

draw one on the black-board for reference during the evening's study. Remember this is a study, and all the helps that can be had should be used. It would be interesting to have the first chapter of "The Heart of Japan" read before the League, having two or three members take part in the reading, arranging the plan beforehand. If this is not practicable, the article above will give a satisfactory account of Japan, the country, and its progress.

FEB. 5—"EARLIEST MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS."

Acts 1-8, 14-17, 25; 9-31-43.

(STUDY 4. APOSTOLIC CHURCH.)

After the descent of the Spirit, which meant power for service and the initial away of life and fellowship consequent upon so great a blessing, we should naturally look for aggressive work in the extension of the truth, and the growth of the newly established church, and that is exactly what took place, and we read of heroic and persistent efforts at missionary enterprise. When men receive the truth, they cannot, must not, keep it to themselves—they must make it known.

To encourage originality of topic treatment on the part of our Leaguers, the writer presents this week two selected outlines on the subject of study, to be expanded by those who prepare the topic for the meeting.

THE RELIGIOUS AWAKENING IN SAMARIA.

1. The obstacles which required to be overcome.—(a) The natural indifference of the human heart to religion. This formed the deepest and least movable barrier. (b) The character of the people. Half-heathen, ignorant, diseased, demoralized, the population was hardly likely to be taken up with the interests of the soul. (c) The presence in the city of Simon the sorcerer, who in a manner had pre-engaged their attention and even captivated their hearts, from the least of them to the greatest.

2. The means which led to the awakening.—(a) The miracles and signs which Philip did, which convinced the people that a greater power than that of Simon had arrived upon the field. (b) The preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom and of Jesus Christ. (c) While these were the means, the Holy Spirit was the agent.

3. The characteristics which attended it.—(a) Great excitement. This was inevitable. (b) Widespread conviction. The whole town seemed to be turned. (c) Numerous baptisms. The magician himself owned the power of the truth and was baptized. (d) Universal joy. The whole city was in raptures of delight.

The second outline views the missionary movement in Samaria from a different point of view, and under a strong and impressive figure of speech. The forces of light and of darkness are viewed as in conflict. There are in bold relief the Champions, the Battlefield, the Weapons, the Methods and the Result.

THE KINGDOM OF DARKNESS AND THE KINGDOM OF LIGHT IN CONFLICT.

1. The two champions.—(a) Of the kingdom of darkness, Simon, the sorcerer, an old and experienced warrior from the army of Satan (v. 11). (b) Of the kingdom of light, Philip, the Christian deacon, a new and untried soldier from the ranks of the faithful.

2. The selected battlefield.—(a) Locally, the city of Samaria. (b) Spiritually, the souls of its inhabitants. As the

kingdom of light, so the kingdom of darkness is within a man.

3. The trusted weapons.—(a) Those of Simon, sorcery, witchcraft, magic, legerdemain, sleight-of-hand, and generally the arts of the conjurer and wizard.

(b) Those of Philip, the Gospel or the good tidings concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.

4. The varying methods.—(a) Simon relied on the power of delusion, or his ability to take advantage of human ignorance and credulity. (b) Philip reposed his confidence alone in enlightenment and conviction by the pure force of truth addressed to heart and conscience.

5. The decisive result.—(a) Simon succeeded for a time in deceiving the people. (b) Philip in the end won them for Christ, and even carried captive (to appearance, at least) Simon himself.

SIDE-LIGHTS.

The law of nature is that a certain quantity of work is necessary to produce a certain quantity of good of any kind whatever.

Some soldiers in the late American war dragged some heavy guns to the base of a hill, but were unable to get them further. The order was to plant the guns on the top of the hill. The officer, seeing the state of things, cried, "Men! it must be done! I have orders in my pocket!" So the church has orders to discipline the world.

POINTS FOR THE PRESIDENT.

Use either one or the other of the outlines given in the foregoing. Give it a week or two in advance to some member to expand and prepare for this meeting. Having received the truth as it is in Jesus, we must make it known—leave that impression on the meeting. It is forcefully illustrated in the narrative under study. Select missionary and Christian-work hymns and let prayer and testimony bear on the theme.

FEB. 12—"JAMES AND THE PERFECT LAW."

James 1, 19-27.

(STUDY 5. APOSTOLIC CHURCH.)

Good influences can only enter in at the doors which meekness, docility, and desire to learn and serve can open. Men's character-conditions usually suffice to explain the limitations of Divine blessing upon them. They have not, because they are not willing to receive. Every man is just as good as he wants to be. Power to receive depends on resolute dealing with our personal character. Here is a great law.

THE PERFECT LAW.

That must be the law which secures to a man the power and liberty to do right. The law is perfect, because it not only tells us what to do, but it imparts the power to do it. The world knows what it ought to do well enough. But there is need to bring men something which shall be both law and power, and the duty and the help to discharge it. The Gospel brings power because it brings life, and presents the law which it helps us to fulfil. This perfect law is freedom, not as exemption from the law, but as the harmony of the will with the law. Freedom comes from the reception into the heart of that divine life whose outcome is the keeping of the commandments. And in the fulfilment of this law, we must lay aside all hindrances and be doers of the Word and not hearers only.

HINDRANCES.

The hindrances which James points out to the operation of this perfect law are worthy of attention.

1. One hindrance is hasty talk. "Be slow to speak," says St. James. Much talk is a dangerous thing; but hasty talk is still more dangerous. Much talk usually goes with little thought. Indeed, hasty talk often goes before thought, and utters what the thought would neither approve nor support. It should be remembered that hasty talk is no less a hindrance when it is pious talk, or talk about religious things. The fact is, there are no persons, as a rule, more difficult to influence for good than those who have too much to say. Hasty talk expresses and nourishes self-conceit and self-satisfaction. "Be slow to speak."

2. Another hindrance is hasty temper. "Be slow to wrath," announces St. James. It is difficult for us to realize the suddenness, unreasonableness, and intensity of anger in Eastern countries. One writer says, "I have never met with a people so disposed to violent anger, especially from slight causes, as in the case of the inhabitants of the East. Men get angry with each other, with their wives or children, or even with inanimate things with surprising frequency. The noticeable points are want of control, and want of anything like ordinary proportion between the cause and the degree of emotion. These fits of anger are marked by most expressive demonstration." Evidently St. James feared that among the Jewish Christians the new Christian spirit was not recognized as a force to restrain this habit of anger. So he exhorts, "Be slow to wrath." Where the weakness prevails, appeal is often made, in excuse, to "human nature will explain his wrong-doing by his disposition, as if the first sphere for the operation of Christian truth were not that very disposition. The power of wrath in man is a necessary and noble element of character, and wider Christian control has its place, as righteous indignation against wrong-doing. But the hasty and thoughtless expression of wrath is a sign of lack of self-restraint. It is often cruel, heartless, insulting, sinful. Lack of restraint is a condition in which evil can work effectively, but good cannot. Temper spoils the work that good would do. Now, the Christian religion is a distinct force towards self-restraint. It helps to the possession of all human powers in sanctification and honor. The angry man is a weak man. Extreme anger is temporary insanity. The Holy Spirit and sinful anger simply cannot live together. Therefore, "Be slow to wrath."

3. A third hindrance is found in the relics of sin still remaining in us. "Putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness," exhorts the writer of the epistle. John Bunyan, in his "Holy War," represents some Diabolians as left lurking and hiding in "Man-soul," and ever hatching and plotting mischief. St. Paul speaks of the "old man with his corruptions"—evil habits, unsubdued desires and passions, every part of our nature under the dominion of sin. Such are a serious and fatal obstacle to the sway of the perfect law.

4. A fourth hindrance is the failure to receive the truth in its fullness as the guide of life. "Receive with meekness the engrafted word," declares St. James. The Word of God is intended to be a fruit in the one accepting it. In bringing this about an agent is necessary, and in this connection ministers of the Gospel and all true Christians are to be active. Thus the Word becomes "engrafted" or "implanted." And the