

great Master's body ! Those men are making trouble. They stir up strife, and to quiet it, Paul and Barnabas say, "We will go up to Jerusalem." They have gone, all day riding on their patient mules toward the holy city. They reach Samaria. They may be slowly riding through its streets at the dusky twilight-hour, wondering where they may pass the night. Is that the house of some Gaius they are nearing ? And there he stands in the very door, his heart as open as his door, crying with outstretched hands, "Come in, ye blessed of the Lord !" Precious is Christian hospitality ! And if the Church came together that night, the Stephens, the Marks, the Marthas, the Maries of Samaria, what kindling of zeal in their faces and a still warmer glow in their hearts, as the apostles told of the wonderful conversion of the Gentiles ! Jerusalem next ! How home-like its streets,

and how many homes opened wide their doors to let the beloved of the Lord come in ! Now step into this gathering of the Church that, electrified by the good news of salvation for all, talk next of that miserable little circumcision question. Look around. That man with the cool, deliberate, practical face, of course, is James. The brother who seems to be looking afar, with the face of the seer, the poet, the philanthropist, must be John. And the man who is now getting up to speak, the brother that feels quick, talks quick, acts quick, with a good deal of heart underneath, if there may not be always the coolest head above, is—Peter. A warm heart and a wise head, though, are in this grand utterance concerning circumcised and uncircumcised. "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they." Brave-hearted, broad-minded Peter !

A. D. 50.]

LESSON II.—HEARING AND DOING.

[Jan. 13.]

James 1. 16-27.

Go! Work!

16 Do not err, my beloved brethren.

17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with a whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

a Num. 23. 19; Mal. 3. 6.

18 Of *b* his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that they should be a kind of first-fruits *c* of his creatures.

b John 1. 13; 1 Cor. 4. 15; 1 Peter 1. 23.—*c* Jer. 2. 3; Rev. 14. 4.

19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath :

20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the ingrafted word, *d* which is able to save your souls.

d Acts 13. 26; Rom. 1. 16; 1 Cor. 15. 2; Eph. 1. 13; Titus 2. 11; Heb. 2. 3; 1 Peter 1. 9.

22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

23 For *e* if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass :

e Luke 6. 47.

24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

25 But *f* whose looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this *g* man shall be blessed in his *a* deed.

f 2 Cor. 3. 18.—*g* John 13. 17.—*a* Or, doing.

26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and brideth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To *h* visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

h Isa. 1. 16; 1 Tim. 1. 5.—*i* Rom. 12. 2.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

Among the three pillars of the Apostolic Church (Gal. 2. 9.) beside the ardent Peter and the thoughtful John, looms up the solemn and stately form of James the Just. He was held in reverence as the son of Joseph and Mary, and therefore "the Lord's brother," as the leader of the Church in Jerusalem, and above all as the disciple of unbending rectitude and faithful obedience to the law. We are told that his knees were calloused from bowing in prayer, that he ever wore the white garments of a priest, that he abode day and night in the temple praying for his people, and that he was honoured for his purity and devotion by unbelieving as well as believing Jews. Though the recognized leader of the Jewish element in early Christianity, he was broad enough in his views to endorse the work of Paul among the Gentiles. To the Jews throughout the world who had received Jesus as the Christ, and whom he recognized as the true "twelve tribes," he wrote this epistle. It presents duties of the Gospel, rather than its experience or its doctrines. It tells disciples what they are to do, what they are to be, the life to be lived, the work to be wrought. And its rebukes and exhortations came with all the greater impressiveness from one whose life was the pattern of all that he taught. In this section he bids his brethren remember the honour they bore as the first-fruits of the world's salvation, and calls upon them to avoid self-assertion, showing meekness in the reception of the word, rather than eagerness in proclaiming their own views of it. He bids them not only listen in the