

back to God. Thus Christ comes to seek him and to bring him back. There is no rest for the shepherd until the whole flock is safe in the fold. In this is the crowning, distinguishing characteristic of Christianity. All other religions represent the lost race striving to find God; but our faith, from Genesis to Revelation, is a marvellous unfolding of God's loving search for a lost humanity; ending in the wonderful climax of shadow and type, the coming of the Divine Man to seek and to save, and to make plain for every erring one the way back to fellowship and God-likeness.

VERSES 8-10.—In Palestine the custom is for the husband on the wedding day to present his wife with a necklet made of ten pieces of silver. The loss of any portion of the necklet is equivalent to loss of good name and reputation among all the neighbors for the unfortunate wife. Carelessness, neglect, infidelity are all suggested and openly charged against her if but one piece be missing. So the distress and anxiety of the woman in the parable are not as unreasonable as some might suppose. She has good reason for worry at her loss; and good reason for jubilation when the little coin is recovered. Now hear the significance of the parable. The woman is the church, the Bride of Christ, to whom the heavenly Bridegroom has entrusted as her fairest decoration a necklet of souls to keep for His glory. The missing of one reflects upon her honor and so upon His. We must not be satisfied if one piece from this pledge of His love and confidence is unaccounted for. God help us to seek the straying ones. It is the bringing of them back that gives the greatest joy on earth, because it makes the greatest joy in heaven.

Joy Songs.

"Jesus saves," "Where are the reapers," "Sinners Jesus will," "I've a message," "I have a Saviour," "Throw out the life line," "'Tis a true and faithful," "I will sing the wondrous," "What will you do."

Seeking, Saving, Singing.

Truths to Practice; then to Preach.

To work with God in seeking souls is the highest service of all. This privilege is not for angels, nor yet archangels; it is reserved for *you and me*.

You cannot save souls by getting them to join the church. If they are not united to Christ they are still dead in trespasses and sins.

To make a man a respectable sinner by improving his environment, will go about as far towards saving his soul, as whitewashing a tombstone will go towards producing a resurrection.

Why God Sings.

One of the most wonderful passages in the Bible to my mind is Zeph. 3:17: "The Lord thy God is in the midst of thee, a mighty one who will save. He will rejoice over thee with joy, He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing." We have often thought of the marvellous music of heaven, when the angel choirs with harp and voice join in the praise of God; but who can imagine the transcendent melody of the strain when God Himself takes up the song! And what great cause can lead the Almighty to such extreme of joy that He, too, must sing? Nothing more nor less than the saving of the lost. The greatest joy of the Divine nature is over the fruits of His redeeming love. In God's universe the supremest height of happiness is reached when a soul turns from darkness to light, and laying down the arms of rebellion accepts the peace of Calvary. Search where you may in earth's

resorts of pleasure, amid the merriest throngs of her care-free children; penetrate the mysteries of other spheres inhabited by beings perchance with joys unknown to us; yet God's universe will reveal no more joyous being than Himself, and the secret—would you know it?—is that He of all has made the greatest sacrifice for others.

Finally, Brethren!

Rejoice in the Lord.

It is a good symptom if you feel like singing when you hear of some soul finding Jesus.

Now is the best time to get your voice in tune for singing with the heavenly choir by and by; and the best way is to set the angels singing by bringing back some soul. Then you can listen and catch the right note.

You will never find joy by seeking it for yourself; but it will surely find you if you seek it for some one else.

JOY TEXTS.—Ps. 9:14, 13:5, 21:1, 35:9, Zeph. 3:17, Luke 10:20, 15:6, 9, Jno. 4:35, 36, Ps. 45:15, Acts 16:34, 2 Jno. 4, Matt. 18:13, Ps. 126:6, Acts 8:39, 2 Cor. 1:14, 1 Thess. 2:19.



A Missionary Church.

Feb. 19.—A missionary church. Acts 13:1-12.
(A missionary meeting.)

DAILY READINGS.—Monday: The Church commissioned, Acts 1:6-8. Tuesday: Witnessing in Jerusalem, Acts 4:23-33. Wednesday: Witnessing in all Judea, Acts 8:1-4. Thursday: Witnessing in Samaria, Acts 8:5-17. Friday: Unto the uttermost part, Acts 16:6-10; 19:21; 2 Cor. 16:16. Saturday: Except they be sent, Rom. 10:9-17.

Suggestions for the Leader.

Consider the missionary church here described. Notice three things about it:—They were actively engaged in God's service, "They ministered to the Lord." They "waited upon" God while they worked, for they heard the Holy Spirit when He spoke to them. They were promptly obedient to His command.

Now look at your own church. Is it a missionary one? If not, why not? What can *you* do about it? Give these three questions respectively, a careful, a prayerful, and an honest answer.

Take to the meeting with you, a heart full of earnest enthusiasm over missionary effort in all lands.

Find if there is not some special field which God is laying upon the hearts of your society. Pray for it definitely. That you may be able to do this intelligently, gather all the information you can about this field and its workers. Get it from newspapers, leaflets, books, notes on the addresses of returned missionaries. This is work your Missionary Committee might do. Keep a blank book in which to preserve these items; you might devote some pages to other lands in the "regions beyond." Be sure and have a map—a large one, if possible—of the country under discussion, with you at your meeting; and have someone point out upon it the different places as they are mentioned.

Missionary Songs.

"In the harvest field there is work to do," "Oh, where are the reapers," "There's a cry from Macedonia," "Work, for the night is coming," "Sowing in the morning," "One more day's work."

Things to Think About.

"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."