

THE NEW YEAR.

"Fear thou not."—Isaiah. xii. 10.

STANDING at the portal of the opening year,
Words of comfort meet us, hushing every fear;
Spoken through the silence by our Father's voice,
Tender, strong, and faithful, making us rejoice.

I, the Lord, am with thee, be thou not afraid!
I will help and strengthen, be thou not dismayed;
Yea, I will uphold thee with My own right hand,
Thou art called and chosen in my sight to stand.

For the year before us, Oh, what rich supplies!
For the poor and needy, living streams shall rise;
For the sad and sinful shall His grace abound;
For the faint and feeble, perfect strength be found.

He will never fail us, He will not forsake!
His eternal covenant He will never break!
Resting on His promise, what have we to fear?
God is all-sufficient for the coming year!

Onward then, and fear not, children of the day!
For His word shall never, never pass away.
—F. R. Havergal.

FINDING EXCUSES.

THERE are certain people who look across the way at their neighbours and say: "If I were as well off as they, how I would help on with the work of the Gospel!" They then drop down to not helping at all, which also is their characteristic habit. There are others who take up a peevish disposition, and cultivate a kind of envy toward those who do more than themselves. The root of the difficulty with all such people is that they do not want to work, but try to find excuses for their idleness. If their hearts were in the cause of Christ, they would do what they could, which is all that he requires of any one, and, finding a pleasure in it, they would grow up into a disposition of brotherly communion with their fellow-workshippers, and experience the enjoyment of hearts free from jealousy.
—United Presbyterian.

LESSON NOTES.

A.D. 58.] LESSON III. [Jan. 18.

PAUL'S FAREWELL.

Acts 20. 28-38. Commit to memory vs. 32-36.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. Acts 20. 28.

OUTLINE.

1. The Counsel, v. 28-31.
2. The Commendation, v. 32.
3. The Appeal, v. 33-35.
4. The Parting, v. 36-38.

TIME.—A.D. 58, immediately following the last lesson.

PLACE.—Miletus, thirty-six miles from Ephesus.

EXPLANATIONS.—*Therefore*—Since I am innocent, and thus the blame would be chargeable to you. *Overseers*—Synonymous with superintendents. *Wolves*—False teachers. *Word of his grace*—The promise of the Gospel. *These hands*—Doubtless presenting his hands hardened by toil. *So labouring*—As I have done. *More blessed*—Bliss-giving. Whether Paul derived this saying, not preserved in the gospels, from oral or written tradition, remains undecided.

TEACHINGS OF THE LESSON.

- Where in this lesson are we taught—
1. The duty of self-examination?
 2. The need of guarding against error?

3. The duty of caring for the needs of others?

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

1. What did Paul charge the elders and their flock to do? "To feed the Church of God." 2. Of whom did Paul caution them? Of men speaking perverse things. 3. What is able to build us up? The word of God's grace. 4. What saying of Christ's did Paul press upon the elders? "It is more blessed to give than to receive." 5. At the conclusion of his farewell address to the elders what did Paul do? "He kneeled down, and prayed."

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The visible Church.

CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

143. May these various blessings be lost? Yes; believers may fail to believe and watch, they may cease to be diligent in duty, and thus may lose these blessings for ever. Hebrews x. 38.

[J. H. xv. 6. 1 Corinthians ix. 26, 27, 2 Pet. i. 9, iii. 14, 17.]

144. What benefits do Christ's people receive from Him at death?

Their souls immediately pass into the presence of the Lord, while their bodies rest in their graves till the resurrection. Philip. i. 23; 1 Thessalonians iv. 14.

[John v. 28, 29; 2 Corinthians v. 8.]

A.D. 58.] LESSON IV. [Jan. 25.

PAUL GOING TO JERUSALEM.

Acts. 21. 1-14. Commit to mem. vs. 12, 14.

GOLDEN TEXT.

The will of the Lord be done. Acts 21. 14.

OUTLINE.

1. The Voyage to Cesarea, v. 1-7.
2. Philip the Evangelist, v. 8, 9.
3. Agabus the Prophet, v. 10, 11.
4. Paul the Hero, v. 12-14.

TIME.—A.D. 58, in the spring.

PLACES.—Coos, Rhodes, and Cyprus, islands in the Mediterranean; Patara, a seaport of Lycia, in Asia Minor; Tyre, Ptolemais, and Cesarea, cities on the coast of Palestine.

EXPLANATIONS.—*Cyprus*—Sighted Cyprus. *Finding disciples*—Literally, "searching out the disciples." *Into Cesarea*—They came here, probably, to see Philip. *The evangelist*—Assistant missionary sent here and there to preach the Gospel. *Virgins*—Not nuns levited by a vow of celibacy. Their virginity is probably mentioned only as a reason for their being still at home. *Paul's girdle*, etc.—Binding his hands therewith after the Old Testament prophetic fashion. *Die... for Jesus*—They saw the danger, Paul the duty; they were moved by fear, he by love.

TEACHINGS OF THE LESSON.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. That prayer is a sure refuge in trouble?
2. That human sympathy often stands in the way of duty?
3. That love for Christ takes away the fear of death?

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

1. At what place did Paul stop next on his way to Jerusalem? At Tyre. 2. What did the disciples at Tyre say concerning Paul's journey to Jerusalem? They said he should not go. 3. What did the prophet Agabus say the Jews at Jerusalem would do to Paul? He said they would bind him. 4. What was Paul willing to suffer for the name of the Lord Jesus? He was willing to suffer death. 5. When Paul's companions could not induce him to give up his journey, what did they say? "The will of the Lord be done."

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The supreme authority of Christ.

CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

145. What benefits will Christ's people receive from Him at the resurrection?

Being raised up in glory, they shall be openly accepted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity. 1 Corinthians xv. 43. Matthew x. 32. 1 Thessalonians iv. 17. [Hebrews ix. 28; Matthew, xxv. 34.]

146. Who is the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is the third Person in the blessed Trinity, one in the Godhead with the Father and the Son. Mathew xxviii. 19.

"HURRY, mamma," said the little innocent with his cut finger, it's leaking."

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