

Christian Messenger.

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THE TEACHER.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1873. INTERNATIONAL SERIES. SUNDAY, December 21st.

The Resurrection.—Matthew xxviii. 1-8.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept.”—I Corinthians xv. 20.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 5-7.

SUMMARY.—The empty sepulchre and angels from heaven assured the disciples that Christ was risen.

ANALYSIS.—I. The disciples' visit. vs. 1. II. The tomb opened. vs. 2, 4. III. The angel's testimony. vs. 5-7. IV. The swift messengers. vs. 8.

EXPOSITION.—Connection.—Our last lesson called us to look on the crucifixion of Jesus. It left him hanging on the cross, dead, and the captain of the Roman soldiers that executed him confessing him to be righteous and a son of God. Close by remain the brave, loving, sad women from Galilee, who had followed Jesus to Jerusalem. vs. 55, 56. Then succeeded the breaking of the robber's legs and the niero-

Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Sanhedrim (Luke xxiii. 50), and hitherto a secret, timid disciple (John xix. 38), now emboldened, requests of Pilate the Lord's body, receives it, places it with all honor in his own new tomb (compare Luke xix. 30), which was in a garden close to the place of crucifixion (John xix. 41), thus fulfilling the prophecy of Isa. liiii. 9: carefully and securely fastens the tomb, and leaves it thus. vs. 57-60. Two women—perhaps more than two—more tenderly devoted to Christ than the rest, had remained to see the entombment, and marked well the closing of the sepulchre. vs. 61. But the Jewish hierarchy, to make sure against fraud (no wonder such men suspected fraud), gained leave to seal the tomb and guard it with soldiers. vs. 62-66. The crucifixion had taken place on Friday, the entombment the same evening, and the affixing of the seal and setting of the guard on Saturday, the seventh day of the week which was the Jewish Sabbath. On Friday or Saturday evening (Luke xxiii. 56; Mark xvi. 1), the loving female disciples brought costly spices to anoint the precious body, and with aching hearts waited for the passing away of the Sabbath and the coming of the first day of the week (our Sunday or Sabbath). Thus we are brought to the lesson of to-day.

Verse 1.—And behold. A word of wonder. There was a great earthquake. Or shock, not necessarily an earthquake, in the technical sense of the word. The Greek word does not require such a view. (John xx. 2.) Mark xvi. 3. For the angel, etc. Given as the reason, or rather the cause of the earthquake. Rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. Mark speaks of one, not necessarily implying that there was only one, as sitting within; and Luke of two as “standing by,” or, rather, as it should be translated, as appearing to (chap. xxiv. 4) them. The angels took the profoundest interest in Christ and in his work.

Verse 2.—His countenance. More exactly, his appearance; yet obviously the appearance of his countenance is intended. Like lightning. As to brightness—its vivid, powerful, dazzling light. Dan. x. 6; Rev. i. 14-16. Raiment white as snow. In the passages just cited, also Rev. iii. 4, 5; vii. 4, etc.

Verse 3.—For fear of him. Not necessarily the result or proof of any special guilt. The keepers. Or guard of Roman soldiers. Chap. xxvii. 65, 66. Did shake. So great was their alarm. Became as dead men. The extreme of terror.

Verse 4.—The angel answered unto the women. He had nothing to say to the guard—had no message from heaven for them—but for those faithful women he had. Fear not ye. The Greek shows that “ye” is here emphatic, and this emphasis contrasts the women with the guard. THEY fear, and well they may; but fear not ye. For I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified. A hint, perhaps, for their anxious, wondering hope of resurrection. For, if the Jews did not forget the promises of resurrection on the third day, we may be sure these women did not.

(Acts i. 3 8), and by Paul (1 Cor. xv. 7). Then follows the ascension.” This carefully-prepared synopsis, whether in every detail of arrangement right or not, will greatly aid the student in gaining a complete view of the closing period of Christ's earthly history.

Verse 1.—In the end of the Sabbath. That is, of the seventh day of the week. Reckoning from sunrise to sunrise. Mark xvi. 2. Began to dawn. Mark xvi. 2. “at the rising of the sun.” The first day of the week. Our Sunday. It appears thus that our Lord was in the tomb but a very small fraction of this day, as he was during only a fraction of Friday—in all not far from thirty-six hours”—yet he was to be there “three days and three nights.” But he was also to rise “on the third day.” Matt. xxvii. 63, etc. Dr. Robinson says that “the Hebrew term, three days and three nights, was used indefinitely for three days” when only parts respectively of the first and of the third day were included. So also a week was called eight days. John xx. 26. The German language has the same idiom. The occurrence of the resurrection on this morning is the fundamental reason for the exchange of the first for the seventh day as the Christian Sabbath. The practice of the apostles, and of the early Christians under their guidance, in observing the first day as a day of worship, is the further reason for our observance of it.

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. (Chap. xxvii. 56.) Mark adds Salome, John omits “the other Mary,” and Luke speaks as though there were quite a company (chap. xxiii. 55). The carelessness of the hour, not less than the nature of the deed, shows the ardor of their affection, the depth of their love. To see the sepulchre, also to anoint the body.

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Verse 6.—He is not here, he is risen. Here, as at the birth, angels first proclaim to men “the good news”—the Gospel. As he said. Thus calling attention to the foundation of their previous hope. Come. And so saying, he doubtless, with the courtesy of the celestial world, led the way into the vacant but ever sacred place. See the place were the Lord lay. Adding this to the evidence of his own testimony, and of the Lord's promise. Mark xvi. 5.

Verse 7.—Go quickly, and tell his disciples. Mark adds that the angel mentioned Peter by name as one to whom they were to go. Chap. xvi. 7. He must have been extremely depressed and distressed because of the memory of his unfaithfulness in denying Christ. Behold, he goeth before you into Galilee. This was after ward done, according to this promise. vs. 16-20; 1 Cor. xv. 6. Lo I [the angel] have told you. That is, now you have my word as you also have his. For it seems, from Mark xvi. 7, that the angel reminded them that Christ had told them.

Verse 8.—And they departed quickly from the sepulchre. Literally, “went out

from it,” as having been in it, and not simply at it, according to Mark xvi. 5. With fear and great joy. “Fear” at the presence of the angel, “joy” at the fact of the resurrection. And did run to bring his disciples word. As did Peter and John, after getting the word, to see the empty tomb—the proof of the resurrection.

QUESTIONS.—The subject of the last lesson? What events are recorded in Matt. xxvii. 55, 66?

Vs. 1. What day of the week is here meant by the Sabbath? Why is not the Christian Sabbath the same day? When was the end of the Sabbath? Mark xvi. 2. Who besides these two women came? Luke xxiii. 55, 66; Mark xvi. 1. Why did they come? Luke xxiv. 1.

Vs. 2. What had happened to the stone that closed the tomb? Was this before the women arrived? Mark xvi. 3. Does Matthew seem to teach that the women saw the angel on the stone? What does Mark say? Chap. xvi. 5. What is Luke's account? Chap. xxiv. 4. Can you see how the three statements agree?

Vs. 3. What was the appearance of the angel? Of what are fire and whiteness the symbols? Rev. i. 4.

Vs. 4. What was the effect on the keepers of the tomb, or the Roman guard? How did their fear differ from that of the women? Why should they have feared?

Vs. 5. What did the angel first say to the women? Why had the women less reason to fear than the soldiers?

Vs. 6. What did the angel say further? Why were the women asked to come and see the sepulchre?

Vs. 7, 8. What were they to do next? Why the haste? What promise added? What did they do? Why their fear? Their joy? What lesson in this for us? Why is so much importance attached to the doctrine of Christ's resurrection? 1 Cor. xv. 12-23.

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. Scripture Catechism, 158.

SUNDAY, December 28th.—Review, or Concert.

Youths' Department.

HYMN FOR A LITTLE CHILD.

God make my life a little light, Within the world to glow; A little flame that burneth bright, Wherever I may go.

God make my life a little flower, That giveth joy to all, Content to bloom in native bower, Although its place be small.

God make my life a little song, That comforteth the sad; That helpeth others to be strong, And makes the singer glad.

God make my life a little staff, Whereon the weak may rest, That so what health and strength I have May serve my neighbor best.

God make my life a little hymn Of tenderness and praise; Of faith, that never waxeth dim, In all his wondrous ways. —Good Words.

THE TRANSPLANTED LILY.

Donald, the gardener, was transplanting lilies. They had grown so thick in their bed that the delicate spray of pure white blossoms could hardly be seen amid the broad green leaves. So the gardener had made a new bed for them in a cool, half-shaded place, such as the modest lilies of the valley love the best, and now he was carefully taking a part of them to their new home.

Little May was watching him with great interest, and following him from one place to another, in her sweet, lisping way, of this and that.

“Why do you move the sweet lilies, Donald?” asked she.

“That they may grow better,” answered the gardener; and as he looked down at the little girl to answer her, she saw that the tears were in his eyes.

“What makes you cry, Donald?” asked she; “is the sun in your eyes?”

“No, dear,” said he. “I was thinking of a sweet lily of mine that was transplanted long ago.”

“Was it put in a better place?” asked the child.

“O, yes,” answered the gardener, “a far better place. It was carried to a garden where it would have the best of care; where the fierce sun would never wither it; where the storms would never beat upon its tender form; where nothing that could hurt or destroy it, could enter within the gates.”

“How nice!” said little May; “how glad you must be that your lovely lily is safe!”

“So I am glad!” answered the gardener.

“Then why did the tears come?” asked the child.

“Because, my little one,” said he, “I miss my sweet lily so much—my home is sad and desolate without it.”

“But shall you not see it again some time?” asked little May.

“If it pleases God,” said the gardener, reverently baring his head, and looking up, “My lily is blooming for me in heaven.” —Little Star.

STAND FAST.

It is a hard thing for a boy or a young man to hold steadily on the right way when all around him are going in the other. It may seem to be useless, except as a trial of his own principles, for him to stand fast in the hour of temptation; but a silent influence goes out from such an example more powerful than that of many sermons.

A young man in the army used often to be urged to drink, but always answered “No,” firmly yet civilly. This irritated some and provoked others to ridicule, and once he was asked to give a reason for such “unsoldierly conduct.”

“Because I promised my father and mother that I would never taste a drop of liquor,” he answered. After this they redoubled their attack, striving by all their arts to induce him to break his resolutions; but in vain. The persecution he endured was most trying, but he had his reward. One by one his messmates began quietly to follow his example. Oaths were not so common, cards were thrown aside, and at least half of them seemed wholly changed in their outward deportment. Many no doubt were well-trained youths at home, who had been led astray by evil example; and now this consistent Christian example had awakened and led them back.

Every time you stand firm in the midst of temptation, you do good to others as well as yourself. Every time you yield to what you know is wrong, you do a great evil to those who entice you to sin. Even “a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.”

Even a child can exert an influence that may result in the saving of a precious life and soul from ruin.—Youth's Temperance Banner.

“OUR GOD HEARS PRAYER.”

A lawyer of New York, a faithful Sabbath School worker, publishes an article in the Sunday School Times, under the title of *Our God Hears Prayer*. He had charge of a class of young ladies, ten of whom were unconverted. In entering upon his work the teacher placed upon his soul the burden of these young hearts. The conditions of Christ in reference to believing prayer, recorded in Mark xi. 22-24, he embraced as his foundation for supplication. His prayers were constant, his personal efforts were prudent and gentle. The believing members of his class became through his earnest entreaties his efficient assistants. The blessing fell upon that class of young ladies. Six of the ten were transformed into their Saviour's image, and harmonized with each other.

THE “THY-WILL-BE-DONE” SPIRIT.

Susie wanted to join a picnic; she wanted to go very much indeed. Her mother knew it. She was sorry not to let her go; but there were good reasons why Susie should stay away, Susie asked her mother; and her mother said:

“No, Susie, you cannot go.”

Mrs. Barnes expected to see a sorrowful disappointment in her daughter's face; instead of which she bounded away, singing merrily as she went.

“I was afraid of seeing you grievously disappointed,” said her mother, much relieved by her daughter's behavior.

“I have got the ‘Thy-will-be-done’ spirit in my heart, dear mother,” said the child, sweetly. It is a spirit which would wipe away many a tear.

PLEASE SAY, AMEN.

Every little girl is not advised to follow the example of that young innocent who answered out loud, “Please say amen,” when a dreary speaker, making some long and tiresome remarks in a Sunday School, inquired, “What shall I say next?” but that speaker and all others like him are advised to accept the hint and find another form for their eloquence, for the children instead of weighing their words are usually weighed down by them. Hardly less than an inspired gift is the ability to address a youthful audience with effect.—Christian Union.

THE BOY ORGANIST.

Mozart's first experience of a large organ was in the monastery of a little town on the banks of the Danube. He was then only six years old, and in company with his father, had left his house in Salzburg, and started upon a long course of travel. All day long they had been sailing down that majestic river, past crumbling ruins, frowning castles, cloisters hidden away among the crags, towering cliffs, quiet villages nestled in sunny valleys, and here and there a deep gorge that opened back from the gliding river, its hollow distance blue with fathomless shadows, and its loneliness and stillness stirring the boy's heart like some dim and vast cathedral.

The company of monks with whom they had been traveling that day were at supper in the refectory of the cloister, when father Mozart took Wolfgang into the chapel to see the organ.

And, now, as the boy gazed with something of awe upon the great instrument, looming up in the shadows of the great, empty church, his face lit up with serene satisfaction, and every motion and attitude of the little figure expressed a wondering reverence. What tones must even now be slumbering in those mighty pipes—tones which, if once awakened, could give utterance to all that voiceless beauty which the day's scenes had showed him—life and death, present and past; the peaceful river and the deserted ruin; the sunshine un-failing and the unfailing shadow at its side.

“Father,” said the boy, “explain to me those pedals at the organ's feet, and let me play.”

Well pleased, the father complied. Then Wolfgang pushed aside the stool, and when father Mozart had filled the great bellows, the elfin organist stood upon the pedals, and trod them as though he had never needed to have their management explained.

How the deep tones work the somber stillness of the old church! The organ seemed some great uncouth creature, roaring for very joy at the caresses of the marvelous child.

The monks, eating their supper in the refectory, heard the tones and dropped knife and fork in astonishment. The organist of the brotherhood was among them; but never had he played with such power and freedom. They listened; some grew pale; others crossed themselves; till the prior rose up, summoned all his courage, and hastened into the chapel. The others followed, but when they looked up into the organ-loft, lo! there was no form of any organist to be seen, though the deep tones still massed themselves in new harmonies, and made the stone arches thrill with their power. “It is the devil himself,” cried the first one of monks, drawing closer to one of his companions, and giving a scared look over his shoulder into the darkness of the aisle.

“It is a miracle!” said another. But when the oldest of their number mounted the stairs to the organ front, he stood petrified with amazement.

There stood the tiny figure, treading from pedal to pedal, and at the same time clutching the keys above with his little hands, gathering handfuls of those wonderful chords as if they were violets, and flinging them out into the solemn gloom behind him. He heard nothing, saw nothing, besides; his eyes beamed like stars, and his whole face lighted with impassioned joy. Louder and fuller rose the harmonies, streaming forth in swelling billows, till at last they seemed to reach a sunny shore, on which they broke; and then a whispering ripple of faintest melody lingered a moment in the air, like the last murmur of a wind harp, and all was still.

THE EMPIRE ON WHICH THE SUN NEVER SETS.—The Island of New Guinea has been taken possession of in the name of the Queen. The possession of this island, one of the largest in the world, teeming with every variety of mineral and vegetable products, occupied by three distinct races of men, numbering several millions, intersected in every direction by navigable rivers, and having every gradation of climate, is of more than ordinary importance, as it virtually gives to England the command of the South Pacific and the China Seas, and must have an important influence in augmenting her Eastern commerce.

Rev. Mr. Spurgeon's church employs 18 colporteurs to visit, conduct Bible classes, and sell religious books. In 1872 they sold over \$6,000 worth.

On a Tombstone at Stenday, Prussia, is inscribed the epitaph, “She died of a corset.”