

LESSON NOTES.

FIRST QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE ACTS AND EPISTLES.

A.D. 45.] LESSON IV. [Jan. 27

LIVING IN GOD'S LIGHT.

James 1: 7-17. Commit to memory vs 18-25.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.—Jas 4. 10.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

God dwells in those who draw near to him.

TIME, PLACE, &c.—Same as last lesson.

INTRODUCTION.—St. James continues his practical advice as to the way in which Christians should live. The evils, against which he has warned us in the last lesson, can be cured by living near to God.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES. 7. Submit yourselves.—As loyal subjects of his kingdom, to his laws, to his will as wise and good.—Resist the devil—Satan cannot enter any heart without his permission. Any person can successfully resist him. 8. Draw nigh to God.—By conscious love and service, by seeking to please him, by prayer and communion.—Cleanse your hands—i.e., have your deeds clean and good, only so can you draw nigh to God. Double-minded—Un- decided, unfixed in choice to do right, and therefore exposed to temptation. 9. Be afflicted.—For your sins. 11. Judge his brother.—Forms an unfavourable opinion, imputes unworthy motives, puts the wrong construction on what he does. Speaketh out of the law—the great law of love. In the name of the law he violates the very spirit of the law, and so brings it into disrepute. Judge the law—Decides what the law means, referring to questionable matters, as of forms and ceremonies, on which even good men may differ. Not a doer of the law—Your speaking evil of your brother is a worse violation of the law than is the act which you condemn. 13. Go to now—As we say, "Come now. Ye ought to say, If the Lord will—God only knows what is wisest and best, and therefore the Christian commits all his ways into his hands.

SCRIPTURES FOR SPECIAL REPORTS. Submitting to God—What it is to be near to God—How to draw nigh unto God. Judging others—How such judge the law. Why they are not doers of the law—Ye are a vapour—"If the Lord will," etc.

QUESTIONS.

SUBJECT: LIVING NEAR TO GOD.

I. WHAT IT IS TO LIVE NEAR TO GOD (vs 7-8).—What is the first command in these verses? What is it to submit to God? How will it help us to live near to God? Who is the great opposer to our living near to God? How may we escape his power? What is the third command in these verses? What is it to draw nigh to God? How may we do it? What will God then do for us? What texts teach us about God's abiding with us? (John 14: 16, 17, 23; 15: 1, 10, Rev. 3: 20.)

II. THE WAY TO LIVING NEAR TO GOD (vs. 8-10).—What is the character of God? (Isa. 6: 3; 1 John 4: 7, 8.) How does he feel toward sin? (Psalm 5: 4, 5, 45: 7.) What therefore must we do first in order to live near to God? (v. 8.) What was the first preaching of John and of Christ? (Matt. 3: 2; 4: 17.) What is meant by "cleansing the hands"? How may we purify our hearts? Who are double minded? For what should we be afflicted and mourn? What is the way to be exalted in goodness and joy? (v. 10; Matt. 23: 12.) Why are repentance and humility necessary before we can live near to God?

III. FRUITS OF LIVING NEAR TO GOD (vs. 11-17).

(1) Right Treatment of our Neighbour.—Why should we not speak evil of our neighbour? What is meant here by "judging his brother"? How do those that so do speak evil of the law? How is it true that those who speak evil of others are not doers of the law? What law do they break? (Matt. 5: 43-45; 22: 39; Gal. 5: 14.)

(2) Trust in God's Guidance.—How do some speak of their plans for the future? Why is this wrong? How should they speak? Is it always best to want to do the Lord's will? Why? Will God guide in the wisest and best way all who commit their ways unto him? (Prov. 3: 5, 6.)

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

4. Yielding ourselves to God as our Lord is to become a part of his kingdom, to be sustained and defended by all the infinite wisdom, love, and power of the King of kings.

2. The place of happiness, of usefulness, of safety, is near to God.

3. We may be near to God by sympathy, love, working for the same ends, having the same character, by prayer and communion.

4. God helps us to live near to him, by his ordinances, by the Scriptures, by meditation, by the Sabbath and its services, by private devotions, by doing all for his glory.

5. We cannot live near to God without casting away the evil that is hateful in his sight.

6. Those who are near to God will speak and act kindly toward their neighbours.

REVIEW EXERCISE. (For the whole School in concert.)

15. How ought we to live? Ans. Near to God. 16. What must we do to reach this blessing? Ans. Repent of our sins, and put away all evil. 17. What is said of the humble? Ans. (Repeat the Golden Text.) 18. How will those who live near to God treat others? Ans. They will speak kindly of them. 19. How will they act toward God? Ans. They will acknowledge him in all their ways.

A.D. 50.] LESSON V. [Feb. 3

PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY.

Acts 16: 55-41, and 16: 1-10. Commit to memory verses 9, 10.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

Acts 16: 9.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

The progress of the Gospel through imperfect instruments.

TIME.—Paul started on his second missionary tour in the autumn of A.D. 50.

PAUL. Aged about 48.

PARALLEL PASSAGE.—Gal. 4: 13-15; with v. 6.

THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY.—(1) From Antioch. (2) From A.D. 50-53, three or four years. (3) His first visit to Europe, extending to Athens and Corinth in Greece. (4) The two Epistles to the Thessalonians were written from Corinth on this tour.

INTRODUCTION.—We now return to the regular course of the history where we left it in Lesson I. After the decision of the conference at Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch, with a delegation from Jerusalem bearing the letter of the Church.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—35. Antioch.

—Of Syria, 300 miles north of Jerusalem. 36. Some days. Probably a few months. 37. Barnabas determined.—Made up his mind. John—Mark.—Cousin of Barnabas. (Col. 4: 10.) A native of Jerusalem. His mother's name was Mary (Acts 12: 12) 38. Paul thought not good, etc.—On the first missionary journey Mark had started with them as a helper, but left them just as they were entering the dangerous part of their journey and was most needed. Paul would not risk this again, (1) because it was a longer and more dangerous journey (2) He may have had premonitions of that sickness which detained him in Galatia not long after this. 40. Paul chose Silas.—Shortened form of Silvanus, one of the men who came with Paul from Jerusalem. 41. He went through Syria.—He started north from Antioch in Syria, through northern Syria to Cilicia, then around the head of the gulf and west to Tarsus. Confirming the churches.—(1) By the decrees of Jerusalem, (2) by new instructions; (3) by inspiring new zeal and courage, (4) by news of the great progress of the Gospel. 1. Derbe.—The farthest point east of the first tour, and hence the first reached in coming by the opposite route. Timothy.—Timothy. His mother was Eunice, his grandmother, Lois. A native of Lystra. Converted on Paul's first tour; instructed in the Scriptures from a child (2 Tim 1: 5, 3: 15) 4. Delivered.—the decrees.—See Lesson I. 6. Galatia.—Here Paul was taken sick, probably with his "thorn in the flesh," the Oriental disease of the eyes. (See Gal 4: 13-15.) 8. Passing by Mysia.—i.e., going through it without stopping to preach. Troas.—The old city of Troy, rendered famous by Homer; the seaport of the Hellespont.—9.

A man of Macedonia—A vision, or an angel, known to be Macedonian by his appearance, dress, and words. Macedonia—A famous country north of Greece.

SCRIPTURES FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—Paul's contention with Peter (Gal. 2: 11-13)—With Barnabas—Was he right?—John Mark—The second missionary journey; its time; its extent—Timothy, establishing the churches—Paul's sickness in Galatia—The call to Macedonia.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—To what part of the history of the Apostles do we now return? What was done at the conference at Jerusalem? What letter was sent back with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch? (15: 23-29) Who were appointed to accompany them? (15: 22.) Which one of them remained at Antioch?

SUBJECT: THE PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL.

I. THROUGH IMPERFECT INSTRUMENTS (vs. 35-39).—How many contentions did Paul have with his brethren about this time? What was the first one? (Acts 15: 1, 2.) Was Paul right in this? What contention with another apostle followed soon after? (Gal. 2: 11-14.) What was the occasion of the third contention? What plan did Paul propose? Whom did Barnabas want to take with them? What may have been one reason? (Col. 4: 10, "sister's son" here should be "cousin.") Why did Paul oppose this? When did this failure of Mark's occur? (Acts 13: 13.) Was Paul right in rejecting Mark? What was the result of the contention? What was Paul's fault in these contentions? Was he a wonderfully good and useful man for all this? What was Barnabas' fault? Was he a good man? What was Mark's fault? Did he overcome it? Did Paul come to love and honour him? (Col. 4: 10, 11, 2 Tim. 4: 11.) Why does the Bible record these imperfections in Christians? Would they have appeared great faults in ordinary men? Should we ever look at the faults without also seeing their victory over them? What do you think of people who imitate the faults of good and great men, and not their virtues?

II. BY ESTABLISHING CHRISTIANS IN THE FAITH (vs. 40, 41; 1: 7).—When did Paul's second missionary journey begin? How long after the first? Who went with him? From what city did they start? In what direction? Trace out their journey. In what three ways did they establish the churches? (vs. 4, 5.) What promising young man did they find at Lystra? Give some account of Timothy. What in his early training fitted him for his life-work? (2 Tim 1: 5; 3: 14-17.) What had he been doing for Christ? How did this fit him for his great work, and open the door to it? What happened to Paul in Galatia? (Gal. 4: 13-15.) Can people even in feeble health do much for the Lord?

III. BY THE CALL TO NEW WORK (vs. 8: 10).—How had the apostles been guided? Are difficulties and hindrances a proof that God wants us to do something else? Where was Troas? What vision appeared here? How did Paul know that it was a man of Macedonia? What was the call? How did Paul interpret it? Is there a call to us from the heathen? How should we answer it? Why? Is there a call to any other work?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

- 1. God uses even imperfect instruments in carrying on his work.
2. The faults of Paul would seem trivial in ordinary people; and seem great only in contrast with his radiant goodness.
3. The blessedness of early training in the Scriptures.
4. Faithfulness in small things prepares us for greater.
5. Teachers should aim not only at converting the impenitent, but establishing the converted.
6. God often shuts us out from some good works we desire, only to lead us to greater.
7. The whole world is calling, "Come over and help us."

REVIEW EXERCISE.—(For the whole School in concert.)

1. What did Paul now begin? Ans. His second great missionary tour. 2. How long did this tour last? Ans. Three or four years, A.D. 50-53. 3. Where did it extend? Ans. Over Asia Minor, and into Europe. 4. Who went with Paul? Ans. Silas, and, after a time, Timothy. 5. What led them into Europe? Ans. (Repeat v. 9.)

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Became a Captain.
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