in Luke's Gospel, waited until the Jewish Sabbath was ended. They had made all the necessary preparations for embalming the body of Jesus. Before daybreak they had set out to perform the sacred task they had undertaken to express their affection to the Great Teacher to whom they had been so devotedly attached. Important as was the duty they sought to discharge, they adhered strictly to the custom of observing the Sabbath. As they neared the tomb they were wondering how they would be able to gain an entrance. They were asking each other who will roll away

the stone that guarded the approach. When Mary Magdalene, who had gone in advance of the others, reached the grave she found that the stone had been rolled away. She turned in haste and alarm and ran till she met Simon Peter and John, who here tells the circumstance, yet modestly refrains from naming himself, indicating only that it was "the other disciple whom Jesus loved." Mary, thinking that the body of Jesus had been stolen by the Jews, told the two disciples, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre and we know not where they have laid Him." Peter and John at once set out for the tomb. They ran, so eager were they to learn what had taken place. John, probably the younger of the two, arrived first and looked into the empty grave. The body was not there but the grave clothes with which it was bound were left. When Peter came he was the first to enter the sepulchre. He found the grave clothes and the napkin with which the head had been bound lying on the floor. His careful examination showed that there had been no evidences of haste, such as would have been the case had the body been hurriedly stolen. Then John followed Peter. He saw and believed. Up to this time, though Jesus had told them that He would rise from the dead, they had been unable to understand the meaning of His words. Neither had they understood the Scriptures that foretold the sufferings and the triumph of the Messiah. When he expired on the cross and His body was laid in the tomb they had been filled with dejection, thinking that the end of their hopes had come. The two disciples after examining the empty grave returned to the city and waited there.

II. The Risen Saviour.—Mary Magdalene after telling the disciples that they had found the sepulchre empty returned, probably soon after Peter and John had left. She is overcome with sorrow and stands beside the grave weeping. While her tears flow she bends down and looks into the tomb and sees something more than had yet been seen within. She beheld two angels, shining ones, clothed in white, emblematic of the purity of these divine messengers. One was stationed where the head of Jesus had rested, and the other at the feet. These were the guardian angels who had watched by the body of the dead Christ. Mary, whose courage was apparently greater than that of the others, was addressed by the angels, saying, "Woman, why weepest thou?" Anxious only to find Him whom she sought, her answer is direct, "Because they have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him." Here the conversation with the angelic ministrants ends, for the Master Himself now appears. Probably hearing approaching footsteps behind her, she turns round. Jesus is standing there but she does not recognize Him. His appearance was unexpected, her eyes were dimmed, she was so absorbed by the one idea of His loss and possibly Jesus was also changed in appearance that at first she did not know Him. Her impression was that this new-comer was the gardener, a servant of the owner of the tomb. Jesus' first words to her were the same as those spoken by one of the angels, "Woman, why weepest thou?" It might, she imagines, be the person who had removed the body or who knew about the removal, so she answers, "Sir, if thou hast borne Him hence tell me where thou hast laid Him and I will take Him away." In saying this she unconsciously evinced her great devotion and courage. She was prepared without fear of consequences to take all responsibility upon herself. The risen Jesus then calls her by name. It was spoken in the old familiar tone. She is moved by the voice. Again she turns and looks intently at Him. All doubt or hesitation is now gone. Now she recognizes Him and answers "Rabboni," which signifies my Master or Teacher. No doubt she fell at His feet in loving adoration and filled with joy was about to grasp Him in her arms. Not in the way of rebuke but to impress Mary with the idea that now His work on earth was over and that there is a present duty for her. He says, "Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended to My Father, but go to My brethren and say unto them: 'I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'" Jesus while sojourning on earth had revealed the Father, and manifested the tenderness and depth of His humanity. He was still to remain the same, for Jesus is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." The God-Man now exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high has all the depth of human sympathy He manifested while on earth. But he is now the glorified Redeemer, the mediator between God and man. The days of His humiliation were ended when He rose from the grave. To Mary He thus unfolded this truth and she at once goes forth in obedience to the command given to her to tell His brethren. This is the term He now applies to His disciples. They are recognized as in sympathy and fellowship with Him. They belong together to the same family. "My Father and your Father" is how He sets forth the intimacy of the relationship He came to establish between all who by faith receive the spirit of adoption and become the sons of God.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a cardinal doctrine of God's revelation to man.

The resurrection of Jesus is established by indubitable proofs. The precautions taken to prevent the carrying away of the body prevented the possibility of deception.

It was to the ministering women that Jesus first revealed Himself after rising from the dead.

The resurrection of Jesus is the earnest and pledge of the blessed resurrection of all believers. "Because I live, ye shall live also."

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