

The Sunday School

BIBLE LESSON.

Adapted from Hurlbut's Notes.

Second Quarter.

Lesson VI.—May 9. Acts 13:26-39.

[Read chapter 13, 14-43.]

PAUL PREACHING TO THE JEWS.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. Acts 13, 38.

I. THE SAVIOUR. VERSES 26-31.

26. BROTHERMEN—Paul never omitted the courtesies of life. CHILDREN OF THE STOCK OF ABRAHAM—And therefore inheriting the rich Messianic prophecies. The Jews prided themselves on their ancestry. This fact Paul seeks to turn to advantage by trying to lead his hearers through the vestibule of venerated Hebrew history into the sanctuary of the Gospel. WITNESSES AMONG YOU FRATHERS GOD—The proselytes from heathenism—Gentile Jews. They were included in those to whom the Gospel was first sent. As the Jews had done much noble missionary work, these converts were numerous. To you—better, "to us."

27. FOR—This Gospel is preached to us, because, through the agency of the inhabitants and rulers of Jerusalem, the prophecies concerning the death of the Messiah have been fulfilled, and because God raised him from the dead. Verses 32 and 33, taking up the same thought in a slightly modified form, confirm this latter view. See also 2, 38 and 3, 17, 26, where the Gospel is distinctly offered to the rulers and people of Jerusalem. —Bradley. THEY THAT DWELL—Paul does not say yes, because the foreign Jews had no hand in the crucifixion of Christ. He hopes that these brethren at Antioch would not set their seal to what the rulers and people of the metropolis had done. THE VOICES OF THE PROPHECY, if heeded, would have set them right. They described the treatment Christ actually received. READ EVERY SABBATH—In their synagogues. Reading the Scriptures was a part of their regular service. Let us fear lest our prejudices or indifference prevent our understanding the word, and lead us also into sin.

28. THOUGH THEY FOUND NO CAUSE—Observe the working of hate and bigotry. Not even suborned witnesses could bring death against him, yet they demanded his death.

29. FULFILLED—So man's most wicked and vicious works are used by God. There is no intimation, however, that such a fulfillment makes the act any less sinful. LAID HIM IN A SEPULCHER—This was done by friendly hands. But Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus were "rulers," and are thus included in that term in verse 27. Moreover, as His enemies looked after the body and obtained a military guard to keep watch over it as the remains of their own victim, the apostle regards this as the cunning manifestation of their enmity to the Saviour.

30. BUT—A skillful appeal from the judgment of their own Sanhedrin to their God. Christ's resurrection proved their course wrong and set the seal on his divinity. Was the Sanhedrin great? Then Jesus was infinitely greater.

31. SEEN MANY DAYS—It was no secret. For forty days he mingled with men, and was seen by so many that there was no room for questioning the fact.

II. THE PROMISES. VERSES 32-37.

32. GLAD TIDINGS—No tidings could be more joyful to the Jewish heart than that the Messiah had come, but they would not recognize him unless he came as they wished him to come. THE PROMISE—First made to Abraham, and renewed all the way down to Jacob, to Moses, to David, to Ahaz, to Daniel, etc. The Old Testament is a unit of promise of the Saviour to come.

33. UNTO US THEIR CHILDREN—Revised Version, "unto our children." The best manuscripts favor this reading, but to give that of the Authorized Version requires the change of but a single letter in the Greek. As Westcott and Hort say, "It can hardly be doubted that this was a primitive error, and that the original statement was, 'unto us their children.' THOU ART MY SON—The psalm quoted from described Jehovah as inaugurating his Son upon Mount Zion. That Son is heir to the uttermost parts of the earth, and Gentiles are bidden to own his sway. THIS DAY HAVE I BEGOTTEN THEE—This same passage is quoted also in Heb. 1, 5 and 5, 5. The best interpretation of its meaning is that in harmony with Paul's statement in Rom. 1, 4: "Declared to be the Son of God with power," by the resurrection of the dead." The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is such a striking proof of his divine Sonship that

this Messianic declaration in the second psalm may be fittingly applied to that great event.

34. THAT HE RAISED—Paul, having declared the fulfillment of the promise, now goes on to prove from the Scriptures that Christ must have risen from the dead just as Jesus had risen.

35. SERVED HIS OWN GENERATION BY THE WILL OF GOD—That is, he served God in his time, or while he lived. But it is true that in doing the will of God we do serve our own generation, and for their best good. PHIL ON SLEEP—Old English for fell asleep. SAW CORRUPTION—Anticipating that some of his audience would say that the passages he quoted referred to David, he here proves this to be impossible. Not David's body was the subject of his own prediction, but the uncorrupted body of the Son of God.

III. THE GOSPEL. VERSES 38, 39.

38. THROUGH THIS MAN IS PREACHED UNTO YOU THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS—The apostle makes his application and at the same time declares the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom. The original has not the word man, but one, referring to the Messiah above declared. THIS ONE, the only Saviour. When the apostle had carried his sketch down to the time of David he turned aside from the narrative and plunged into his main theme—presented David's Son to the faith of David's subjects. Through Christ past sins are "forgiven," their record is "blotted out," present sinfulness is eradicated, and a new heart implanted which hates sin; and future sin is made unnecessary, indeed, impossible, except by a "fall from grace." All this was purchased by Christ's merits and is offered in his name and by his authority.

39. While, as is natural, this first reported sermon of Paul's is similar in many respects to the sermons of Peter as given in the Acts, yet we readily recognize thoughts and expressions parallel to those in Paul's epistles (see, for example, 1 Cor. 15, 3-11); and this verse states in clear terms the great doctrine of justification by faith in Christ, as opposed to justification by the works of the law, which Paul emphasizes so powerfully in his Galatian and Roman epistles. ALL THAT BELIEVE—Or, rather, that have faith, not merely intellectual belief, but trusting faith. JUSTIFIED—A legal term, not meaning "to make just or holy," but "to absolve from guilt." This is done by the "remission of sins." The law could not absolve anyone from guilt. Not that the gospel does it more perfectly than the law, but it does what the law cannot do. Here is the open door into a life of which the law knew nothing.

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Gov. Black, of New York, has signed the bill amending the Raines excise law.

Two hundred and ninety-three Popes have succeeded each other, and only eleven of them, including the present Pope, have reigned more than seventeen years. Leo XIII has reigned nineteen years. Plus IX, reigned thirty-two years, thereby stultifying the popular superstition that no Pope would reign more than twenty-five. Leo owes his fine health and astonishing powers of work, firstly, to his frugal up-bringing in the Italian hills, and in the next place to his regularity of life-long abstinence. He lives on less than five francs a day.

How He Found Out—"Mary," said he "will you do a little sum for me?"

"Oh, yes."

"Well, write down the number of the month in which you were born. Multiply that by 2, and add 5 to the product. Now multiply what you have by 50, and add your own age to the product. Now subtract 365 from what you have, and add 115 to what is left. Please tell me your answer."

"532," she replied.

"Ah, I see you were born in May, and are thirty-two years old."

"Yes; but how do you know?"

"Because the month of your birth was the fifth of the year, and the last two figures give your age."

Let the class in algebra or higher arithmetic explain why this exercise will always give a result like the above. An ingenious teacher can vary the problem indefinitely, and yet observe the same principle and arrive at the same result.

"HE HATH THE FALLING SICKNESS."

—Shakespeare.

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