

The Sabbath School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Second Quarter Lesson 6. April 28 1901

JESUS APPEARS TO THE APOSTLES.—John 20: 19-29.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*—John 20: 29.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time.—Sunday eve, April 9, the day of the resurrection, and the following Sunday evening.

Place.—An upper room in Jerusalem. Probably the place where the Lord's supper was instituted, and where the Holy Spirit came upon them at Pentecost. It seems to have been the common place of meeting of the disciples at this time.

MESSAGE OF THE RISEN JESUS TO HIS DISCIPLES.

HIS FIRST MESSAGE.—PEACE.—

Vs. 19, 20. *The first day of the week (Sunday) when the doors were shut... for fear of the Jews. A protection against surprise and against spies. Where the disciples were assembled. Taking the evening meal (Mark 16: 14), perhaps attempting their first Lord's supper. The disciples were "the eleven" (except Thomas) and others with them, probably including the women, Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brethren, and Joseph Barsabas, and Matthias (Acts 1: 23). Came Jesus, while the two disciples from Emmaus were telling their experience (Luke 24: 35, 36). And stood in the midst. It is not stated that this was miraculous, but it was done by some spiritual power over his risen body. And saith unto them, Peace be unto you. A beautiful salutation fill'd with meaning and power. Dr. Boardman says it is "the watchword of the Mediator's Kingdom: Peace with God, Peace with Man, Peace with Self."*

1. It was peace with God, sins forgiven.

2. It was peace of righteousness, peace with the law of God.

3. It is peace in one's own soul.

4. It is the peace of trust, as Christ was at peace in the storm on the lake.

He showed unto them his hands and his side. This was done first to convince them that it was Jesus himself risen from the dead. To convince them still more he called for food and ate as of old (Luke 24: 41-43). The second reason for showing his wounds was to connect his present condition and future glorification with his sufferings. Then were the disciples glad. At first they were terrified, but after he had shown himself as the same Jesus their sorrow was turned into joy; their hopes were to be realized, the promised kingdom was to come.

Practical. It is still true that where two or three are gathered to gether in Jesus' name, there he is present with them. He often comes silently and unobserved till we receive his benediction of peace. Then we hear his voice calling to service, and feel the breathings of the Holy Spirit.

THE MESSAGE THAT CALLS TO SERVICE.—Vs. 21. *Again, Peace be unto you.* After they had been convinced as to the reality of his resurrection, he repeats his words of peace. *As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.* Jesus sends his disciples with all the equipment necessary for the conversion of the world,—the Holy Spirit, the atonement, the love of God; all motives that appeal to the soul, life, truth, foretastes of the kingdom of heaven.THE MESSAGE ANNOUNCING THE HOLY SPIRIT.—V. 22. *And when he had said this, he breathed on them.* Expressing the fact the gift was to come from him, and was a breath of life. *Receive ye the Holy Ghost.* This was the earnest of the gift which a few weeks later, on the day of Pentecost, was bestowed in fuller measure, not only on them but on the world. The Christian church, the preacher, the teacher, the worker in every degree can do but little for the salvation of men till they receive the Holy Ghost. This gift conferred the power necessary for the service to which Jesus had called them.THE MESSAGE SHOWING THE GREATNESS OF THE POWER CONFERRED UPON THEM.—V. 23. *Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them.* From the corresponding passage in Luke 24: 46-48, it seems clear that the meaning of this whole verse is: I have now by my death prepared the way for proclaiming forgiveness of sins to the world. Go ye forth, and wherever you preach this truth, men will repent and believe, their sins will be remitted. The whole work is committed to your hands, and you will be sustained in your mission by God. Ye remit, send away, let go, or give up, as a debt, forgive. They were to preach the divine conditions of forgiveness,—patience and faith,—under the influence and with the power of the Holy Spirit; and these conditions should not change; God himself would forgive, and continue

to forgive all who repented and believed, even to the end of time.

THE MESSAGE OF FAITH.—V. 24-29. *But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus. Thomas is a Hebrew name, meaning a twin. Didymus is his Greek name, meaning, like Thomas, "a twin."*

1. Thomas was not so much a doubter as a realist. He must have real facts, not stories or visions, or even testimony. He must see the reasons of things, and see the steps by which to reach the truth.

2. He was honest in his doubt. He waits for light, searches for it.

3. The sad facts that were real, the scenes at the trial and on the cross, had so impressed his mind, that it was difficult for him to believe the reports of others who had had glimpses of the risen Lord.

4. Thomas had many good qualities. He was conspicuously faithful, loyal, and brave, even when discouraged. He was honest, even when in despair.

Was not with them when Jesus came. Either by accidental detention, or as a result of his temperamental. *Except I shall see, etc.* Unless he has evidence of fact, of sense, of touch, he does not see how he can believe. *And after eight days...* This is, therefore, the Sunday following Easter day. *Again... with in.* The gathering was held in the same place and under the same circumstances as before. *Then saith he to Thomas* He well knew how Thomas had felt, and what he had said; but he gave this proof of the resurrection not for him alone, but for all his disciples. *And thrust in (put it) into my side.* There are few to whom the confirmation of the senses, of experience, and of reason is not a great comfort. *Be not.* Thomas was in a fair way to become unbelieving through his doubt of the resurrection. *Not faithless but believing.* Thomas answered and said unto him, *My Lord and my God.* He passes at once from the depths of dependency to exalted faith. *Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed.* Thomas had come into faith by the way of visible manifestations. But there is another way. *Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.* These come to faith by a spiritual apprehension, by inward sympathy, by the way of the affections and the higher nature.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Thomas lost much by not being at that Sabbath evening meeting with his brethren. The influence of the meeting would have been especially valuable to one of his temperament.

2. Jesus did not reprove Thomas for his doubt, but pointed him to a higher level. It is not the high attainment Christ praises, but the honest effort; not the stumbling step he censures, but the false will.

Parents And The Sabbath School

The work of the parent is certainly one of the most important factors in securing a successful Sabbath School. Long before I had any children of my own to awaken an interest or anxiety on this subject while engaged as a Sabbath school teacher, I was brought to realize that my work was helped by some parents, and hindered by others.

Once in particular, I remember. I taught the infant class, and I had trained them to kneel during prayer. One morning I stopped for one of my pupils. The mother brought her out dressed so sweetly, in a dress of purest white. She helped her carefully into the spring-wagon, and started away; then, coming back she said: "Lizzie, if I were you, I would not kneel down to-day. You have your white dress on, and that hall is so dirty." I felt sad and said, "Has she no calico dress she could put on?" The mother looked up, and said, "Why?" "Because," I said, "I would rather see her dress soiled than her soul." The mother saw her mistake and said, "Oh, well, you can kneel down if your teacher wants you to." I was glad to see her manifest that much good sense, but I knew that her first remark had made an impression on the child that might never be eradicated.

Another time our lesson was on Sabbath desecration. I tried to make an abiding impression, and I got the evidence of having succeeded. "Now," said I, "do you think, after studying this lesson, that it would be right to go fishing on Sunday?" One little girl, a grandchild of one of the most stylish and very worldly women in the town, sprang to her feet, and said, "No; and I mean to tell my grandma so, too, for she went fishing last Sunday." I had the consciousness, however, of knowing that I had not meant to be personal.

The paramount duty of every parent is to see that the child studies the lesson at home. In order to study the lesson, the child must be interested in it. No parent can interest a child in a lesson unless interested herself. Monotony kills interest, therefore do not use

the same method every week. If your child has grown tired of study, I would suggest a little stratagem, something like the following:

Change places with her for a time. You be pupil, let her be teacher. Have a Bible, lesson leaf, and map always on hand. Monday morning, while your hands are in the study, or you are working out your bread, you can say, "Mary, do you know what the lesson is about for next Sunday? I did not have my lesson very well yesterday, and I was awfully ashamed. I get so little time to study. I wish you would get that leaf and tell me what the title and Golden Text are, and I will try to learn them while I do this work, for I never want to be caught again as I was yesterday." Thus you will impress upon the mind of the child that it is a disgrace to have a poor lesson. You will be surprised to see how ready she will be to help you, and you can get her to read the lesson, locate the places on the map, etc., without knowing that she is doing anything but helping mother. If you have older children that you cannot reach in this way, try making the lesson a subject of table talk.

Fathers have their part. For in this as in every good work, there can be no perfect success unless both parents work together. No matter how pressing may be the work of the farm, the shop, or the store, the children must have time to eat, or they will not develop strong, healthy bodies. So also must they have time to digest the bread of life, or they will prove weakly Christians.

Then take time to talk over the lesson at the table, and the interest manifested by the parents will be imparted to the children. Make it a rule to review the lesson all together every Saturday night before beginning any other reading. This, again, will require some firmness, for the political papers are very inviting, but let us remember to put the Gospel first, and secular news afterward.

The lesson learned, the next thing of importance is promptness of attendance. I wish that I could impress every parent reading this with the importance of teaching their children to always be on time in Sabbath School. Why can we not realize that tardiness on the part of one pupil must invariably disturb and hinder the work of the whole school? Then let us see to it Saturday night that the clocks are none too slow. When Sunday morning comes let us wake up, and when we wake up let us get up, and calculate our time just as we expected to take the 9:30 train, and see how we will improve the Sabbath school and bless our children by training them always to be on time.

Once there the child needs confidence in the instructors, and for this he depends largely upon his parents. Especially is this true of the young pupils. Let the parents talk at home that the superintendent or teacher is incompetent or inconsistent or unchristian, and the child will enlarge upon it, and perhaps misconstrue the statements in his own mind, until he comes to regard his instructor as a veritable hypocrite. How can the heart of such a child be reached? Lastly, pray for the Holy Spirit to be our teacher and bless our work.—Mrs. Hannah M. Roney, in Herald and Presbyter.

Country Boys in the City.

I remember, says a writer in The Lutheran Observer, when I was a boy in the country, how I reasoned with my widowed mother, that in a city like New York it would not be difficult to secure employment for every issue of the great metropolitan dailies contained advertisements of situations in search of incumbents. After a couple of years of importunity I was permitted to have my way, and as I now recall how wearily I tramped the streets of New York for six days before finding a situation that barely paid for my board, I am persuaded that the advice given by Dr. Parkhurst in the following paragraph is both wise and judicious:

The subject is a very broad and serious one. In a general way, I am inclined to discourage any boy from coming to the city, and especially the average youth, against whom the odds of getting on are very great, and becoming greater. We need the extraordinary man, but the country towns and districts need him very much, and the average man has two chances in the country to one here. There are of course, many more opportunities here, but for each one of them there are ten applicants. The difference in the cost of living overbalances the difference in wages, and so it is harder to save a dollar here than in the country. No, the average person should stay out of this great vortex of mediocrity, misery, temptation, and crime. The great corporations and trusts are now absorbing every business. There is no room for the small man with

the small business. On the other hand, the corporations have no soul and no brotherly love can be expected from them. Competition grows fiercer and fiercer, and this competition, instead of developing initiative, is destroying it in the minds of thousands of men, and making nothing better than human machines of them. As the bank or shop grows larger, the men with only one idea, with the ability to do only one thing, increase. We are increasing the cogs, and not the wheels.

Child Thrift in France.

Thrift is a habit which requires to be met early. The boy or girl who does not realize the value of money is not likely to be prudent in later life. Like other habits, good or bad thrift is contagious. The child who saves pennies instead of spending them, and is able to show a bank, arouses emulation in others. Whatever encourages children to save small sums of money does good, not only by preventing immediate waste of money, but by creating among children a public sentiment favorable to thrift. What is done in this country by voluntary organization is done on a larger scale in France by the savings banks. The children of the common schools deposit with their teachers any sum they save, from a sou, which is about the equal of an American cent, upward. Once a month agents of the savings banks go the rounds of the schools and collect the children's savings. He who deposits but a single sou receives a small bank book, and when he has deposited a franc he receives a large bank book. During the last seventeen years French boys and girls have opened more than half a million accounts in the savings banks. Many children, or their parents for them, deposit an endowment fund, which is meant to give them a capital of \$1,000 to \$2,000 when they become of age.

It is worth considering whether, in this country, some modification of the French plan is practicable, by which savings banks should cooperate with school teachers in promoting the habit of saving among children.—Youth's Companion.

Tommy Atkins.

When any one in England speaks of Tommy Atkins, people know that he means a British soldier. Not an officer, but a private soldier. It is the nickname of the British private soldier. Rev. E. T. Hardy tells us the reason for his name. In 1857, when the native soldiers in India, who were called Sepoys, mutinied against the British Government, all the Europeans in Lucknow fled for safety to a large house called the Residency. On their way they met a private soldier, who had been stationed as a sentry. They begged him to come with them, but replying that his post of duty lay where he was, the soldier refused to leave. Shortly afterward he was murdered while still on duty. His name was Tommy Atkins, and thereafter, when a special deed of bravery was reported, it was said, This man is a regular Tommy Atkins. Thus the name became fixed as a title of honor for the British private soldier.

Class Not Ahead of Teacher.

As the priest, so the people, is an old adage. This is a truth applying to Sunday school teachers and their classes. A careless, worldly, unconsecrated Sunday school teacher is not able to build up the spiritual life of his pupils. He may command their respect as a kind, courteous gentleman; he may even give them correct truth and wholesome instruction; but his own life and conduct do not enforce his teaching, and hence his class keeps below the plane of his own worldly life. Teachers in the Sunday-school need to be spirit-filled as well as other Christian workers in order to win their pupils to Christ and to build them up to Christ. Save our Sunday schools from the influence of cold, worldly, and unspiritual teachers!

If we open the door to a doubt, the devil will have a messenger with bad news ready to come in.

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