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BEREAN NOTES. A. D. 33.] LESSON VIII. Acts 4. 23-37.

May 21.] CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP.

HOME READINGS. MONDAY-The Lesson. Acts 4. 23-37. TUESDAY-The open gate. Acts 12.1-17. WEDNESDAY-" Great power." Eph. 6.

THURSDAY-" One body." 1 Cor. 12. FRIDAY—"Of one heart." 1 Cor. 13.1-13. SATURDAY—" Love one another." John

SUNDAY-"Lay down our lives." 1 John

What lesson may we here learn about-1. Our company ? 2. Our prayers ? 3. Our gifts ?

4. Our work ?

DOCTRINE: Christian unity. John 17. 20, 21; Rom. 12. 5; Gal. 3. 28; Psa. 133. 13; Col. 3. 12-15; 2 Cor. 13. 11; Eph. 4, 5, 6, 13-16; 1 Cor. 12. 12, 13, 25-27 Phil. 2, 3, 4; Matt. 12. 25; Rom. 16. 7; 1

TOPIC :- Loving Fellowship in the Church of Christ.

GOLDEN TEXT :- We, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one memhers one of another. Rom. 12. 5.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

The issue between the infant Church and the powerful Sanhedrim is in the last esson fairly joined. The council had commanded silence, and the apostles had unequivocally refused. The victory thus far was with Peter and John, but their situation was full of peril. Our lesson describes the next scene under the TITLE of Christian Fellowship, which the TOPIC sets forth as Loving Fellowship in the Church of Christ. The GOLDEN TEXT gives the ground and reason of this fellowship:

We, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.' The OUTLINE presents its Fruits as fourfold: 1. "Fraternal sympathy;" 2. "United prayer;" 3. "Abundant blessing;" 4. "Generous distribution." And then the whole is summed up as teaching the DOCTRINE of Christian Unity.

23. Being Let Go. Released by the Sanhedrim, Peter and John returned at once to their brethren, the other apostles and the Christians who were with them. The place was probably the upper room of chap. 1. 13. their usual place of meeting for prayer. They told in sympathetic ears the story of the arrest, the investigation, the noble confession, the commanded silence, the threats, and the refusal. It was a momentous hour. They were all in personal danger. The cause of Jesus was in danger. But no one proposes that they is entire devotion. They do not for a moment think their Lord will be defeated; but they, his servants, feel the need of reinforcement, and they will carry the whole case to him in prayer. Nothing better

could possibly have been done. 24. ONE ACCORD. All hearts uniting in the prayer offered by one of their number, perhaps by Luke himself, as Whedon's Com. suggets. It is full of deep feeling. It (1) confesses God's greatness, (2) enters its complaint, and (3) presents its request. He who created HEAVEN and EARTH and ALL IN THEM of whatever character, is the Omnipotent God. If he MADE them, he is supreme over them, and can control them. It is very fitting that his tried servants should appeal to him for help.

25. Who.....said. In Psa. 2. 1, 2, quoted verbatim from the Septuagint. The psalm was always applied to the Messiah. It represents Jehovah as having a plan of exalting the Messiah, his Son, to the kingdom of the world, and the plans of earthly powers attempting to defeat his purpose, which God laughs at and derides. The Omnipotent Creator is never taken by surprise. He saw beforehand this very opposition. HEATHEN. Nations. RAGE. Like a mob. IMAGINE. Meditate, devise. VAIN THING. A useless, ineffectual project. As though man could succeed against God, though he may seem to do

so for a season! 26. Kings and Rulers are represented as united in consultation and opposition to Jehovah and HIS CHRIST. Christ in Greek, Messiah in Hebrew, and anointed in

English are equivalents. 27. Anointed. At his baptism, by the descent of the Holy Spirit upon his human soul, consecrating him to his threefold office of prophet, priest, and king, chap. 10. 38. On one side was God, who anointed him; on the other were Herod, Pilate, the Romans and the Jews, GATHERED TO-GETHER AGAINST him at Jerusalem at his crucifixion. They were as if in a conspiracy to oppose and crush him, and they killed him. This was the beginning of the fulfillment of the prediction of opposition and persecution. The Sanhedrim were continuing it, and the world's war on Jesus

has not yet ceased. 28. For to Do. As in chap. 2. 23, (see Lesson III,) we must distinguish between God's acts and men's acts. God in his infinite love determined to give his Son, as an anointed high-priest, to offer up himthe world, 1 Pet. 1. 19. 20. This was they should kill him, or rage against him, interest paid.

or that he should die in that way. They in their hate brought about his death, and so really accomplished God's plan of mercy, but not in God's way. He could have prevented their acts by destroying them. So he overrules the wickedness of

29, 30. The case is stated, and now they ask God to look upon the THREATENINGS of their persecutors. They do not ask for the destruction of their foes, or their own safety from harm, or release from their commission. They are ready for the cross and for death. Their prayer is simply for divine help to SPEAK the truth with unflinching BOLDNESS, while God is exerting his power in healing and other miracles through the NAME OF JESUS. They sought new strength for the new emer-

31. Place was shaken. A physical token that the Omnipotent was come to their help. FILLED. A new and mightier baptism of the Spirit than that of the Pentecost fell upon their souls. This was the answer to their prayer. The Holy Spirit so filled them with heavenly love, and so inspired and strengthened them, that they were at once lifted to the holy courage that could face the fearful storm.

32. This second baptism was upon the whole body of believers as well, making them of ONE HEART and ONE SOUL-one in love and purpose, in feeling and will This was a new experience. NEITHER SAID. After the Pentecost the wealthier freely gave, chap. 2. 45; but now they do not claim their goods as their own, although they still truly own them. Such was the power of love, suddenly making five thousand ONE.

33. GREAT POWER. In preaching. Notwithstanding threats, they continued to make the RESURRECTION OF JESUS the emphatic fundamental fact. GREAT GRACE. 'A specimen of that grace which our Lord had asked for believers, when he had prayed that his disciples, and those who would believe on him through their word, might be perfected in one."-Fletcher. John 17. 17, 23,

34, 35. SOLD. As necessity arose, a part or the whole of their real estate, just as they chose, and voluntarily gave the proceeds to be DISTRIBUTED among the needy by the apostles.

36, 37. JOSES. Joseph. BARNABAS. Called in chap. 13. 1, a prophet and teacher, and in chap. 14. 14, an apostle. He was a foreign Jew, born in the island of CYPRUS, and the first LEVITE mentioned as believobey and be silent; no one wavers. They ing in Jesus. His LAND was probably in forget self and think of their Lord. This | Cyprus. He became an eminent minister

> Lessons. 1. How much better in every way is the company of the friends of Jesus than that of his enemies. John 1. 41. 42; Ruth 1, 16; Deut. 7. 2, 3; Heb. 11. 24-26; Phil. 3. 18, 19. 2. Let us learn to carry every need and every trouble to the great God. He may not always remove them, but he will help us in the best way, and will surely give us his Holy Spirit. 2 Cor. 12. 8, 9; Phil. 4. 6, 7; Eph. 6. 18. 3. Giving of our substance for the cause of Jesus is easy and pleasant when it springs from a heart of love. 2 Cor. 9. 6-8; Phil. 5. 15. 16; 1 Cor. 16. 1, 2; Rom. 15. 26; 1 Chron. 29. 3. 6. 9. 17. 4. United prayer always brings souls together, and when love makes them one they are mighty for every good word and work. Acts 1.14; 2.42; 12.5.7.12; Col. 3.16.

The old Jerusalem was laid waste by war, and the ruins are overlaid with dust and desolation.

But the New Jerusalem shall never crumble down. The jasper battlements shall stand and shine forever. The golden gates shall never lose their lustre, nor rust upon their portals. The white robes shall never need cleansing, for they are washed in the blood of the Lamb. The harps of heaven shall always be in tune, and never be swept by dirges. No failing eyesight, no gray hairs, no weary limbs, no wrinkled brows, no hollow cheeks;-no sickness, pain nor any more death. Oh

blessed prospect!
The full glory draweth nigh!—Methodist

Norman M'Leod was once preaching in a district in Ayrshire, where the reading of a sermon is regarded as the greatest fault of which the minister can be guilty. When the congregation dispersed, an old woman, overflowing with enthsiasm, addressed her neighbor: "Did you ever hear ony thing sae gran? Wasna that a sermon?" But all her expressions of admiration being met by a stolid glance, she shouted. "Speak, woman! wasna that a sermon?" "Oh, ay," replied her friend, sulkily, "but he read it." "Read it?" said the other, with indignant emphasis," I wadna hae cared if he had whustled

The wife of George I. Amsdell a wealthy Albany brewer, obtained a divorce from him in 1870. She was granted \$40,000 alimony, of which \$20,000 was paid in cash and the rest in mortgage. In 1874 they were re-married, and the wife gave back the mortgage. In 1876 they were ready to part again. The wife began a suit to recover the mortgage. Mr. John T. Hoffman was made a referee in the case, and he has decided that the second marriage self as a sacrifice and die for the sins of was null and void, as Mr. Amedeli had no right to marry again while his divorced wife lived. Therefore a new mortgage God's plan. But he did not decree that must be given to her and the arrearage of

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WALLACE PHINNEY, J.P.

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