

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1879.

SUNDAY, July 27th, 1879.—Victory Over Death.—1 Cor. xv. 50-58.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 54-57.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."—John xi. 25.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, 1 Cor. xv. Tuesday, Matt. xxii. 23-32. Wednesday, John v. 21-29. Tuesday, John xi. 18-27. Friday, Acts xvii. 16-32. Saturday, 1 Thess. iv. 13-18. Sunday, Rev. xxii.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. The animal body left. Vs. 50. II. Process of resurrection. Vss. 51, 52. III. The changed state. Vss. 53, 54. IV. Song of triumph. Vss. 54-57. V. Concluding exhortation. Vs. 58.

QUESTIONS.—Where do we find that the resurrection is taught and predicted in the Old Testament? Cite some of the passages in which Jesus taught it? Who are to be raised? When? Of what great work is the resurrection a sequence?

I. Vs. 50.—What does this verse teach us of the resurrection body?

II. Vss. 51, 52.—With what voice shall the resurrection be ushered in? Who shall sound it? 1 Thess. iv. 16.

III. Vss. 53, 54.—What change shall follow the trumpet of God?

IV. Vs. 54-57.—How is sin the sting of death? But for sin might not death have been a happy change?

V. Vs. 59.—What did Paul wish to know? Phil. iii. 10. What is meant by "power of his resurrection"? Who have this power to day?

By the resurrection is meant the bringing of the human body to life after it has been forsaken by the soul. There are no distinct assertions of it in the writings of Moses or in the Psalms. The passage in Job xix. 25 is believed by many to recognize it. Isaiah and Ezekiel have comparisons based upon it. Isaiah xxvi. 19; Ezek. xxxvii. 1-14. Daniel is the first to distinctly avow it. Dan. xii. 2. After the Exile the doctrine came to be generally believed, but by what means is not fully known. At the time of Christ and his apostles this belief was common among the Jews, though covered with some gross conceptions. (For leading passages bearing upon it see Matt. xxii. 23-32; John v. 21, 28, 29; vi. 39, 40; xi. 24; Acts xxiv. 14, 15; 1 Cor. xv; Phil. iii. 21; 1 Thess. iv. 13-17.)

The following are a few of the principal points brought out in the New Testament on the resurrection: (1) It is ascribed to Christ as its Author. 1 Cor. xv. 22; John v. 21; comp. 1 Thess. iv. 14. (2) All will be subjects of the resurrection, irrespective of moral condition. John v. 28, 29; Acts xxiv. 15. (3) It will take place at the end of the world. John vi. 39, 40; xi. 24; Rev. xx. 11, 12. (4) As to the manner of the resurrection the New Testament gives little definite information. It speaks in figures of a trumpet (1 Thess. iv. 16), and in analogies by the grain of corn cast into the ground, but thereby shows the possibility, rather than the manner, of that great event. It is not a doctrine of natural religion. Human feeling seems to be quite the other way. It is a consequence of redemption, the benefits of which are to accrue to the body as well as the soul of man. Well does Pressensé say of it, "If the resurrection does not form an integral part of Christianity, it no longer pays to speak of the rest." It was the keynote of all apostolical preaching. Acts xvii. 18; xxiii. 6; Phil. iii. 10. It was the great seal to the whole Christian doctrine of a future life. Christ the first-fruits, the first wave-offering before the eternal throne, the pledge of the on-coming harvest; "afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

EXPOSITION.—I. Redemption Completed. Verses 50-54.

The connection of this lesson with the preceding discussion, of which it forms the conclusion, should be noted and indicated.

Verse 50.—Flesh and blood cannot [are not able], etc.—By flesh and blood, is here meant our earthly or animal nature (vss. 43, 44), which in unfallen Adam was prominent, but without the subsequent corruption. This nature, and the mode of life which it requires, are and were designed to be only tem-

porary, a step in an onward, upward progress. What lies beyond that step is here called God's kingdom. See vss. 43, 44; vi. 9, 10.

Verse 51.—I shew [state to] you a mystery.—In the New Testament a mystery is a fact or doctrine not previously revealed, at least clearly and fully. Mark iv. 11; Eph. v. 32, etc. We shall not all, etc. Paul says "we," classing himself with those who would be alive in the flesh at Christ's second coming (vs. 23), not because he expected not to die before that event; but because he was alive when writing, as the departed were not.

Verse 52.—In a moment, etc.—Instantaneously, with no process occupying time. "At the last trump" [trumpet], here means at the time of its sounding, which, again, is the time of Christ's Second Advent. Vs. 23; Matt. xxiv. 31. On the use of a trumpet to announce any great event, see 1 Kings i. 34, 39; Matt. vi. 2; 1 Cor. xiv. 8; 1 Thess. iv. 16; comp. Rev. viii. 2, 6, 13, etc. The dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. The order of statement here is to be the order of the events. See this carefully noted in 1 Thess. iv. 15-17. The word translated "the dead," means the dead persons, not the corpses. The Scriptures do not describe the final resurrection as a mere restoration of bodies, but as a resurrection of men. Paul does not recognize all the living as being disciples like himself, nor all the dead as disciples, and to be raised incorruptible.

Verse 53.—For this corruptible, etc.—A necessity of divine order belonging to God's work of redemption as eternally purposed, and as foretold.

Verse 54.—But when, etc.; then, etc.—"Then," and not till then, will the prediction be finally and utterly fulfilled. See the prediction in Isa. xxv. 8; comp. Heb. ii. 14, 15; Rev. xx. 14.

II. The Exultation of Hope. Verses 55-58.

Verse 55.—O death, where, etc.—This language is derived, though not literally quoted, from Hosea xiii. 14. The question "where?" is an emphatic assertion that redemption, as completed in the resurrection, utterly destroys death's sting and the grave's victory. Death and the grave are regarded as man's enemies, but both conquered through Christ.

Verse 56.—The sting of death is sin.—Not only does the sense of sin make death painful in prospect by the "fearful looking for of judgment;" but death, with that of which it is symbol, is judgment, "the wages of sin." See the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man. Luke xvi. 19-31; Rev. xx. 14, 15. The strength of sin is the law. The law gives the painful sense of sin, and the law also decrees and requires the penal judgment. Rom. ii. 12-16.

Verse 57.—But thanks be to God, etc.—As Christ is God's gift to us sinners, so, of course, is salvation from its beginning to its completion, and, hence, to God are due the thanks of grateful love. The thanksgiving fittingly goes along with the exultation.

Verse 58.—Therefore, my beloved brethren, etc.—If thanks, so also a thank-offering in holy service. Not that only, but as in all other enterprises the assurance of success is motive and inspiration to tireless labor, so also here. Stability is to be gained with abounding energy and activity.

TOPICS.—(1.) The sting of death.—To the natural man, death is inexpressibly dreadful. Through fear of it he is, all his life-time, "subject to bondage." Disease and death were introduced by sin—by transgression of God's holy law; and it is the consciousness of sin that makes men shrink from death with such horrible recoil.

(2.) The victory over death.—will not be complete till the morning of the resurrection. Then two things will happen: All the saints that are alive will have their bodies changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump. At the same instant, the bodies of the righteous dead will be raised from their long sleep in the dust, and the souls of the saints, that Christ brings with him, shall be re-united to the bodies that they left behind them—only, instead of having their old corruptible character, each body shall be like unto the glorious body of the risen Christ.

(3.) Faith—hope—love.—These three

beamt in the last verse, as the distinguishing characteristics of perfected Christ manhood.

—Abred from the Baptist Teacher. SUNDAY, August 3rd, 1878.—The Minist of Reconciliation.—2 Cor. v. 14-21.

GOLD TEXT.—"We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."—2 Cor. v. 20.

For the Teacher of the Primary Class.

All men be sure they will die. Christians must be sure that they need never be afraid of death.

Death first came in the world as a punishment for the first sin; and as all have sinned since, all must suffer it. There is no grave in heaven, where there is no sin and there never would have been onen earth, had it not been for sin. Sins what makes us afraid to die; it is the ing which makes death hurt. We are aaid to meet our Father. But when Jesu has forgiven our sins, this sting is taken away, and death cannot hurt.

Jesus is stronger even than death; and he shed this, when he rose from the dead ad came forth from the grave.

Jesus not only rose from the grave himself, but will raise others. He has promised tis, and he showed that he can do so, because he has already done it.

For those who love Jesus, death is only falling asleep here, and waking in heaven.

In the first change the eyes will be closed, the vice silent, the ears do not hear, the hands lie still, the heart does not beat.

The body will have another change.

"He will change our vile bodies, and make them like unto his own glorious body." "When he shall appear, we shall be like him."

Jesus is now in heaven, getting homes ready for all who have loved him here. But he will come back to earth, we don't know when. Tell of his going away in the clouds, and coming back in like manner; the holy angels and those who have gone before to heaven with him. It will all be done as quickly as you can wink.

Though all rise, all do not rise to such a glorious life; the wicked are led off to everlasting punishment.

Answer to Scripture Enigma.

- No. 29. "HE WAS DESPISED."—Isa. liii. 3. 1. M ilkliah.....2 Kings xxii. 8. 2. E sau.....Gen. xxv. 31-34. 3. Waggon.....Gen. xlv. 27. 4. A malek.....Deut. xxv. 19. 5. S anballat.....Neh. ii. 19, 20. 6. D agger.....Judges iii. 21. 7. E arthquake.....Acts xvi. 26. 8. S apphire.....Ezek. i. 26. 9. P alm-tree.....Judges iv. 5. 10. I ncese.....Ezek. viii. 11. 11. S amuel.....1 Sam. xviii. 14. 12. E gyp.....Ex. i. 14; Jer. xliii. 7. 13. D ew.....Hosea vi. 4.

Scripture Enigma.

No. 30. INITIALS AND FINALS. Confusion reigned on every side, Ah! grief and woe! When this uprose in sinful pride, Pride soon brought low.

- 1. Twice the fair queen her husband bade, With traitor base; Name ye the royal feast she made, Her lord to grace. 2. Leaping the flames may rage and swell, Over his head; One walks with him, whose stronger spell Is round him spread. 3. Clouds and thick darkness closing round, Our souls may fear; On clouds inscribed bright hope is found Darkness to cheer. 4. Words are but smoke, precepts are vain Goodness to teach; Christ gave us this, our lives to train His height to reach. 5. Cracking it rings, joyless to hear, On the fool's part; Rippling its waves fall on the ear, From youth's pure heart. The best sleigh bells ever invented are a pair of rosy-checked girls.

Booth's Department.

Fighting the Storm.

"A fearful day, neighbor Scheffer!" "You say truly, neighbor Balt; there has been nothing like it since the great storm of '24. Heaven have pity on us!"

So muttered to each other the villagers of Seckendorf, as they crouched behind the rocks along the river bank in the gray of that wild March morning, with a hurricane such as no living man could remember, rushing and roaring down the valley. Young and old, even babies and bed-ridden grandmothers were all gathered there; for it was no time to linger within the walls which cracked and groaned with every blast, and might at any moment come crashing down in one mass of ruin.

Even in that sheltered spot the jackets of the men and the long hair of the women flapped in the wind like torn canvass; but out in the open ground the fury of the storm was fearful to look-at. Tall trees were bending like whips, huge stones crashing down the surrounding ridges, twigs and even large branches flying through the air like straws; while on the unsheltered uplands, more than one shepherd's hut had been literally blown to pieces, and lay strewn far and wide over the hill-side, a shapeless wreck of shattered timbers.

But even more fearful was the sight of the flooded river below, which, swollen by weeks of rain, and lashed into fury by the tremendous gale, went foaming down the narrow valley with a roar that seemed to shake the very rocks that walled it in; and as the peasants stood gazing at it, one of them, a stalwart herdsman from the upland pastures, pointed, with a sudden paleness on his sunburned features, to the little cottage that stood on an island in the center of the stream, at the window of which a human face had just shown itself.

"It's the ferryman and his family," whispered one; "they haven't had time to escape."

At that moment the clatter of hoofs was heard along the stony road, and a single norseman came tearing down toward the bank, his white hair and his horse's mane streaming on the wind like a pennon. A murmur ran through the crowd as he approached: "It's our master—it's the Count of Hildesheim."

Even before he reached the spot, the Count had evidently seen the danger of the island family: for his first words were:

"Two hundred thalers to the man who saves them. Who will go?"

The men looked at each other in silence. There were no faint hearts among them; but the bravest man might well have shrunk from the boiling whirl of foam, in whose grasp the strong boat would have been as nothing. More than one eye kindled, more than one hand clenched itself; but nobody stepped forward. And at that moment a huge wave went roaring up over the islet, and striking the cottage wall tore it away like paper, while the shrieks of the children and their mother, who were now plainly visible, were heard even above the howling of the storm.

"Will you let them perish before your eyes?" roared the Count. "If I were ten years younger, I'd go myself!"

Just then a solitary figure, which seemed to have risen through the earth, so suddenly did it appear, was seen on the very brink of the river, launching a small boat. In another instant boat and man vanished together into the whirl-wind of spray that filled the air. The Count clutched his horse's mane, and his lips moved as if in prayer; while more than one stifled cry broke from the peasants as the little bark at length reappeared close to the islet, dancing like a feather amid the roaring waves that surged up around. But the ferryman had seen the coming help, and prepared for it. In an instant his wife was lowered down, with her baby in her arms. The two other children followed; but alas! there was no room for the father in the tiny skiff, already overloaded.

The two brave men exchanged a look, and understood each other. Off went the boat shooting down the foaming current like an arrow. More than once all seemed over; but the oarsman's hand was sure, and at last, far down the stream

he brought his charge safe to land. Then without halting a moment, he seized the tow rope, and dragged his boat up to the point whence he had started, and shot out into the raging flood once more.

"God be with him!" cried the Count, fervently; "no other man in Saxony would have dared such a deed!"

Stoutly did the gallant man strain at his task; but he came only just in time. The ferryman had barely leaped into the boat when the whole building came crashing down. In an instant the whole crowd was in motion, and headed by the Count himself, they rushed down the bank to meet the rescued man and his deliverer as they touched the shore.

"There, my brave fellow," cried the old noble, holding out his purse to the oarsman; "never was money better earned!"

"Not so, Sir Count," answered the other; "God has enabled me to keep myself by the work of my own hands and I need nothing more. Give your gold to this poor man and his family, who have lost their all."

And without awaiting a reply, he turned on his heel and disappeared.—Sunday Afternoon.

The Musical Box.

There was once a little old lady who had neither father, nor mother, nor sister, nor brother, nor husband, nor children, nor cat, nor dog, nor bird, nor anything else that lives, and moves, and has its being.

For all had died away, or run away, or flown away, or been fetched away; and she was left quite alone.

But the more she lost, the brighter and more sweetly she smiled. It was as if her sun were hid at the back of her head where the wee gray knot was twisted, and it must shine through whether she would or not.

Now this little old lady, when everything was lost, or strayed, or stolen from her, bought her a musical box about as big as your hand, and put it under her pillow.

Every night after she had read her good Book, and said her prayers, and put up her spectacles, and wound up her clock, and shut up her stove, and locked her door, and put on her night-gown and cap—with the dainty white frills—what do you think happened?

She drew her musical box out from its hiding-place and wound it up; then out there came music like the voices of a choir of enchanting fairies.

And as the music came sweeter and more sweet, the little old lady's capstrings trembled and fluttered, and her lips parted as if she would speak, while her eyes looked upward with rapt delight. Then if you had seen the face, I am sure you would have thought the sun was coming through.

Once, so wittingly the music drifted away into the dark, that a weak mouse came out of his hole and stood erect, its two small hands drooping with the languor of enchantment.

And the little lady, too, grew drowsy, and hid away her treasure, and sank back into the pillows and slept.

One time, when the little lady had as usual gone to sleep, do you know, she forgot ever to wake up again!

And now comes the queer part of it. Afterwards, when all the strange people had come in and looked upon the strangely radiant face, with its quiet eyelids closed, and the tiny, folded hands, with the frills about the wrists—

When they were all looking and wondering with curious, tearless eyes, there came from under the pillow, the faintest, tiniest music, like the smothered tinkling of a hundred silver bells—so little, so sweet, so far, far off!

And this was the tune the hundred silver bells were tinkling:—

"There is a happy land, far, far away."

And all the foolish people ran away, and declared all over the town they had heard the angels sing.

They never dreamed it was the little musical box that had not forgotten its friend. But whatever set it a-going nobody ever knew.—Emma Burt, in Christian Union.

Remember often that the true measure of all we do, is its uniformity with God's will. If I eat and drink because it is God's will, I am more acceptable to Him than if I suffered death without any such intentions.