

Teacher Training Course

Presbyterian Church in Canada

Under the Direction of the General Assembly's Sabbath School Committee

DEPARTMENT OF SCRIPTURE—I. The New Testament—Its Contents and Growth.

N.B.—It is recommended that the Revised Version be consulted in these studies.

LESSON I.

THE GOSPEL

The word Gospel is the Anglo-Saxon "God-spell," which probably signified God-story, that is God's word, or perhaps, good story. The Greek word *euangelion* (our "evangel") means good-tidings.

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT — Though the word gospel as used in the New Testament does not occur in the Old Testament, yet those who lived under the old Covenant had a gospel preached to them, Gal. 3 : 8 ; Heb. 4 : 6. This was God's promise that He would redeem Israel. The record of this good-tidings, contained in history, prophecy, psalms, and other literary forms, was the sacred scriptures of the Jews, read in every synagogue throughout the world at the opening of the Christian era. This Old Testament was the only Bible of the first Christians.

AS PREACHED BY JESUS—Jesus began His ministry by proclaiming the Gospel of God (Mark 1 : 14) or the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 4 : 23 ; 5 : 3, 10) ; that is, He brought the good news that He was about to establish the kingdom of God, which had been promised long before to Israel, Isa. 40 : 3-11 ; Ps. 2 ; Dan. 7 : 14. Jesus Himself was this glad-tidings. He revealed to His disciples that God is our Father, Matt. 11 : 27-30. He forgave sins, Mark 2 : 5, 7. His words brought eternal life, John 6 : 68, 69. His miracles and deeds of mercy made known the power and love of God, Matt. 11 : 27 ; John 10 : 32, 37, 38. His life was a gospel, and His followers came to see that He was the Messiah of God, Matt. 16 : 16. But they were staggered when He foretold them that He must die. How could suffering and death be a part of the gospel of the glorious Messiah ? Yet Jesus taught that this death was essential : only by it could He ransom the many

for His kingdom, Mark 10 : 45. Along with the prophecy of His death, however, the promise ran that He would rise again. So the resurrection also was a part of Christ's Gospel, Matt. 16 : 21-23 ; 17 : 22, 23 ; 20 : 18, 19. Finally He taught that He would come again in glory to judge the world, Mark 13 : 26, 27 ; 14 : 61, 62.

AS PREACHED BY THE APOSTLES — After Pentecost (Acts 2) the disciples discovered that the death and resurrection of Jesus were essential. At first much of their preaching was witness-bearing. They testified that Jesus was indeed risen and ascended to heaven and urged the people to repent and believe on Him, Acts 3 : 15, 17-19. The substance of their gospel may be found in Peter's discourses, as given in Acts 2 : 22-24 ; 32-36 ; 3 : 13-15 ; 4 : 10 ; 5 : 30-32. In the early days it was unnecessary to relate the facts of the life of Jesus, for they were well known to all.

THE GOSPEL ALWAYS ONE AND THE SAME—Paul speaks of my gospel (Rom. 2 : 16 ; 16 : 25), that is, the gospel of Christ as Paul preached it, chiefly to Gentiles. Peter preached especially to Jews, and would emphasize different features, Gal. 2 : 7. But there was only one gospel, the gospel of Christ, that is, preached by Christ and with Christ as its object. All Christians were agreed that this good-tidings was redemption from sin and death into the eternal kingdom of God, through faith in the risen Lord Jesus Christ, Acts 2 : 42 ("the apostles' teaching"), Gal. 1 : 6-9 ; Heb. 13 : 8.

LESSON II.

THE WRITTEN GOSPEL

When the first missionaries left Palestine and carried the gospel to the Jews of the Dispersion (1 Pet. 1 : 1) and to the Gentiles,