TEACHING HINTS

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the School.

For Teachers of the Older Scholars and Bible Classes

Note the new conditions following the death of Stephen (ch. 8 : 1-3), especially the scattering of the disciples, the persecuting zeal of Saul and the stay of the apostles in Jerusalem. The map should be used.

1. *The evangelization of Samaria.* Observe : (a) The preacher—Philip (compare 6 : 5 ; 21 : 8, 9), and his power, 8 : 6, 7. (b) The theme—Jesus Christ. This is especially noteworthy, as it appealed at once to the need of the hearers, avoiding their prejudices. This gospel met the need, and in Jesus the Samaritans found great joy. (c) The enemy. Study Simon as an obstacle to the progress of the kingdom. His method was sorcery, which gave him great influence among the whole people. The prominence of the magician in the East is remarkable. The power of Jesus far surpassed Simon's, even in the magician's own estimation, and he was, for the time being, conquered. His "conversion" was simply the conviction that a greater power than his own was present.

2. *The recognition of Samaritan converts* by the apostolic church at Jerusalem. Point out the wonderful step toward universal brotherhood implied in this action. The Samaritans were not Jews, but a mongrel people descended from the intermarriage of heathen and Jews. Though they observed the Mosaic law, they rejected the tradition of the elders and hated the Jews and were hated by them. The fact that they accepted Jesus formed a basis of unity, and the Holy Spirit sealed this with His presence. This is an excellent opportunity of considering the question of church union. It involves the case of caste in the foreign field, of color, of different nationality, of differing creeds. It is very worthy of note, that difficulties are easily arranged when spirituality is high. The final solution is in love, rather than formal logic.

3. *The judgment of the false professor.* Carefully study Simon's case. He wanted power, evidently for magical purposes. It is the sin of trying to control or use spiritual gifts for selfish ends. All bribery, wire-pulling for church office and similar methods stand judged in the light of this principle.

This is a good missionary Lesson. Study the spontaneous growth of Christian sympathy, and the use of laymen in the foundation work of the kingdom.

For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

A Lesson on Home Missions, this : a very important Lesson in our wide land, with its few great centres and its great expanse of thinly settled country ; with the swift incoming, too, of peoples from many lands. Don't tell the scholars all this, but have them tell you. If you succeed in having them so do, the Lesson will be an easy one to teach.

The missionary. Who ? Another of that band of deacons, of whom Stephen was one, ch. 6 : 5.

How he happened to become a missionary. He was flung into the work by hot persecution, vs. 1, 4, 5.

His mission field. The city of Samaria. John 4 : 9 shows the feeling that existed between the Jews, of whom Philip was one, and the Samaritans, who were a mixed race, part Jew, part heathen. But the love of Christ in the heart melts the race prejudice. Nothing else does this so quickly or thoroughly. Perhaps nothing, except this, really does it at all.

His message. What was it ? "Christ", says vs. 5 : what is now, "the old, old story of Jesus and His love". That is the heart of the gospel, the one thing worth the while of missionaries to preach.

His success. Bring out, that many believed, and that Philip's words and wonderful works brought great joy to Samaria. Have the scholars tell what benefit people get from accepting the gospel of Jesus Christ.

A strange convert. Simon, the sorcerer, and his acceptance of Philip's message, and his baptism (vs. 9-13), will elicit much interest. Explain that Simon's belief was not the trust and love of his heart, but merely the conviction that Jesus was a greater man and miracle worker than himself.

The visit of the apostles, vs. 14-17. They were like our Home Missionary Superinten-