

SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON XXXIII.

Aug. 18, 1898. THE WIDOW OF NAIN. (Luke vii. 11-17.)

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not."—Verse 13.

HOME STUDIES.

- M. Matt. ix. 18-26. . . . Jairus' daughter raised.
T. Luke vii. 11-16. . . . The widow of Nain.
W. John xi. 25-46. . . . Lazarus raised.
Th. 1 Cor. xv. 35-58. . . . The general resurrection.
F. 1 Thess. iv. 9-18. . . . The dead in Christ.
S. Ps. xvi. 1-11. . . . "My flesh shall rest in hope."
S. Phil. iii. 7-21. . . . Our bodies to be changed.

HELPS TO STUDY.

Jesus now gives a new manifestation of his power. He had healed the sick. He now raises the dead. This incident occurred shortly after that which formed the subject of our last lesson—the day after, our version reads—but many authorities read, "soon afterwards." The two readings differ in only one letter.

1. THE WIDOW'S SORROW. It was indeed a sorrowful procession which had just left the gates of Nain (Note 1). There was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. Then there had been a sad funeral before this one: perhaps only lately—and the poor woman had been glad that, though her husband was gone, her son had grown up, and could support her; perhaps years ago—left with little baby—had brought him up—all her "treasure" in him—(how wisely Jesus said, "Lay not up treasures on earth," etc.!) Was he a good son? We know not—but if so what a loss to her! Any of you "only son of mother, and she a widow?"—how tender should you be to her!

She is alone in the world now—perhaps poor—knows not what she will do—dark seems the future. Yet she has many kind friends—she and her son are loved in the town—see how many following the bier. Through streets—out of gate (Jews buried outside cities)—moves the mournful procession—not silent as with us—loud wailings and cries (Jer. ix. 17, 18; Amos v. 16; Matt. ix. 23)—one weeping bitterly (comp. Jer. vi. 26; Amos viii. 10; Zech. xii. 10).

II. THE WIDOW'S JOY. Her "sorrow is turned into joy." He does it, who, through His grace and love, can and will turn all our sorrow into gladness. For as the procession moves out of the gate, another company comes up the hill (Note 2) towards the city. They have come a long way, twenty-five miles, from Capernaum, over mountains—we should think very weary—would scarcely notice a passing funeral. But *One* does—He knows it all—sees into the widow's desolate heart. Hear His gentle voice as He speaks to her—Weep not—not weep?—is there not a cause? but see startled bearers stopping when Jesus touched the bier (Note 3)—crowd silent in wonder—Jesus speaking to a corpse that cannot hear (comp. Rom. iv. 17). But it does hear—the soul that had flown far away hears and comes back—the heart is beating again—the blood flowing through the veins again—the lungs breathing again—there is a *living man* on the bier—sitting up. Can the gazers be in a dream? No, for he speaks—and it is the voice of the widow's son! We have seen happy meetings, read of them (e.g., Jacob and Joseph—but what must *this* have been?

Now look at the people, who probably never saw Jesus before. What do they think? That He is a great Prophet. They remember what Elijah and Elisha did.

But was Jesus like *them*? They raised dead with much prayer and effort (1 Kings xviii. 19-22; 2 Kings iv. 32-35) how did *He* do it? Truly God had visited His people in a sense they never thought of—not sending a prophet, but coming Himself.

But those who had come with Jesus—people of Capernaum—the disciples—they had seen other miracles why were they surprised?

III. It taught them more about two things.—

I. THE COMPASSION OF JESUS.

Had He not been kind before to the sick of their town one Sabbath evening—to the leper—to the centurion? Ah, but *then* He was asked. Now they see He loves those who know Him not—longs to bless those who never think of asking—feels for all suffering; His compassion spontaneous.

So it is still. Have you had sorrow, trouble, disappointment, pain? Jesus saw it all—pitied you though you never went to Him. Did it go away after a time? He had interfered, though you knew it not. Might He not well stop thinking of you? But "His compassions fail not"—He is "the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy." Think of the kindest person you know—he is not so tender-hearted as Christ. Does His love seem so natural—not much in it to marvel at? But think—*who suffers most* at seeing misery?—hard man or tender man? Then how must He have suffered at all He saw? (Heb. iv. 15; Isa. liii. 3, 4; Isai. 9.)

2. THE POWER OF JESUS.

This, too, they had seen before—over fish in lake, devils, fevers, leprosy, etc.—power even to heal at a distance (centurion's servant); but power over the dead, over the lifeless body—over the spirit that has "returned to God who gave it"—this is a new thing indeed. So again, *His power is the same now*. But does He raise the dead now? He will, John v. 28, 29. Death shall not keep our bodies; if we trust in Him and love Him, death cannot hurt our souls. See why, Heb. ii. 14, 15; Rev. i. 18.

And the day is coming, when there shall be no more tears and no more death (Rev. xxi. 4).

Is this great power—great compassion?

THERE IS GREATER YET.

See whom God calls "dead," Eph. ii. 1; 1 Tim. v. 6. Why called so? Can a dead body see, hear, feel, speak, act? And a dead soul *sees* not its own state, *hears* not God's voice, *feels* not God's love, *speaks* not in true prayer and praise, *does* not God's will. Which of us like that?

Upon dead souls Jesus had compassion. Looked down and saw us dead, so dead that we knew it not. Who asked Him to have pity, to come down? He came unasked—lived Himself among dead souls—let them kill Him, that He might purchase life for them.

Upon dead souls Jesus has power. These also hear His voice, as He calls—"I say unto thee, arise." He sends the "Giver of Life," the Holy Ghost, to "breathe into them the breath of life."

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

1. A city called Nain. Pronounced Na-in. It is now only a poor village, called *Nain*, identified by this name, and situated "on the northern slope of the rugged and barren ridge of Little Hermon" (Stanley). It is "in the tribe of Issachar, hard by the source of the brook Kishon, not far from Endor, two and a half leagues from Nazareth. The name signifies 'the lovely,' perhaps an account of the pleasant situation in the plain of Esdraelon: except in this passage it does not occur in the sacred history. The fathers Eusebius and Jerome knew it as a village two Roman miles southward from Tabor" (Van Oosterzee).

2. Came nigh (or, "drew near") to the gate of the city. "One entrance alone Nain could have had—that which opens on the rough hillside in its downward slope to the plain" (Stanley). Another mark of accuracy; for just here the meeting of the two parties would be unavoidable.

3. Touched the bier. "Among the Jews, the bier was no covered; it was a simple plank, with a somewhat raised edge. The body, wrapped in its shroud, was therefore visible to all. Jesus lays his hand on the bier, as if to arrest this fugitive from life" (Geddes).

THE family of Dr. G. S. Burns, of the Glasgow Cathedral, have resolved to erect a handsome organ in this fine old building at their own expense.

A GATHERING of all connected with the Murphy movement is to be held at Round Lake, continuing in session for eight days from August 6. Mr. Murphy will be present, and three meetings will be held daily, addressed by prominent temperance men.

It is stated to be the intention of a few young men of good family to purchase a site in Armenia, in the neighborhood of Erzeroum, to found a monastery in connection with the Church of England. It will occupy a similar position to the establishments of Fathers Ignatius and Nugee.

WHILE the great question of retaining the Bible in the public schools is under discussion, there is one school, thank God! from which it can never be excluded, and that is the Sabbath-school. Great as may be the corruption of the times, it cheers us to know that while six millions of children in our country—and some say seven or eight millions—are taught every Sabbath the truths of God's Holy Word, we need not despair of the future.—Dr. Hays, Richmond.

THE advance of Christian missions and the changes wrought among heathen nations are well illustrated by two facts which we find in our exchanges. In a recently published book, called "A Voyage in the Sunbeam," the writer, speaking of Japan, mentions that many Buddhist temples had been closed, and that speculators were buying up their fine bronze bells, and sending them to England to be coined into pennies and half-pennies. The other fact is, the Sandwich Islanders had to come to England to the British museums to see specimens of the idols their forefathers worshipped, there being none in their own land.

THE new Pope has addressed an indignant letter to the Vicar-General of Rome on some of the grievances he has had to meet at the very commencement of his Pontificate. He is wrathful against the Press, which he would like to see restrained, but his anger knows no bounds when he sees in Rome, "the centre of Catholicism and the august seat of the Vicar of Jesus Christ"—what? On one side Protestant temples, due to the money of Bible societies, and reared in the most populous streets as an insult to the Roman Church, and on the other side, schools, asylums, and almshouses opened for young people really with the design of training up a generation at enmity with religion and the Church of Jesus Christ. In the eyes of the new Pope all this is "iniquitous," but the only remedy he can recommend is that the clergy should redouble their energies in teaching the Catechism.

MEETINGS OF PRESBYTERY.

BRUCE.—In Knox Church, Kincardine, on last Tuesday of September, at 2.30 p.m.

HURON.—Presbytery of Huron will meet at Wingham, on 2nd Tuesday of October, at 11 a.m.

HAMILTON.—This Presbytery will hold an adjourned meeting at Welland, on Tuesday, the 13th inst., at 2 p.m.

LINCOLN.—At Woodville on the last Tuesday of August, at 11 a.m.

PETERBORO'.—At Cobourg, on the last Tuesday of September, at 11 o'clock a.m.

TORONTO.—In the usual place, on the first Tuesday of September, at 11 a.m.

WHITBY.—At Whitby, on the 3rd September, at 11 o'clock a.m.

CHATHAM.—The Presbytery of Chatham meets at Thamesville on Tuesday, the 17th Sept., at 1 o'clock p.m.

PARIS.—Presbytery of Paris meets in Zion Church, Brantford, on Tuesday, 17th September, at 2 p.m.

KINGSTON.—Next quarterly meeting of this Presbytery will be held in St. Andrew's Hall, Kingston, on Tuesday, 24th September, at 3 p.m.

LONDON.—An adjourned meeting will be held on 1st Tuesday in August, in Knox Church, Parkhill, at 2 p.m.

Next regular meeting in St. Andrew's, Samia, on last Tuesday in September, at 7 p.m.

WORDS OF THE WISE.

EVIL ministers of good things are as torches—a light to others, a waste to none but themselves only.—Hooker.

I KNOW no manner of speaking so offensive as that of giving praise and closing it with an exception.—Steele.

GOD mingles the bitter with the sweet in this life, to set us seeking another life where there shall be sweet alone.

GOD never called a lazy man to preach the gospel, nor a man that would not strive to prepare himself to preach.

HE that follows the Lord fully will find that goodness and mercy follow him continually. For daily wants he will find daily grace.

SINCE I cannot govern my own tongue, though within my own teeth, how can I hope to govern the tongues of others?—Franklin.

WE should often have reason to be ashamed of our most brilliant actions, if the world could see the motives from which they spring.

TEMPERANCE and labour are the two best physicians of man; labour sharpens the appetite, and temperance prevents him from indulging to excess.

HAPPINESS, in this world, when it comes, comes incidentally. Make it the object of pursuit, and it leads us a wild-goose chase, and is never attained.

CAN the evil wrought by gossip be estimated? We trow not. A wise woman can scarcely say too little in company if the conversation trenches the least upon scandal.

WHEN flowers are full of heaven-descended dews, they always hang their heads; but men hold theirs the higher the more they receive, getting proud as they get full.

HOLD yourself well in check. The weakness and inefficiency of the men and women who cannot hold a tight rein over themselves in the emergencies of life are most pitiful.

ACTIONS speak more for us than words; they are the test of character. Like fruit upon a tree, they show the nature of man; while motives, like sap, are hidden from our view.

ADHERE rigidly and undeviatingly to truth, but while you express what is true, express it in a pleasing manner. Truth is the picture, the manner is the frame that displays it to advantage.

SWEET-BRIER and other odorous shrubs never smell so sweetly as after a shower of rain; no more are the graces of a believer ever so lively and fragrant as when watered by the tears of sorrow.

THAT may be right which is not pleasant, and that pleasant which is not right; but Christ's religion is both. There is not only peace in the end of religion, but peace in the way.—Henry.

THEY who tread life's pathway, ever bearing on their faces an expression of cheerfulness, are radiant ministers of good to mankind. They scatter sunshine on all they meet, depression and gloom fade away in their presence.

AN old man was dying who had long served Christ, when one asked him: "Can you rest a little now, father?" "Dear child," he said, "it is all rest; for the everlasting arms are underneath me."

IF the spring puts forth no blossoms, in summer there will be no beauty, and in the autumn no fruit. So, if youth be trifled away without improvement, ripener years will be contemptible, and old age miserable.

FLATTER not thyself in thy faith to God, if thou wantest charity for thy neighbour; and think not thou hast charity for thy neighbour if thou wantest faith in God—when they are both wanting; they are both dead, if once divided.

THE Lord, by His Holy Spirit, humble our hearts by the remembrance of our frailty; pardon our sins, the only cause of it; clothe us with Christ's righteousness, the only ease of it; hasten his Son's coming, the only end of it.—Clerke.

PAT did not stop preaching because all of his converts did not hold out. Many of the converts even of Jesus went back "and went no more with Him." If a man tumbles into the river, are we to refuse to rescue him because he may fall in again?

THE history of the world teaches no lesson with more impressive solemnity than this; that the only safe Guide of a great intellect, is a pure heart; that evil no sooner takes possession of the heart, than folly commences the conquest of the mind.—C. C. Bonney.

THE shepherd David had five smooth stones in that primitive cartridge box of his, but it only took one to bring down Goliath. Maybe, if spiritual warriors had more of David's faith they would have need to expend less pulpit ball and powder.—Presbyterian.

CHRISTIANITY, once in action, can never be content with a limp and lavender liberalism, an unaggressive indifference to the fact that men can be ruined, or a religion that believes in plush and velvet and the genial, rather than in usefulness and the scientifically true!—Joseph Cook.

YOUR children are yourselves living anew. Their faults are largely inherited from you. Labor, therefore, to make up for defects toward them by love, and compensate both them and the world by aiding them in correcting their errors and rising victorious over their infirmities.

IT is not what people eat, but what they digest, that makes them strong. It is not what they gain, but what they save, that makes them rich. It is not what they read, but what they remember, that makes them learned. It is not what they profess, but what they practise, that makes them righteous.

SO limited are our faculties for comprehending things as they are in themselves, that did the Scriptures present dim and faint pictures of them, they could not otherwise be revealed at all. The "light which no man can approach unto," if presented in its full blaze to eyes too weak to endure it, would blind instead of enlightening. We now "see by means of the reflection of a glass," what we could not otherwise see at all.