

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lesson for 1878.

SUNDAY, December 15th, 1878.—The Walk to Emmaus.—Luke xxiv. 13-32.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 28-32.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?"—Luke xxiv. 32.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, Luke xxiv. 1-32. Tuesday, Vs. 14; Malachi. iii. 16-18. Wednesday, Psalm xlii. Thursday, Vs. 20; Psalm ii. Friday, Luke ix. 18-27. Saturday, Psalm cxix. 97-112. Sunday, John v. 39-47.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. The walk to Emmaus. Vss. 13, 14. II. An unrecognized companion. Vss. 15, 16. III. The conversation. Vss. 17-27. IV. Supper at Emmaus. Vss. 28-30. V. Recognition and disappearance. Vss. 31, 42.

QUESTIONS.—On what day was the crucifixion? On what day was the resurrection? To whom did Jesus first reveal himself? To which one of the eleven had he also revealed himself? Luke xxiv. 34; 1 Cor. xv. 5.

I. Vss. 13, 14.—How far from Jerusalem was Emmaus? Who were walking thither? Of what things were they talking?

II. Vss. 15, 16.—As they communed, who came near to them? Why might he at first have seemed an intruder? Prov. xiv. 10. What is meant by "their eyes were holden"?

III. Vss. 17-27.—Why were these disciples sad? Comp. John xvi. 10. What history do they give of Christ? What chief priests and rulers had conspired in putting him to death? Matt. xxvii. 57; xxviii. 2. What had these disciples been hoping? What does Jesus now say to these disciples? What do the words, "O fool," imply? Contrast Matt. v. 12. What is meant by "ought not"? What does Jesus proceed to expound? What passages may be here referred to? Gen. iii. 15; xlix. 10; Deut. xviii. 15; Ps. cx.

IV. Vss. 28-30.—What is meant by "made as though"? Why did they constrain him?

V. Vss. 31, 32.—When were the eyes of the disciples opened? What became of Jesus then?

Jesus was laid in the sepulchre of Joseph of Arimathea, near to the cross, and here passed Friday night, all of Saturday, and Saturday night. Early Sunday morning there was a great earthquake, and an angel descending, rolled the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and sat upon it. Immediately after, Mary Magdalene, and other women, came to embalm the body. Mark xvi. 1. Beholding the stone rolled away, Mary Magdalene runs to inform Peter and John. John xx. 1, 2. The other women proceed, and meet an angel (or angels), who tells them of the Lord's resurrection. Luke xxiv. 2-8. Then they depart, and Peter and John, hearing the story of Mary Magdalene, hasten to the sepulchre, and Mary follows them. They enter the sepulchre, but find it empty. Luke xxiv. 12; John xx. 3-10. They then return, leaving Mary behind, weeping, to whom, however, Jesus appears, and gives her a message to bear to the disciples. John xx. 11-18. Early in the afternoon, two of the disciples leave Jerusalem for Emmaus, and are joined by Jesus, who converses with them unrecognized. This brings us to our lesson to-day.

EXPOSITION.—Verse 13.—Two of them.—Not of "the eleven" (vs. 33), but of the disciples in general (vs. 9). The name of one was Cleopas (vs. 18), probably not the Cleophas (or Alpheus) of John xix. 25. The name of the other is unknown. That same day. The same with that on which the women and the two Apostles had gone to the sepulchre (vss. 1, 12), our Sunday, or, more fitly, "Lord's Day." It was now afternoon (vs. 29), compared with vs. 13). Emmaus. Its location is unknown; and the several conjectures as to the place, are only conjectures. Three-score furlongs. Seven and one half miles; an easy walk, and readily admitting the return mentioned in vs. 33.

Verse 14.—They talked together, etc.—The events were of supreme and all-absorbing interest to them, because their attachment to Jesus was truly that of disciples.

Verse 15.—While they communed, etc.—So ever, the Lord is near those whose common love to him draws them into such fellowship with one another.

Verse 16.—Their eyes were holden,

etc.—Mark says (xvi. 12), that he appeared to them "in another form"; that is, in another, or different form from that in which he had been known before the resurrection.

Verse 17.—What manner of communication, etc.—The Saviour purposely conceals from them his identity, until the proper moment. Vs. 30.

Verse 18.—Art thou only a stranger.—Van Oosterzee would translate, "Art thou the only stranger." But the word translated "only" means alone; that is, in separation from others. We can therefore translate as follows: Art thou sojourning in Jerusalem alone? They take him to be one of the many who had come up to the feast, and was now returning. As he returns alone, and not, as was the custom, in a company or caravan, they ask whether he has also been staying in the city so alone as not to know the events that had filled all minds and hearts and mouths—those of visitors to the city, as well as its inhabitants. In these days. Especially within the last four days.

Verse 19.—What things?—Asked in order to draw them out, that thus they might be ready for his words. Jesus of Nazareth [the Nazarene]. So designated here because this is the name of the man; and as such, of course, is acknowledged by all. His titles, for example, the Christ, etc., were matters of dispute. A prophet. Their confession is open and bold, and goes as far as their present conviction allows. They had believed him to be the Christ; but of this are in doubt now.

Verse 20.—How the chief priests and our rulers.—More exactly, the chief priests, and the rulers of us; that is, our chief priests and rulers. They are contrasted with the disciples, in respect both of official position, and of view and treatment of Christ. Delivered him to be condemned to death. According to xxiii. 1-25. And have [omit "have"] crucified him. The Romans did the outward work of crucifixion; but the Jews, as the instigators and determined compassers of the crucifixion, were more properly its authors.

Verse 21.—But we.—"We," the disciples. The word is, in the original, made emphatic; thus contrasting strongly the disciples with the rulers. Fructus. Were hoping; that is, all along, until the crucifixion, which quenched the hope in them; as it did not in the dying robber. Redeemed Israel. This phrase would express that which all hoped from the true Messiah, whether the views of the work to be wrought were vague or definite, earthly and temporal, or heavenly and spiritual. The third day. Hence the more strange that their companion had not heard of it.

Verses 22-24.—These verses show that the resurrection of Jesus was not believed by the disciples generally on the first day, despite the testimony of the women, and its confirmation, in part, by Peter and John. Vss. 9-12.

Verse 25.—Fools.—Slow in understanding. All. The emphasis is upon this word. They understood and received a part, but not all—not those pointing to the death of Messiah.

Verses 26, 27.—Ought not.—Was it not necessary, because predicted, while there was a prime necessity, which was the ground of the prediction itself. See Isa. liii.

Verses 28, 29.—Unto the village.—Emmaus. Vs. 13. He made as though. He would have gone further unless the two had wished him to abide.

Verses 30, 31.—As he sat at meat.—The evening meal, or supper; not a celebration of the Lord's Supper. He took bread, etc. Apparently himself, unasked, assuming the Headship, such as he had ever held when with his own—thus virtually transforming the common meal into a Lord's Supper. If this was the home of one of the two, the act was the more striking and significant. The guest became the host. Their eyes were opened. A reference to vs. 16. He vanished out of their sight. Disappeared from their view—whether by natural or supernatural means, is not said. The latter is suggested by the form of expression.

Verse 32.—Did not our heart burn within us.—The heart that is born of the Spirit responds to the gospel that is preached by the Spirit.

TOPICS.—(1) The disciples talking by the way.—These two were talking of Jesus. How much the Lord is pleased

with this sort of thing, we may learn from Malachi iii. 16.

(2) Disciples sad, when they should be rejoicing.—They had been disappointed in their hopes. There had come to them, from trustworthy sources, the most ample evidences of their Master's resurrection, but they were too much blinded by their tears to see the evidences.

So we, many a time, because things do not go just according to our expectations, are only too ready to suppose that they are going all wrong, and therefore to be full of doubt and despondency.

(3) The best expounder of Scripture.—"He expounded to them, in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself." What a privilege, to have him expound it.

(4) Christ manifesting himself.—The disciples, hitherto, had "known Christ after the flesh." Henceforth they were to know him no more in that way, but more constantly and closely.

When one of the disciples wanted to know how he would manifest himself, he answered: "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." This keeping his words is the way to secure the brightness of his manifested presence, and to have an answer to that familiar and beautiful prayer, "Lord, abide with us."

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, December 22nd, 1878.—The Saviour's Last Words.—Luke xxiv. 44-53.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."—Matt. xxviii. 20.

For the Primary Class Teacher.

Tell the connected story from where we left Jesus hanging on the cross. Speak of the sorrow of the women who loved Jesus, and the sweet spices which they prepared, their visit to the grave, their surprise, and in what way Peter and John heard of it, and how the news spread to the others. Describe two of the disciples setting out on their long walk. They had often gone over the same road with Jesus. Now they did not know what to think of all these things which had happened. If he was really what they had trusted he was, why had he died such a dreadful death? And were the wonderful stories the women, and Peter, and John told, really true? And what did it all mean? These were the things of which they talked as they walked together.

But a stranger overtakes them, who asked what they were talking about so sadly.

Give the conversation. Show how Jesus made it plain that Christ ought to have suffered these things. Review from last week why it was that he died. Picture them drawing near the place where they were to spend the night; they were so anxious to hear more that they urged him to come in. Jesus always comes in where he is invited.

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"Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile The short and simple annals of the poor." —GRAY.

CHAPTER I.

It was a gloomy evening in the gloomy month of December, 1870. The fine drizzling rain that had been falling all day, changing into a dense fog, had settled down—like a dark pall—upon the earth, shutting out the view of surrounding objects, and bringing night an hour before its time.

A bright wood fire burning on the wide hearth, gave my small room, with its worn rag carpet, splint-bottomed chairs and little table of books, a cheerful, cosy appearance, but a cloud hung over its brightness, and my heart was heavy as the atmosphere without. "For years I had battled with life as a weak woman may, my path growing darker, my spirit less hopeful as the cheerless days went by; and now the shadow of the "gaunt wolf" was at the door, and my feeble arm was powerless to bar his entrance. The last flour was baked; the tea canister empty; Charley, my precious eight year old boy—the only

one left me of five—could not attend the district school because his boots leaked so badly, while my own scanty wardrobe was almost beyond the magical powers of needle and thread. Something must be done! and drawing a low easy chair near the lounge of my invalid husband, I sat down to—think.

Poor Walter, after hours of racking pain, slept peacefully, unmindful of the difficulties that beset my way, undisturbed by the cares that racked my aching brain, as I staggered on with my heavy load. I had no father, no mother, no brother, sister or friend to lift a feather's weight of the burden from my slender shoulders. The few neighbors were kind enough in their way, but they "were not my people," and did not understand my sorrow; for when I wept hysterically because Farmer Green—an excellent man, who often sent me fruit from his orchard, vegetables from his garden, and sometimes a large pat of butter from his dairy—suggested, in kindness, that "the parish should care for children and cripples," he regarded me with a look that said as plainly as words, "You are a born idiot!"

To avert a calamity which I could not contemplate with any degree of calmness and which to my excited mind seemed worse than death, I asked myself over and over again, What shall I do? Sell the little home that sheltered us, with the few barren acres attached? It would bring a small sum, but then we would be houseless as well as destitute.

No! whatever might betide, we must not leave our humble retreat. Apply to a wealthy relative in a neighboring State? Pride did not restrain me. He had been my father's ward and owed his success in life to his guardian's kindness; but he knew my misfortunes, and had never offered a single dollar of his thousands. No appeal would be likely to soften the heart of the hard, money-making, money-loving man towards his forgotten and less fortunate kindred.

Sitting there in the fast gathering darkness I fear that bitter and rebellious thoughts rose in my heart; vain presumptuous questionings of the wisdom and mercy of our heavenly Father; that I did not see clearly why I, who had been generous in prosperity, should cry for bread. God pity and forgive the weak faith that doubted his care; that could not believe his promises to the poor and forsaken, nor trust that the "handful of meal in the barrel would not waste nor the cruise of oil fail" before the dreary winter was over and gone.

But something must be done! or my helpless child and his more helpless father would become paupers indeed. I would make one more rash effort for their sake, and if it failed, God help me and them!

With the resolution so suddenly formed came something of my old hopefulness. My frugal supper was hastily prepared, and when my little family had been made comfortable for the night, I tidied my room! and, unlocking a drawer that held the flute, small Bible and other little treasures of my eldest son—who had died two years ago of brain fever—I turned them over lovingly and reverently, selected a few sheets of foolscap, spread them smoothly out on the pine table, and sat down to write—the story of my own life.

Heaven knows, there was little enough of romance or sentiment in the common and commonplace incidents that made up its record! I had been no spoiled and petted child of fortune; only a plain farmer's daughter. I had not been reared in luxury and idleness, but carefully instructed in homely domestic duties by my good mother—a woman "who looked well to the ways of her household,"—and carved no higher "mission" than ministering to the happiness of husband, children and friends.

No unfortunate love affair or unhappy marriage afforded the scientist material out of which to weave a thrilling tale of woe or crime. My heart had been worthily bestowed, and at nineteen I was married, with my parent's approbation and blessing to a handsome, steady-going mechanic, whose many noble qualities of head and heart made it an easy duty to love and "reverence my husband." All too old-fashioned, tame and prosaic for the story readers who delight in records of blighted affections, startling elopements, sensational weddings, and frequent divorces.

My father's house was no grand baronial mansion like those we read about in books, nor yet a lovely little vine-covered cottage, where heroines are presumed to dwell; only a low, rambling, substantial old farm-house, that betokened plenty within and without. No marble fountain gloamed in the grounds, but "apple and peach trees fruited deep," cheered the eye and promised cheap healthful luxuries. No elegant conservatory was kept at great expense and care, but the well-swept door-yard was odorous with the pleasing perfume of lilacs, sweet briars and damask roses. No rare exotics bloomed in the kitchen garden, but the straight, well-weeded rows of early radishes, lettuce and green peas, were bordered with pinks, pansies, jonquils, and other dear old-time flowers, now discarded for new and costly favorites, no lovelier than were our simple lowly things of beauty. No tender hot-house plant was ever more highly prized or more carefully tended, than was our great red honeysuckle that climbed over the roof and sent its soft fragrance into the wide airy hall where we passed the long summer forenoons in pleasant converse or useful employment.

A very plain unpretending place was my childhood's home, yet I described it minutely. The large parlor or keeping room, with its huge feather-bed, covered with a bright patch-work quilt, triumph of my mother's skill, and admiration of all the country round; its glass cupboard, filled with quaint old china and real silver; its tall mantelpiece, ornamented with great brass candlesticks, scoured to the brightness of pure gold, and never degraded by use except on Christmas or other grand festive occasions; my own little chamber with its one window opening on the beautiful Ohio river, its tiny fire-place, gay carpet, the cheap but pretty vases on the bureau, and dimity-covered toilet table, over which hung the large mirror, where I braided my hair with sweet wild blossoms, as gay and free from care as the birds which built in the eaves of the old-fashioned dwelling.

As memory traveled backward, familiar voices were in my ear, familiar footfalls sounded in the old rooms, and familiar forms gathered around the family board and the family altar. I wandered with young companions in the beautiful cottonwood grove that skirted the river bank, and sailed with them, in our painted boat, over its placid waters. I was a child once more, strolling with my brother over the woods in search of flowers and berries, trudging, demurely, behind him, from the old log school house, or riding by his side, on my coal-black pony, over the green hills to our distant church. I recalled our innocent pleasures and pastimes, our Christmas turkeys, harvest dinners, our holiday picnics, and birth-day festivals. We stood hand in hand watching old Juba—our faithful man servant—place his trout lines, and sat together in Aunt Stepsey's cabin, where we feasted on roasted apples, cracked our walnuts, and listened, spell-bound, to blood-curdling ghost stories, more fascinating to our childish minds than "Arabian Nights," or the thrilling adventures of Robinson Crusoe.

Poor brother Mark! He died in early manhood, and his loss was the first real sorrow of my life.

As page after page was filled with pleasing reminiscences of happier days, the unwonted employment awakened slumbering feelings that I thought were dead within me; for when I wrote of mother's tenderness, and father's indulgence, tears, the first I had shed for many months, fell like rain on the unconscious paper. When I told of the gay party, where I first met Walter Lynn, then a tall youth of twenty, my heart throbbled strangely, and when I described the white muslin dress and blue ribbons, worn at my cousin's grand wedding, a thrill of vanity made me forget the tattered gown and empty larder. Very unbecoming, no doubt; but gentle reader, the true womanly "woman never forgets her ornaments." When the memory of my own betrothal came back so vividly that I seemed to hear the hopeful words of my lover, and feel the gentle pressure of his hand, a great wave of tenderness swept over me, and, leaving my seat, I bent over the couch of my sleeping husband. It was only to draw the comforter more closely around him, for the night had grown chilly. A woman