

Our Young Folks.

Make Me Loving

Father who, in love divine,
Came to bless a heart like mine
Make my spirit now thy shrine
Make me loving,
Make me mild,
Let me be Thine own dear child
Very frail and weak am I,
Oft forgetting Thou art here,
How my prayer, and self-will cry
Make me loving,
Make me mild,
Let me be Thine own dear child
Ever watch about my home,
Never let its dear ones roam
Where the Tempter's voices come
Make me loving,
Tender, mild,
Let me be Thine own dear child
Through the hours of the day,
When I study, work, or play,
Close to Thee I fain would stay
Make me loving,
Tender, mild,
Let me be Thine own dear child

Heroism.

"Oh, dear," said Willie Grey, as he sat down on the saw-horse, and looked at the kindling-wood which he ought to have been splitting for his mother, "I do wish I could do something for the world. Some great action that every one could admire, and that would make the country and the whole world better and happier. I wish I could be a hero, like Wellington, or a famous missionary, like Judson, but I can't do anything, nor be anything."
"Why do you want to be a hero?" asked his cousin, John Maynard, who, coming up just then, happened to overhear his soliloquy.
"Oh," said Willie, coloring, "every one admires a hero, and talks about him, and praises him after he is dead?"
"That's the idea, is it?" said John. "You want to be a hero for the sake of being talked about."
Willie did not exactly like this way of putting it.
"Not only that, but I want to do good to people—convert the heathen—or—or save a sinking ship, or save the country, or something like that."
"That sounds better; but believe me, Willie, the greatest heroes have been men that thought least about themselves and more about their work, and so far as I can recollect now, the great—I mean according to the Christian standard—have always begun by doing the nearest duty, however small." And here John took up the axe and began to split the kindling-wood.
Willie jumped off the saw-horse, and began to pick up the sticks without saying a word; but though he said nothing, he thought the more.
"I've wasted lots of time thinking what great things I might do, if I only had the chance," he thought; "and I've neglected the things I could and ought to do, and made a lot of trouble for mother. I guess I'd better begin my heroism by fighting my own laziness."
Will every boy adopt Willie's resolution, and carry it out in his daily life?

Little Kindnesses.

A little boy had a hard lesson given him at school, and his teacher asked him if he thought he could learn it. The boy thought when his eye glanced over the hard words and strange figures, that it would be too difficult for him, and at first he hung down his head at the teacher's question; but after a few moments' consideration, he looked brightly up, and said, "I think I can do it, sir, if you will allow my sister to help me."
"Oh certainly, my dear; if your sister will assist you, she may."
"Oh yes, sir, she is always so glad to help me."
"That is right, sister, help your little brother, and when you are doing so, you are binding a tie round his heart that may save him in many an hour of dark temptation.
"I don't know how to do this sum; but brother will show me," says another one.
"Sister, I've dropped a stitch in my knitting; I tried to pick it up, but it has run down, and I can't stop it."
The little girl's face is flushed, and she watches her sister with a nervous anxiety, while she replaces the naughty stitch.
"Oh, I am so glad," she says, as she receives it again from the hands of her sister, all nicely arranged. "You are a good girl, Mary."
"Bring it to me sooner the next time, and then it won't get so bad," said the gentle voice of Mary. The little one bounds away with a light heart to finish her task.
If Mary had not helped her, she would have lost her walk in the garden. Surely it is better to do as Mary did, than to say, "O go away, do not trouble me!" or to scold the little one all the time you are performing the trifling favor.
Little kindnesses cost nothing, and beget much love.

ALAS! how defiled in Thy most holy sight are my garments and walk! No doubt from day to day I brush away the dust, but ah! how little good it does! Forgive me, O my Father, and cleanse me, granting me so to walk that I may at last enter, pure and unspotted, Thy holy city.—Gottlieb.
WHEN we are fullest of heavenly love we are best fitted to bear with human infirmity, to live above it and forget its burden. It is the absence of love to Christ, not its fullness, that makes us so impatient of the weakness and inconsistencies of our Christian brethren. Then, when Christ is all our portion, when he dwells with us and in us, we have so satisfying an enjoyment of his perfection that the imperfection of others are, as it were, swallowed up, and the sense of our own nothingness makes us insensible to that which is irritating in individual feelings and habits.

Sabbath School Teacher.

LESSON XLIX.

THE GENTILES RECEIVED.

COMMIT TO MEMORY, vs. 41-48.
PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Acts i. 1; iv. 31; viii. 36.
SCRIPTURE READINGS.—With v. 33, read 2 Sam. xiv. 11, with v. 35, read Psalm xv. 1, 2; with vs. 36, 37, compare Rom. iii. 29, with v. 38, read 1 a. vii. 14; with vs. 39, 40, 11, read Acts i. 1, 2, 3 and 8; with v. 42, compare Acts xvii. 31; with v. 43, read Acts iii. 21; with vs. 44, 46, compare Acts ii. 4; with vs. 47, 48, read Matthew xxviii. 19, 20.

GOLDEN TEXT.—The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.—Isa. lx. 3.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—All flesh shall see God's salvation.

The mind of the pupil must be prepared for learning this lesson, by being shown first,

(a) The light in which the Jews regarded the Gentiles, who, when received into the Church, up till now came as "proselytes" (which meant originally, strangers coming), and were, as far as possible, made Jews. Even the apostles took a long time to get rid of the feeling in favour of this course.

(b) The character of Cornelius and the preparation of mind he had for receiving the truth. A model congregation is gathered under his roof and auspices. (See v. 33, which irregular, unpunctual churches and schools ought to study well.)

When these two things have been made clear to the pupils, they will be able to understand the heads of Peter's sermon here reported to us. A sermon usually has an introduction, a statement of truth and an application. We have these elements here, and this analysis of the passage may help the memory.

I. THE INTRODUCTION.

Peter began with some solemnity of manner and deliberateness, not as to make a remark, but a lengthened address. He "opened his mouth." His opening words were very fitting, placing speaker and hearer in a right relation to one another, and preparing the way for what was to follow. But while they were plain enough to the hearers, many readers have failed to understand them.

They do not mean that God makes no difference in His treatment of men that He regards the believing and the unbelieving, the wicked and the pious, alike. "I see now," says Peter, "I catch the truth that God does not confine His grace and favors to one race or one nation." The idea is taken, like the word, from the act of judging. If a judge should let a criminal slip because he was of one state, while he punished all such from other states, or if a man appointed to dispense public charity gave to his own acquaintances, or set, or party, or nationality, while refusing equally deserving persons not of this description, he would be a "respector of persons." This God is not (2 Chron. xix. 7; 1 Pet. i. 17), and man ought not to be. (See James ii. 1, 9.)

(The teacher may find other and better examples, but the great thing is to give a clear idea.)

The next word (v. 35) does not mean that a good heathen is just as truly accepted as a good Christian. If this were so, what need was there to take so much pains to bring Cornelius to Christianity? This error is dangerous. If we believed it, we should feel less care for missions to the heathen. The true meaning is, that a man who "feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is not rejected on account of race, and it is not assumed that Cornelius had reached this point, but that he could, though a Gentile, be brought to it. Hence Peter preached to him. It is Peter's confession of his own former mistaken narrowness, and it is no more. It is true both of the Jew and Gentile, that "to him that hath shall be given" (Mark iv. 24, 25).

II. THE STATEMENT OF TRUTH.

(vs. 36-43). The beginning of the statement is linked in the closest way with the sense of Peter's acknowledgment, for "the word" is dependent on some verb or preposition understood. It is as if Peter said, "I now see the meaning of that word," etc.

The following points are brought out in the apostle's address:

1. Men—Jews and Gentiles—need "peace" with God (v. 36), are naturally at war with Him. He opens arrangements for reconciliation. Men do not first send or apply to Him. He "beseeches" them. Preaching is God's way of bringing men to peace with Him. Hence ministers "preach the word" (2 Tim. iv. 2).

2. Jesus Christ is the reconciler, mediator, peacemaker. And He is "Lord of all," Jews and Gentiles. That this is the meaning is proved by Rom. x. 12, which study. No narrow plan, therefore, is His. This is true still. Hence Christ is to be published by ministers, missionaries, teachers, by all who hear of Him, and to be believed by men.

3. There is a historical order in the course of his work.

(a) John the Baptist broke up the ground, raised expectation, reprov'd sin "in the spirit and power of Elias," and announced Jesus. His doctrine is called his "baptism," from the outward rite which marked his followers.

(b) Jesus Christ came "to the Jew first." He began preaching in Galilee (Luke iv. 14, 15, 16, 23 and 31), and followed in the course of John's ministry. He went throughout all Judea. He taught openly. His work was notorious. All men talked of it. There was no secrecy about it. Cornelius and his friends would naturally know of it. In order to teach men, we must begin with what they know, and build on it.

4. Jesus was divinely qualified for His work (v. 38). He received the anointing of the Holy Ghost, which imparted power. He is spoken of here not as Son of God, but as Jesus of Nazareth. (Such forms of speech are common: Acts xi. 24; 1 Pet. iv. 14.) He proved this anointing by His life, which was not only innocent but benevolent in the highest degree; "went about doing good." A good man might do

this, but His benevolence was superhuman. He healed the "oppressed of the devil," in reference mainly to demoniacal possession. The apostle puts the truth as they could understand it, for "God was with Him." (See Matt. i. 23.) He was doing God's work, showing men what God is.

5. When men put him to a shameful death, "hanged on a tree" (v. 23), God, on the other hand, raised Him up on "the third day" (v. 40), and showed Him by "many inflexible proofs" to be the same Jesus (Acts i. 3). (See 1 Cor. xv. 4, 8.)

6. These facts are duly attested by witnesses (v. 11), fit, sufficient, chosen before the events, by God, and in earnest, as their sufferings proved. The apostle is not afraid of weakening his case by admitting that Jesus did not in His risen form mingle with unbelievers, and show Him to promiscuous multitudes. They had the means of knowing from the closeness of intercourse, "did eat and drink," etc.

7. These facts were preached to the people (Acts i. 4, v. 23), and Jesus, the risen Saviour, is to be witnessed for as the appointed Judge of all, the dead and the living, at His coming (v. 42). (See 2 Tim. iv. 1; 1 Thess. iv. 15.)

III. THE APPLICATION.

(v. 43). He is appointed Judge. He is able to save. And now we tell you what indeed the prophets going before heard of, or read by you; witnessed, also, that whoever, Jew or Gentile, believes on Him, shall receive forgiveness of sins. When it is said "all the prophets," the meaning is "the whole drift of prophecy is in this direction."

While he was actually uttering the words, in a way which could not be misunderstood, the Holy Ghost fell upon all; his own companions receiving a new impulse, and the Gentile hearers receiving the gift so that Peter and the rest could be assured of it. How it was shown, we are told in v. 16, by their speaking with tongues, etc., as in Acts ii. 5-11. But the effort was instantaneous (v. 15), in the amazement of the Jews, and the impression on Peter's mind. Jew and Gentile were "red alike." They enjoy the same gift—tongues, once a symbol and means of separation, are now a sign of oneness. It was a Pentecost for the Gentiles. Why should not baptism with water follow this baptism from heaven now as then (v. 47)? But one answer could be given, and on that he acted (v. 48). God had received them, why should not the Church? So they were by his command, baptized. He would not, by himself baptizing, give the idea that the efficacy depended on him that administered it. (See John iv. 2; 1 Cor. i. 14.) The point is that it is administered according to his will (Matt. xxiii. 19.)

SUGGESTIVE TOPICS.

The preacher—the audience—the former barriers between them—how removed—Peter's present convictions—true meaning of his introduction—the substance of the gospel—to whom Jesus came—in what places—how attested—how treated—by men—by God—to what place raised—why thus emphasized—the testimony of the prophets—hearing of all this—effect—how evidenced—the meaning of this gift—Peter's conclusion—the consequent action.

LESSON L.

SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL. (Acts ix. 19-30)

COMMIT TO MEMORY, vs. 22-24.

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Isa. xi. 10-12; 2 Cor. ix. 1-7.

SCRIPTURE READINGS.—With v. 19, read Ps. lxxvi. 10; with v. 20, Acts. ii. 10; with v. 21, read Luke i. 66; with v. 22, read Acts iv. 36; with v. 23, read Matt. 10, 22; with v. 24, compare Gal. v. 22-24; with v. 25, compare Acts ix. 30; with v. 26, read Ps. cxxxiii.; with v. 27, read Acts xxi. 10; with v. 28, read Matt. xxiv. 7; v. 29, read Gal. vi. 10; with v. 30, read Acts xii. 25.

GOLDEN TEXT.—They went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them.—Mark xvi. 20.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—The kingdom of God is like leaven.

(a) No one phrase would include all that is in our lesson so well as that placed at its head. The teacher will do well to look at the atlas, mark in his mind the places mentioned; and if any book descriptive of these is at hand, it will be well to read what is said of Phenice, Cyprus, Cyrene and Antioch. See p. 183. The "Grecians," Barnabas and Agabus, may be studied also in the Bible Dictionary.

(b) It is to be remembered, too, that this book is fragmentary, and gives specimens only of the acts of the apostles; and yet the brief notices have a real unity, and are fitted to convey just ideas regarding the planting of Christianity.

1. The first spreading of the gospel was involuntary. The history goes back a little. Stephen's death had been the signal for an outbreak, and many had to quit Judea. (See Acts viii. 1.) They found Jews, however, in such places as they reached. Phenice is not to be confounded with a town in Crete of the same name (Acts xxvii. 12). It was a region north of Palestine, including Tyre and Sidon, and running along the Mediterranean coast, with Lebanon on its eastern side. It had much trade. Cyprus is an island off the coast of Palestine, rich, fertile and luxurious. Antioch was the Syrian capital, built on the Orontes, and called after the father of its founder. It was a place of great importance.

The believers, so far as appears, in ignorance of Cornelius' baptism, if indeed it had occurred, preached only to Jews. They were not office bearers, but private Christians, full of zeal and love. It would be idle to think of "preaching" as formal, public, and like our modern sermons. They told of the Christian facts and truths as they had opportunity. They "endured" the cross, had to flee (Matt. x. 23), but carried the truth with them and diffused it.

V. 20 has some obscurity in it, founded on the ambiguity of "some of them," that is of the dispersed, or possibly of those who received the truth from the dispersed. There is also a difference of view as to the word for Grecians, the original copies varying. Some read Hellenas, which would be Gentile Greeks. Some read Hellenistas, which would be Jews speaking Greek. If

the former, the spirit of Christian love was doing what Peter had been led to do. If the latter, the meaning is that Greek-speaking Hebrew believers spoke to their Greek-speaking countrymen, as they found them. The point is not very important, but the weight of evidence is in favor of the reading which makes it "Grecians." Cyrene, from which some of these active laborers came, was a great city, but on the coast of Africa. Tropic now includes its site. It had many Jews, introduced by Ptolemy of Egypt; was politically joined to Crete by the Romans. Ample notices of the Jews in Cyrene are found in Josephus. It was not without design that men of Cyrene witnessed Pentecost.

II. VOLUNTARY EFFORT.

(v. 23). One part of the Church is stimulated by blessing on another part. Therefore there should be no envy or jealousy, but gratitude to God, when good is done anywhere by anybody. The mother Church at Jerusalem is gladdened by news from Antioch. Peter's defence had prepared for right action here (Acts xi. 2-18). The persecution has already been turned into a blessing! The Church sent forth Barnabas. It is not set down as an apostolic act, nor was an apostle sent. Barnabas was well-fitted for the task. He was from Cyprus also, a good man, a "son of exhortation," as Acts iv. 36 means, prudent in counsel, large-hearted and gentle. He was to preach by the way, making Antioch his destination.

His joy over the working of God's Spirit through the truth, "the grace of God," is characteristic of him. He may have feared mistakes or errors in the new state of things, but on the contrary it was only necessary that they should act with "purpose," etc., in view of temptation, of persecution, and of that fickleness which is so common. The joy of the good man seemed to require explanation; hence, v. 24, "For he was a good man," etc. It is only good men who rejoice over spiritual gain when it is not to them, or their "side," or in their way, or in some degree promotive of their views. And such good men are apt to be used as instruments. They break down prejudices, are believed in, get credit for singleness of eye; honor the Holy Ghost, and He honors them. He was full of the "Holy Ghost and faith." Hence his usefulness, "much people were added unto the Lord." "What a noble gift of God a true bishop and minister is—a true Barnabas!"

Barnabas (v. 25) had no idea of being the great man of Antioch, of covering himself with the glory of this work. He wishes aid, and he thinks little of himself. He remembers Saul (Acts ix. 26, 27), whom he had taken by the hand, whose ability and fitness for service he recognizes, and sets out to seek him for a colleague, no doubt with the concurrence of the Church, some think at the suggestion of the mother Church at Jerusalem; this, however, is but a conjecture. He is the same disinterested servant of God throughout. Many good men and even ministers find jealousy a sore temptation. Barnabas was singularly free of this type of selfishness. But how good it is when brethren work "in unity." Having succeeded (v. 24) in finding Paul and bringing him to Antioch, the great city of that region, and therefore so important, there was a whole year of united, steady, successful work "with the church." How great is the value of such a year's labor! There were comers and goers, and much people learned the truth.

Owing in part to the prominence gained by the believers; in part to the tendency of the people of Antioch to give names, but we may be sure under God's overruling sway, they were publicly known, not by the name of Jesus, for He stands by himself as Saviour, but by the name of Christ, for we also are "anointed with the Holy Ghost" that came on Him. (See 1 John ii. 20.) The name, like Huguenot, Puritan, Methodist, was probably in scorn at first, but like the cross, it has become a name of honor.

III. WE HAVE, IN THE THIRD PLACE,

FRUITS OF THE GOSPEL,

which, in their way, also tend to spread it (vs. 27-30). Agabus predicted a famine.

The time of the announcement, during the year of joint labor, is to be noted (v. 27). The time of the famine is in the reign of Claudius (v. 28), which was A. D. 41-54. Josephus and Tacitus both mention this famine. The whole Roman Empire felt it, and, as long before, Egypt furnished corn. The "prophets" had supernatural illumination, God ordering it so that warning should be had. The miracles of the Bible have adequate important ends, and are so distinguished from spurious imitations.

Then followed a model "effort," as we now indelicately say, of what should be a joyous service. "Every man gave," and "according to his ability," for the relief of the brethren, "one of the fairest flowers in the garden of the apostolic era." Many a church has only "resolved" (v. 29), but the Church of Antioch did as it determined (v. 30). When they thought of the mode of distribution, they found ready to their hand a class of men recognized on all sides. The synagogue had its "elders" from the beginning.

It was a service of trust and importance to convey this aid, and Barnabas and Saul were sent with it. Whether Saul went to Jerusalem or not at this time, or only to Judea, is uncertain. He is silent as to this journey in his letters. They made this a special mission. (See Acts xii. 25.)

We may single out for notice the following lessons:

1. A healthy church will grow sometimes in knowledge, grace and influence, and generally along with this, in numbers. Providences will concur with the aims of God's people.

2. Good men will be prompt to notice indications of the divine will, and to act on them. They will work together and sink personal preferences about secondary affairs, in behalf of primary interests.

3. The Church when thriving attracts the world's notice, hostility and scorn, but is none the worse for the same.

4. The Church is a body, and its members care for one another in things temporal and spiritual. Ministers are not out of their duty when raising and dispensing pecuniary aid.

SUGGESTIVE TOPICS.

The effect of persecution—places reached

—indirect results—sources of power—feeling a Jerusalem action there—deputy sent—his character—his mission—his joy—his subsequent course—the year at Antioch—the results—the new name—how given—its significance—the famine—the relief—how raised—how sent—to whom—and the principles it illustrates.

An Icelandic Cave.

The interior of Iceland, so generally known, is a great uninhabited grassless desert, for the population (only about 70,000 for an area one-fourth larger than Ireland) is mostly confined to the sea-shores and neighboring valleys. In going from coast to coast this desert must be crossed; it edges the inhabited land as the sea does on the other side, and gives a wild charm—for us, at least, who suffer from over-population. We were now on the borders of this region, crossing a great valley or plain of old lava, with a background of snow mountains. The lava was rather like a very rent and crevassed glacier, but all black, the sombre coloring being only relieved by the patches of grey and yellow lichen. Right in the middle rose the isolated conical hill, Erick's Jökull, with dark crags below, and perpetual snow and ice above. Even on that sunny day, the scene conveyed the strongest impression of vast, weird, remote desolation. We rode over the lava till we reached a great gaping pit, and then dismounting we clambered down over rough rocks into the cave of Surtshellur, which they say run for two miles under ground. The floor of the cavern was transparent, hardies, covered near the entrance with some inches of water. The last sight of daylight, looking back, was therefore very pretty, as the ice gave a perfect blue reflection of the overhanging rocks. Now lighting candles, we scrambled over icy slopes. Down in the clear depths we could see the strange black shapes of the lava, as Dante saw the traitors like flies in amber in the ice of his frozen Inferno. All this cavern must have been once a huge bubble in the boiling lava, and these fantastic boulders flung from some furious volcano. Then came the frost-giants and made the place their summer palace; for where the cavern is at its highest, and the clear ice stands in tall columns, and fretted arches reaching to the roof, it is curious and pretty enough for any fairy tale. In the light of our torch, the whole place flashed back prismatic colors with a blaze that made our two little candles seem very dim when it was out. At the far end of the cave, in a hollow rock, we found seals, and coins, and carved names left by former travellers, some of them dating from early in the century. We added our names, as we were the first ladies who had been in the caverns—no that there is any special difficulty about going there, but that, speaking broadly, no ladies travel in Iceland. We were glad to return to the warm daylight, feeling convinced that the outlaws who once inhabited these caves must soon have become the most rheumatic of men.—Good Words.

Independent Journalism.

It is in the main a happy thing to be an "independent journal," and yet the happiest estates has its drawbacks. To the vision of the independent journal there appear only two possible varieties of periodicals, itself and the "organ." To be an "organ" implies all kinds of meanness of spirit. It is of necessity a hopeless and helpless slave. Others think for it. It is chained to creeds and mere party principles. There is something sublime in the excellent superiority of the free journal. It hardly despises, it only pities. In politics it soars as free as the American eagle; in theology it spurns the trammels of dogma—especially Calvinism. It locks down with compassionate disdain on the oratorical souls that feel bound by duty, who talk of "ought" and of "law" or doctrines. From the calm heights of freedom it looks pityingly upon the great throng in servitude. With a lordly air it gives its advice on all conceivable subjects, commiserating those who cannot, and overwhelming those who will not hear the oracle.

But there are storms even on Olympus, and we notice that there is one break to all this fine and high delight. The trouble is that notwithstanding the perennial flow of wisdom from "independent" fountains, such is the depravity of men and things that the universe are generally awry. And when matters become jangled there most needs be scolding. And the one drawback that mars happiness is the need of perpetual fault finding. The political independent is a sort of scold-in-chief; it scolds the ins and it scolds the outs. In its judgment everything is going to the bad. It shows that all measures that have been begun, were better let alone, and that all which have been let alone ought to be undertaken. The one unflinching canon of its criticism is—if Mr. Pope will suffer the spoiling of the rhyme—"whatever is wrong."

But it is in theology that the independent soul suffers the severest pangs. Calvinism is such an awful whome. The most virulent symptom of independency is seen when Calvinism is flouted in its face. It is such a base surrender of the inalienable rights of the human freeman to bind his soul in the bondage of doctrines. Alas! that any one should believe, and above all maintain a belief. The church is wrong. It is not strong enough; it is too strong. It is not strict enough in being less strict. Modern Christians are wrong, and ancient Christians were not right. Charity, charity! The world wants charity. A man is a fool and not a bigot who will not persecute another who lacks sweet charity.

And so it goes on till our admiration of the serenity of the heights of independency is mixed with wonder whether or not the great are not themselves unhappy. We remember "uneasy lies the head that wears the crown," and are content to wear the chains of creeds and convictions and be free from the burdens of excessive freedom.