

Version). Indicating in itself that which is the complete antithesis to death, the word lends itself easily in the New Testament, as Trench pointed out long ago, to that true life which alone triumphs over death, physical and spiritual. "No wonder, then, that Scripture should know of no higher word than this to set forth the blessedness of God and the blessedness of the creature in communion with God." In this general signification, ζωή is used with a variety of shades of meaning. Sometimes it refers to the future state only, sometimes to the whole sum of blessed life in God here and hereafter. In St. Paul it often describes the sum of the Divine promises in the gospel; St. John uses it with a stately significance characteristic of his style as that which primarily and essentially belongs to God alone, but which becomes man's possession through the self-revelation of the Father in the Son.

Our correspondent is, however, right in assuming that ζωή had not originally this meaning, and does not always preserve it in the New Testament. As the antithesis of *thanatos* (θάνατος), death, it does sometimes refer to our natural life in the present state. See Acts xvii. 25, "He giveth to all *life* and breath and all things;" 1 Cor. xv. 19, "In this *life* only;" Luke xvi. 25, "Thou in thy *life*-time receivest thy good things;" Jas. iv. 14, "For what is your *life*? It is even a vapour." The passage Rom. viii. 38 also should probably be understood in this connection, "For I am persuaded that neither death nor *life*," etc.; compare 1 Cor. iii. 32, "The world, or *life*, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours." It is true that the able writer in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES judges otherwise. He says, "It is not this present life St. Paul takes notice of,

it is the life beyond; not even in death, not even in the life beyond death, the life eternal, will he be separated from the love of Christ." We venture to think this a mistake. The antithesis points in quite a different direction, and if ζωή be here used of that higher spiritual life which transcends our present state of mortality and corruption, it cannot be conceived of as that which would separate us from Christ.

The presence of these very few passages, however, cannot hide from us the fact that in the New Testament the word ζωή has been ennobled. If we might so paraphrase the scriptural expression of 2 Cor. v. 4, that which is mortal in it has been swallowed up of higher life. On the other hand, ψυχή is, as our correspondent puts it, essentially the principle of natural life. It is used in the New Testament nearly always of the life of man, and mainly of his individual existence. The translation "soul," appropriate in some respects, is often misleading, because we speak of "saving the soul" in contradistinction to preservation of the mere life of the body. There can be no question that the Revisers give our Lord's meaning more correctly in passages such as Matt. xvi. 26, "What shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his *life*?" The saving of the *life* (not "soul") in verse 25 points only to our present state of existence, the true meaning of which can only be realised, and its true end attained, by our renouncing self and serving Christ. But the subject is a large one, beyond the scope of these brief notes. We have referred to it thus far because it is suggestive, and may be followed up by readers for themselves. Those who do not read Greek will find all the help they require in Young's *Concordance*.

The Sunday School.

Exposition of the International Lessons.

I.

November 30.—Luke xxiv. 1-12.

Jesus Risen.

This is both a short and an unusually easy lesson. No doubt there may be found difficulties enough in harmonising the different narratives of the resurrection. But of all barren things to discuss in the Sunday School supposed discrepancies in the Gospels is the most barren and fruitless. When a critic of Archdeacon Farrar's capacity and freedom (witness for *freedom* his recent book on the *Minor Prophets*) holds that there are *no* discrepancies, most teachers will be content.

Following St. Luke's narrative, then, we receive a clear

and most interesting impression of the earliest events of this first Lord's Day.

It was very early in the morning when Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, Salome, and other women came to the sepulchre in Joseph's garden to anoint with spices the body of Jesus. Discussing as they came what they should do about the great stone which closed the entrance of the sepulchre, they were surprised, on arriving, to find it rolled away. But this was nothing to the surprise they got when they entered the tomb, for they "found not the body" there.

This is the first great fact in any proof of the resurrection of Jesus; and it is the more valuable that, as Dr. Farrar notices, it is admitted as a fact by the most rationalistic critics, the most advanced sceptics. The body of Jesus was gone from the sepulchre. The most ingenious theories have been

devised to account for it; and, it must also be said, the most absurd. There could be no better illustration than we have here of the wisdom of letting one sceptic answer another; for the first thing that each new theorist does, before stating his own theory of how the body could be gone without admitting a resurrection, is to demolish the theory of his predecessor.

The first thought of the women was of the loss they had sustained. Some one had removed, perhaps stolen away, the body. Then the angels appeared. It was a time of much moment for angels as well as men, and heaven and earth had got very close together. "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" The sepulchre is the place of the dead. Jesus has a divine life which cannot die. He is not merely alive, He is always living. The angels do not merely state the fact that He is alive from the dead, but that it was not possible He could be holden of the grave.

"Remember how He spake unto you." Thus the angels began the office which is specially that of the Spirit—they brought things to remembrance, whatsoever Jesus had said. And no doubt with a power of conviction which the Spirit only possesses, which human words cannot have; so that, though the women were convinced, they could not convince the disciples.

But Peter—readier, opener, and perhaps only more impulsive—arose and ran unto the sepulchre, whereupon we have an important addition made to the proof of the resurrection. The linen cloths were carefully laid by themselves. This removal of the body was not the work of a hasty friend or terrified foe. Everything has been done decently and in order. He that believeth does not make haste. He that is the object of faith does nothing to require it.

II.

December 7.—Luke xxiv. 13-27.

The Walk to Emmaus.

1. "Two of them." The name of the one was Cleopas (ver. 18), the name of the other we know not. They were disciples, but not of the eleven Apostles.

2. "Three score furlongs." Six and a half miles.

3. "O fools" (ver. 25). The expression in the original is not nearly so strong as this. "Ye foolish ones" might do.

4. "Ought not Christ to have suffered." Put the emphasis on "ought." Christ *had* to fulfil the prophets, who prophesied that he would suffer and rise again.

5. "Beginning at Moses." The earliest promise and prophecy is Genesis iii. 15.

This incident occurred on the same day as our Lord had risen. Thus it was one of the earliest of his manifestations. We cannot but wonder, therefore, at the grace of it. Who were these two so highly favoured? We know nothing about them beyond the single item that the name of one of them was Cleopas. There had not occurred an event so momentous as this in the whole history of Israel, but the angels are not sent to make the announcement to the High Priest, nor does Jesus Himself appear first to the reigning monarch. Two men had the heart to miss Him, the

wondering hope of again finding Him, and that was enough. As they walked, "Jesus Himself drew near and went with them."

We recognise thus that He is the same Jesus. There are signs of a difference in His bodily appearance. The eyes of these two were holden that they did not recognise Him. Neither did Mary Magdalene recognise Him, nor the disciples on the lake. But whatever change may have taken place in His body, we see that He is Himself unchanged. He is the same who made the fishermen His friends, and ate with publicans and sinners.

Still is He the same in heaven. We wonder how He had time to attend to these two ignorant, unknown men. We wonder still, can He attend to us? Let us not forget that after His ascension to heaven, He found time to meet another traveller by the way, a traveller in no ways greatly distinguished then—Saul the Pharisee, as he journeyed to Damascus—

"Though now ascended up on high,
He bends on earth a brother's eye."

But notice, as a further lesson, the way He led the two to know Him. He did not disdain evidences, but they were the very simplest. He ran over the prophecies of His death and resurrection and final glory, as the books of the Old Testament contain them. For how shall we believe except we hear? Then when they knew the truth about Him, He opened their eyes, and they knew Himself. It was the sight of Himself that converted them.

III.

December 14.—Luke xxiv. 28-43.

Jesus made known.

He made Himself known (1) to the two who went to Emmaus, (2) to Simon, (3) to the Apostles and others. These are the three appearings recorded in this lesson.

(1) To the two disciples who went to Emmaus. Already we have followed their walk till they arrived at the village. Jesus made as if He would have gone further, but they pressed Him to stay. They did not know it was their Lord; but His voice was strangely familiar, and His words were powerful to search the conscience, so that their hearts burned within them. They would hear more, and at their entreaty He stayed, for already He is the *hearer of prayer*. Then, "as He sat at meat with them, He took bread and blessed, and brake and gave to them: and their eyes were opened and they knew Him, and He vanished out of their sight." *It is like a celebration of the Lord's Supper.* The Word is preached, and preached in its direct bearing upon the Supper, the text being the *necessity* of His suffering. There is also the breaking of the bread, the blessing, and the distribution. But one most significant thing must be observed. The blessing does not *bring* His bodily presence, neither does the faith of the men; rather it is just then when He had blessed, and when their eyes were opened that they knew Him, that "He vanished out of their sight." To partake of His body and blood, all we need is His presence in the Spirit.

(2) To Simon. St. Paul mentions this appearance also (1 Cor. xv. 5), but we know nothing of the details of it. We can only remember that Simon had shown a readiness to listen to the words of the women (ver. 12). We can believe that, notwithstanding the great denial, he understood Jesus as well as any, and was as prepared to know of His resurrection. And, lastly, we can easily admit the likelihood that the forgiving Lord would seek an early opportunity of comforting the forgiven Apostle.

(3) To the Apostles. As they were wondering at the words of the two disciples who had returned from Emmaus, "Jesus Himself stood in the midst." They were gathered within closed doors for fear of the Jews (John xx. 19.) Here we must notice (1) the apparent change in the risen body, and (2) the reality of that body. It is impossible to enter upon a discussion of this most mysterious subject. But it is well to draw attention, in the light of St. Paul's words that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," to the evident intimations here that Jesus did now act in a way which was unfamiliar to the disciples. He vanished out of their sight; He suddenly appeared in their midst, the doors being shut; and they thought He was a spirit. Yet (2) His body was real. "Handle me," He said; and He ate food before them. So that in later days these proofs of His actual bodily resurrection were among the strongest to which the Apostles could appeal. Says St. John in his first epistle (i. 1), "Which . . . our hands have *handled* of the Word of Life;" says St. Peter, "God . . . showed Him openly . . . to us, who did *eat and drink with Him* after He rose from the dead" (Acts x. 41).

IV.

December 21.—Luke xxiv. 44-53.

Jesus' Parting Words.

In His parting words to the disciples, He began at the beginning of the Old Testament and went through it, tracing the prophecies which related to Himself, just as He had done to the two on the way to Emmaus. We cannot insist upon it that He quoted from every book in the Old Testament, but the words used here—"the law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms"—include the Old Testament as a

whole, just as we have it now. He traced *Himself* through-out it; for He is not only the key to open the meaning of every book, but the link which binds the one book to the other, first in the old Testament, then in the New, and, finally, the two Testaments together. Says the old commentator:—

"In Vetere Testamento Novum latet,
In Novo Testamento Vetus patet."

"In the Old Testament the New is concealed,
In the New Testament the Old is revealed."

And this is the reason why.

He appealed to what they knew, to that authority which they admitted—the Scriptures of the Old Testament. In every one of us, in the youngest child, there is something to appeal to, and to build out from that is the only true education. St. Paul had sometimes only the conscience—the crude, covered conscience of a heathen—to which to make his appeal. How much more have we!

He made the "doing" follow upon the "doctrine," the hand upon the head. Understanding the Scriptures, they must preach.

But here we come upon the great matter and mystery of the lesson. "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued (literally, *clothed upon*) with power from on high." The hand must follow the head; knowing the doctrine, we must do it; but between the two there must come the endowment. What does it mean to the children? These simple truths may be mentioned and easily illustrated.

1. We can do nothing for God until we know His will. The Bible contains His will.
2. We may know the Bible well, but we must *understand* it.
3. It is God who opens the understanding. We must read with prayer.
4. To know is to serve. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye *do* them."
5. But the most active service may do no good. God's presence is needed in the Spirit, and we may have to wait a long time before we are conscious of His presence and help.
6. God does not *need* our work. It is the greatest of all lessons to learn that He can do without us.

Life's Phases.

BY THE REV. JAMES STARK, Belmont Street Congregational Church, Aberdeen. Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson, & Ferrier. 1890. 2s. 6d.

THE Scotch Evangelical pulpit has no better all-round representative than Mr. Stark, and this book is worthy of him. Strong, sensible, well-digested thought, healthy and brotherly sympathy, an eye wide-awake to the signs of the times, a genial and

cultured style, brightened with illustrations and allusions which show the catholicity of the preacher's reading,—these, together with outspoken loyalty to the old central truths, are the marks which Mr. Stark's admirers will look for, and which they will find. Some may think the concatenation of "Phases" a little arbitrary, and the title itself rather indefinite and commonplace; but there is so much point and power in the substance of this little volume that we do not care to find fault with the form.

WILLIAM A. GRAY.