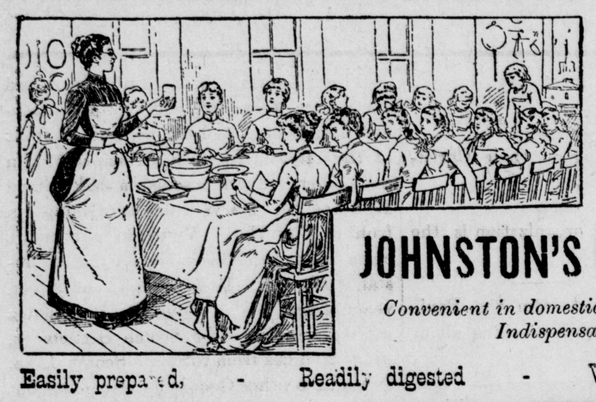


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voice: "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?"

And Daniel answered back He was safe. At once a rope was lowered, and the good Daniel was pulled up to the king's embraces. There and then another decree was signed, and Daniel's enemies were summarily cast to the lions. Ah! the no-prayer decree worked badly for them.

O young man, do you know how to pray? Perhaps you shut your window when you pray. You keep your religion out of sight. You say your prayers with your head under the bed-clothes. You are afraid of the lions. But a religion that keeps itself out of the world's sight, and never clashes with the world's decrees, is a religion not worth the having.

Young man, do your duty. Kneel down and say your prayers, although all the fools of Montreal sneer at you. Come forward and say before the church and world: "I believe in Jesus. I am on His side—the side of all that is true and good." Of course you will have your trials. You may not get out of the lions' den, as Daniel did, without a scratch; but for you, as for him, there is nothing to fear.

Christian, seek not yet repose,
Cast thy dreams of ease away;
Thou art in the midst of foes;
Watch and pray.

Forgetting the Things Behind.

There is a grace in forgetting as well as in remembering; there is a genius in knowing what to discard as well as what to keep; and both these are the invariable possessions of a successful and efficient life. No man of conscience can forget his sins; no man of judgment can forget mistakes; but he does not carry them with him. What he does carry is the experience which comes to him through them—the strength, the wisdom, the grace of character which have been developed by what they have brought or what they have taken away.

A man's real life is always before him; the past is only valuable for what he can learn from it. The days fade from all distinct recollection, because these artificial divisions of time are of no consequence except as character has grown or degenerated in them A man's greatest achievement, once accomplished, begins immediately to recede, and becomes less and less in his eyes. No really great man has ever reposed on anything which he has done; there has always been the consciousness that he was greater than any expression he had given of himself, and that the real satisfaction and joy of life lay, not in the work, but in the doing of it. One task succeeds another, one experience follows another in endless succession; a man's work is never finally done, because his life is always expending, and the time will never come when this law of progression will cease to operate. There can be no heaven which is not a heaven of development. It is a great waste of strength to make one's faults and blunders and sins impediments in the onward march. There is no virtue in continually bemoaning the mis-doings of the past. Real repentance is not lamentation, but girding up the loins for the work of expiation. Let the dead old year bury its dead; leave behind the depressing memories of failure and defeat, while you carry their lessons in your heart. Your real life is not behind but before you; it is the new year, and not the old, which is your opportunity.—*Dr. Lyman Abbott.*

The Diamond Character.

The beauty of character is to reflect God; and just so far as we colour this reflection of God with anything of self, so far do we fail of that clarification of inward thought and outward life which makes us like Him.

The diamond is like the perfect type of character. Every other precious stone reflects the light coloured by its own texture. Only the diamond reflects light in its essential purity. This is the secret of its superiority among gems. Other gems may be beautiful, but the diamond is transcendently beautiful.

Young Christians, be diamond characters! Catch the divine light, and give it forth again uncoloured by selfishness of any sort. Be so simple and so sincere that all the beauty and all the truth coming to you out of the God-life and the Christ-life shall shine through you into the lives of others, and help to make them also transmitters of light.

It is self-consciousness that spoils the beauty of character. The secret of true living is to lose the intermediate sense of self, and think only of that wider relation-ship of God and neighbour "Keep thou thy soul translucent, that thou mayest never see its shadow."—*Zion's Herald.*

How often is it difficult to be wisely charitable—to do good without multiplying the sources of evil! To give alms is nothing unless you give thought also. It is written' not "Blessed is he that *feedeth* the poor," but 'Blessed is he that *considereth* the poor." A little thought and a little kindness are often worth more than a great deal of money.

The Sabbath-School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Third Quarter-Lesson XII—Dec 20.

THE RISEN CHRIST AND HIS DISCIPLES.—John 21: 1-14.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.*—Col. 3: 1.

THE OBJECT OF THIS METHOD OF REVEALING HIMSELF. We have the record eleven times that Jesus appeared to his disciples during 40 days. Why was he not with them all the time? This period was a transition state, a connecting link between the three years of personal association with Jesus in his human presence and his spiritual presence, as an unseen divine Saviour abiding forever with his people. It was needful (1) that he should appear often enough to give perfect proof that he was alive and the same Jesus they had known before. (2) That they should be trained to a realization of his divine nature and spiritual presence. (3) That by the ascension there should be an unbroken connection between the visible and the invisible manifestations.

JESUS APPEARS TO HIS DISCIPLES IN GALILEE.—Vers. 1-14. *After these things.* The appearances described in the previous chapter. *Jesus shewed himself again at the sea of Tiberias.* A name for the Sea of Galilee. The morning of the resurrection two messages were sent to the apostles by the women that they were to go into Galilee, and Jesus would appear to them there. Accordingly the eleven went into Galilee, and waited for the appearing of Jesus there. *There were together Simon Peter*, etc. Seven are named here. The place of meeting was a mountain in Galilee, where the rest of the eleven met them. *Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing.* The rest fall in with his plan. They were waiting for the time appointed to meet Jesus, and must do something. They probably needed to do something for their own support. Idleness and needless dependence on others are not Christian virtues. The best way of waiting for further manifestations and clearer visions of Jesus is in the faithful performance of present duties. *Into a ship.* A fishing boat. *And that night they caught nothing.* Although night was the best time for fishing. *When the morning was now come.* At daybreak, *Jesus stood on the shore; but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.* That they did not recognize him may have been due in part to the dimness of the early light, but more probably to the fact that he was recognized only as he choose to reveal himself. *Children.* A familiar Oriental address. *Have ye any meat?* i. e., any fish. *Cast the net on the right side of the ship* (boat) *and ye shall find.* As they evidently saw nothing strange in the direction to "cast the net on the right side of the ship," it is probable that they attributed it to the stranger seeing a shoal there. *They were not able to draw it.* Up into the boat. *For the multitude of fishes.* There were 153 large ones. The number was so unexpectedly great that they took pains to count them. *That disciple whom Jesus loved.* John modestly speaks of himself, never once mentioning his own name in his gospel. *Saith unto Peter, It is the Lord.* Doubtless he remembered how Jesus had done a like wonder for them three years before. *Now when Simon Peter heard that it wa the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him.* The fisher's coat appears to have been a sort of loose garment, like the workman's blouse of to-day. *For he was naked.* Stripped of all but his light under-garment. *And did cast himself into the sea.* In his impetuous desire to welcome his Lord, he could not wait for the boat, but swam ashore. He would fain prove that he did love him in spite of his fall a few days before. It is characteristic of the two men that John the thoughtful was the first to recognize Christ, and Peter the impulsive, the first to go to him. *The other disciples.* Staying to attend the fishes. *A little ship.* A small boat belonging to the larger vessel. *Two hundred cubits.* 300 to 350 feet *Dragging the net.* Unable to raise it into the boat, they drew it to the shore. *As soon as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.* A simple meal, provided by Jesus, to which the apostles were invited. Whether the provision was miraculous or not, is not declared; but the first impression would be that it was miraculous. *Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.* The fruit of their own labors was to be joined to that which the Lord has provided. *Simon Peter went up.* On board the boat to help. *Yet was not the net broken.* So the Gospel net can hold all that will come. *Come and dine.* Rather, Come, breakfast. *And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.* They were so certain that it was the Lord, that they did not dare to show any doubt by asking him who he was. *Jesus.... taketh bread and giveth them.* This invitation to eat with Jesus may have been meant to complete his object-lesson to them as fishers of men. They were taught that if they gave themselves up to the work of the gospel, they should find in that work all they needed for the necessities of the body, and should eat bread with him in his kingdom above. *This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself.* To the disciples as a body. This does not take into account his appearances to individuals.

THE LAST MESSAGE OF JESUS. Jesus appeared several times after this; and after he had made himself fully known, he left a parting message as a legacy to his Church. He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, promised them the power of the Holy Spirit, and then bade them to preach the gospel to all the world.

The Missionary Duty of the Church. Observe that this command implies that Christianity is a universal religion, that it is adapted to all nations and all classes.

(1) This is the command of Christ. The Church cannot be obedient, and let one nation be without the gospel.

(2) This command includes home missions as well as foreign; our own neighborhood as well as more distant places. Every nation needs the gospel as much as ours needs it.

(3) It is the nature of a living Christianity to be missionary. Max Miller says that of all religions, only the missionary religions are living. That church is dead which is not anxious to preach the gospel to every creature.

(4) This is the only way the Church will keep pure. Nothing without this can keep its doctrine or its life from degenerating. Any church which seeks to save souls will keep pure.

(5) The church at home is built up faster by working for the heathen.

(6) The grandeur of this work exalts the individual Christians who give and labor.

(7) It is blessed to have part in the final triumph of the gospel.

THE ASCENSION. From Mount Olivet, near Bethany, Thursday, May 18, a. d. 30. It is well always to remember that while the cross is the central point of Christ's mission, yet the last view we have of Christ is not on the cross, but as a risen and ascending Saviour, leaving a promise of his abiding spiritual presence and care, and a promise to return again. It was at this time, doubtless, that the great change came over his body, which is described in 1 Cor. 15: 51-53. (1) By Christ's ascension we see his true nature, as divine; (2) that he may be the omnipresent Saviour of all men alike; (3) that we may be taught to live by faith, and not by sight; (4) to train us up into his character by doing his work; (5) he has gone to prepare a place for us, as well as us for the place. We must remember that he is personally present, only invisible, and that he has sent the Holy Spirit to guide and teach and give power.

PRACTICAL HINTS.

Jesus took pains to make the proofs of his resurrection complete.

But in such a way as to train his disciples to believe and realize his unseen existence.

When the disciples go where Jesus commands, he reveals himself to them, often in unexpected ways.

The true way to wait for our special work is to do the ordinary work that comes to us.

Jesus often comes to us in our daily duties as really as in our hours of devotion.

Labor for the saving of souls is in vain when done in our own strength and way.

Jesus cares for our daily wants

Try it for a Month.

Pray three times daily for a month, and note the general effect on your daily life.

Pray daily for the salvation of one or more souls, and see how God will change them.

Pray for those who despitefully use and abuse you, and observe how fervently you will learn to love them.

Pray for a pure heart, for a sanctified nature; "for this is the will of God, even your sanctification," "and if we ask anything according to his will, we know that he heareth us."

Pray for a revival in your community, and mark results.—*The Ambassador.*