

Ancient Hymn.

Art thou weary, art thou languid,
Art thou sore distressed?
"Come to Me," saith one, "and coming,
Be at rest."

Hath He marks to lead me to him,
If He be my guide?
In His feet and hands are wound-prints,
And His side.

Is there diadem, as Monarch,
That his brow adorns?
Yea, a crown, in very surety,
But—of thorns.

If I find him, if I follow,
What His guerdon here?
Many a sorrow, many a labour,
Many a tear.

If I still hold closely to Him,
What shall be at last?
Sor. ow vanquished, labour ended,
Jordan passed.

If I ask Him to receive me,
Will He say me nay?
Not till earth, and not till heaven
Pass away.

Finding, following, keeping, struggling,
Is He sure to bless?
Angels, martyrs, prophets, pilgrims,
Answer "Yes."

LESSON NOTES.

FIRST QUARTER.

REVIEW. (Mar. 25.)

GOLDEN TEXT.

And art built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.—Eph. 2. 20.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Christ has a visible church on the earth.

SUBJECT FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—Give one lesson to each of the scholars.

QUESTIONS.

SUBJECT: THE BIRTH OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

1. PREPARATIONS (Les. 1).—Who wrote the Book of the Acts? When and where was Jesus crucified? When did he arise again? What proofs are there that he arose from the dead? How long did he remain on the earth before his ascension? When did he ascend? What did they do after this? What two promises did Jesus make them?

2. THE BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH (Les. 2).—How long after the ascension was the day of Pentecost? Where were the disciples at this time? What happened? What were the effects? Who is the Holy Spirit? How did such effects follow his coming? How many were converted? Of what prophecy was this a fulfilment? Why may this be called the beginning of the Christian Church?

3. THE CHARACTER OF THE CHRISTIANS (Les. 3, 7).—What is it to be a Christian? What two things must we do to become Christians? How do repentance and faith make us better? What was the character of the early Christians? What is said of their benevolence? of their feelings toward God? of their daily lives? of their joy? of their worship? of their courage? of their abiding under the influence of the Holy Spirit?

4. THE WORKS OF THE CHRISTIANS (Les. 3, 4, 5, 7, 11).—What did they preach? What did they do with their property? What miracles did they do? What about their attendance at religious meetings? What did they suffer for Christ's sake? Give instances of faithfulness in speaking the truth to their enemies? Which one prayed for his enemies?

5. DANGERS FROM WITHIN (Les. 8, 10).—What two hypocrites crept into the Church? What did they do? What was their motive? How were they punished? What was the effect of this punishment? What division and partiality arose? Who complained? How was this danger overcome? Was it overcome in a Christian spirit? What good resulted?

6. DANGERS FROM WITHOUT (Les. 6, 7, 9, 10, 11).—Who were the first ones imprisoned

for the sake of the Gospel? Did it prevent them from preaching any more? Were they frightened? What did they say to their persecutors? For what did they pray? How were they released at one time? Who was the first martyr? How was he killed? By whom? How did God show his approval of him? What persecution arose after this? Did it prevent the spread of the Gospel?

7. RESULTS.—Over how many years of the Church do this quarter's lessons extend? How many disciples were there at the beginning? What is said of their numbers now? What was the effect of their trials? To what city had the Church hitherto been chiefly confined?

SECOND QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

A. D. 37.] **LESSON I.** [April. 1.]

SIMON THE SORCERER.

Acts 8. 14-25. Commit to memory verses 20-23.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Thy heart is not right in the sight of God.—Acts 8. 21.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Only the faith that changes the heart makes true Christians.

TIME.—Early summer of A. D. 37. Not long after the last lesson.

PLACE.—Samaria. The exact city unknown, perhaps Sychar or Samaria.

RULERS.—Caligula, emperor of Rome. Vitellius, governor of Syria. No governor over Judea, Pilate having been removed. Jonathan was high-priest.

SIMON MAGUS, i.e., the Magician or Sorcerer.—Probably born in Citium in the island of Cyprus. He pretended to be a great prophet and to do wonders. He probably had a knowledge of natural science, and used it as fortune-tellers, and sleight-of-hand performers, and spiritual mediums do now.

CIRCUMSTANCES.—This Simon was producing a great sensation in Samaria, when the persecution which arose after the martyrdom of Stephen drove the Christians into the countries surrounding Judea, and Philip the deacon went into Samaria and preached. Great numbers were converted, and among them was Simon Magus, who was baptized as a convert.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—14. *They sent Peter and John*—To endorse the movement, to help it on, and to see that the Samaritans were true converts. The Jews hated the Samaritans, so that there was great prejudice to be overcome. 15. *Receive the Holy Ghost*—i.e., not the ordinary influences, but such as appeared at Pentecost, some visible power of tongues, or healing, or experience to fit them for their work in spreading the gospel. 20. *Thy money perish with thee*—Not a curse or wish of evil, but a statement of fact, that Simon was lost if he kept such a heart as he had. *The gift of God, etc.*—This was a total misunderstanding of the nature of God's gift. 22. *Repent*—There is hope for the worst of sinners if they repent. *If perhaps*—But there is danger that they will not repent. 23. *In the gall of bitterness*—The bitterest of the bitter. The gall was the seat of venom in poisonous serpents. Such is the bitterness of sin. *In the bond of iniquity*—i.e., chained and fettered by sin. 24. *Then answered Simon*—Simon was sorry for his danger, not for his sin.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—Philip.—Simon.—Sorcery.—The Gospel among the Samaritans.—Why the gift of God cannot be purchased.—The gall of bitterness.—Simon's request.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—What was the chief event of our last regular lesson? What followed? (8. 1). How did this lead to the spread of the gospel? (8. 4). To what places was the gospel carried? (8. 1; 9. 2).

SUBJECT: TRUE AND FALSE CONVERSION CONTRASTED.

1. **FIRST CONTRAST,—OF MEN.**—Who carried the gospel to Samaria? (8. 5). To what city? Was this Philip the Apostle? Who was it? What do you know about him? Who had been to this city of Samaria before him? (8. 9). What can you tell about this Simon? What is a Sorcerer? What effect had he had upon the Samaritans? What was the result of Philip's preaching? Was Simon

among the converts? What did Simon believe? (8. 13). Was he a true Christian? What was the matter with his faith? (James 2. 19, 20).

2. **SECOND CONTRAST,—OF WORKS** (vs. 14-17). What kind of works had Simon done in this city of Samaria? Did they do any good, or help any one, or make any one better? What kind of works did Jesus do through Philip? (8. 7). Are these works worthy of true religion? Is this contrast of works a good example of the different effects of false and true religions? Who were sent from Jerusalem to Samaria? Why? What great prejudices did they have to overcome? (John 4. 9). How had John once felt toward these Samaritans? (Luke 9. 52-55). What did Peter and John impart to them? Had they not received the ordinary influence of the Spirit? (John 3. 3, 5). What more did they now obtain? (Acts 2. 1-4, 17, 21). What word in verse 18 shows that there was some visible manifestation? What two things did the apostles do in imparting this gift? Was the gift theirs? How will it be manifested in us? Can we have the gift of the Holy Ghost?

3. **THIRD CONTRAST,—OF HEARTS** (vs. 18-25). What did Simon ask of Peter and John? What was his motive? What was Peter's reply? Was this a curse on Simon, or a statement of fact? Why cannot the gift of God be purchased? How did this question show that Simon's heart was not right? What was it to be "in the gall of bitterness"? "in the bond of iniquity"? How might even Simon be forgiven? Why does Peter say "if perhaps"? What was Simon's reply? Did he truly repent? When is the heart right in the sight of God? What did the apostles do on their way home?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. The wonders of false religion are such as to excite astonishment; those of Christ's religion do good.
2. Bad men think all others are as false hearted as they.
3. The false convert still seeks himself in his religion. The true convert seeks God and the good of his fellow men.
4. The best things, as love, faith, salvation, truth, cannot be purchased.
5. The fruits of sin are exceedingly bitter.
6. There is an unpardonable sin, because there is a sin that will not be repented of.
7. False repentance is sorrow for the sufferings of sin. True repentance is sorrow for the sin.

REVIEW EXERCISES. (For the whole School in Concert).

1. How far had the gospel now been preached? **ANS.** As far as Samaria.
2. Who appeared among the converts there? **ANS.** Simon the Sorcerer.
3. Who were sent to them from Jerusalem? **ANS.** Peter and John, that they might receive the Holy Ghost.
4. What did Simon ask them? **ANS.** That he might buy the power of imparting this gift.
5. What did this show? **ANS.** That Simon was not truly converted.
6. In what three ways was this shown? **ANS.** (1) He did not understand true religion; (2) He still lived for selfish ends; (3) He was sorry, not for sin, but only for the suffering from sin.

Cuddle Doon, My Bairnie.

Cuddle doon, my bairnie,
Sleep ye soun', my bairnie,
While I croon, my bairnie,
A wee bit sang to thee,
Cozy nap, my bairnie,
In my lap, my bairnie,
Nae mishap, my bairnie,
Ever need'at thou dreu.

Sleepin' noo, my bairnie,
Bonnie doo, my bairnie,
Could I lo'e my bairnie
Dearer than I dae,
Lay ye do n, my bairnie,
An' aroun', my bairnie,
Ane aboon, my bairnie,
Safely watch o'er thee.

—*Georgina J. Gordon.*

THE man or woman who teaches a Sunday-school class without being able to bear personal witness that Jesus is the Saviour of sinners must feel, at times at least, a keen sense of incongruity, or do very shallow thinking.

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