

curréd while he was still quite young, but not before his name had begun to be on men's lips, it was remembered and often repeated that the one thing that cast a shadow on his bright handsome face, the one thing that made him fall silent and look stern, was an ugly bit of gossip or an uncharitable story repeated in his presence.

"If you wanted to shut him up and send him out of the house, that was the way to do it," said one of a little group speaking tenderly of him, as we do of the dead. Then another who was present answered—half shamefacedly, but struggling to be honest too—

"He was all you say; he was the only fellow I ever knew who never gave you a chance to do anything but look up to him; but he was very uncomfortable company, for you had to set a watch on the door of your lips when he was by."

But I who have been told this story have wondered sometimes how it would have been had Slander chanced to busy itself with the last speaker, and, in the raking of the mud, he had been bespattered? Would he not have been glad to know that in one pair of hands, at least, his reputation was safe, that in one breast suspicion would find no welcome?—Ah, it is all very well to join in the laugh against a brother or a sister, but when we are the victims the jest does not seem quite so merry; the arrows that we speed so lightly hurt unaccountably when my bosom or yours is the target. And is it to be supposed that we who are so ready to spy out every flaw in a comrade, to whisper the despairing word to belittle the good deed, are to escape scot-free? We have only to make our bow to the company and retire; when our turn comes our character is tossed in the arena, and we may consider ourselves lucky if it escapes with a few poor rags and tatters to cover its nakedness.

But the regular skirmishers, those who can give and take and hit back again when they are struck, are not those for whom we reserve our pity; rather we side with our non-combatants, the kindly, simple, harmless folk who wish ill to no one and do good to all, but who may yet be mortally wounded by an arrow drawn at a venture.

For this habit of detraction, so easily acquired, spares none, and punishes most severely those who least offend.

There is no habit which so quickly grows as this of detraction and disparagement; young folks think it clever, a sign of superiority to find nobody good enough for them. "Put in the wart," said Cromwell to the painter, but these youthful critics when they look on the artist's work see nothing but the blemish. Listen to them as they talk and laugh and giggle together. How they tear, not their friends and acquaintances only but strangers to pieces! This one is a fright, that other looks a fool, one displeases by his conversation, another by his silence; it will be the listener's turn next since nobody escapes. Where is Captain Charity, where is Ensign Pitiful, and where, alas! those ten thousand men who rallied under these leaders? If there were but hope of ten, where the despisers are gathered together: Mouth-gate might yet be saved.

The satirists—being mostly men—would have us believe that women are the chiefest thieves and robbers of reputation, but in truth the vice is sexless; it flourishes in clubland as it does at five o'clock tea in the drawing-room. A gossip of either sex grown old is hopeless; he will whisper and hint mysteriously, and wound anonymously to the end; but in fresh young hearts there is a chance for Captain Charity.

Once upon a time there was a young girl whom a wise person took to task for this grievous fault.

"My dear," said the kind old voice; "you have a very pretty wit and quite a distinguished gift of sarcasm." I have been watching you, and I have noticed that all your arrows speed home. You find it amusing now to be feared and dreaded, but one day perhaps you will wonder why it is that nobody loves you, that everybody shuns you and would rather run away than stay in the same room with you, and then, may be, you will wish that you had not made the world so lonely. We are not all as clever as you, but we have our little good points too, and most of us are trying humbly to do our duty, and be sure, my dear, that the stupidest of us is capable of being wounded and disheartened."

I think that maiden took that little sermon in good part and learned to make a friend of Captain Charity before she had quite depopulated her world. "We are none of us infallible," said Mark Pattison once, "not even the youngest of us." And so Mr. or Miss Censorious, isn't it just possible you may be mistaken sometimes, isn't there just a chance that you may ascribe the wrong motive, or pass the undeserved sentence, and might you not now and then give the victim the benefit of the doubt?

Captain Charity goes a long, long way further than this, he does not so much as let the doubt in; he thinks no evil, he hopes all things. He looks within, and he sees there a great many short-comings and failings, and he says, "Who am I that I should judge my brother? I am not here to condemn, but only to love, as I seek and desire myself to be loved, in spite of all that is unworthy in me." And he is gracious ever in deed as in speech, pitiful in act, ready to yield "cup-offerings of kindness" to the "little ones," the feeble and defenceless. One recalls in thinking of him the beautiful legend of St. Christopher, who sought to serve the greatest king upon earth, and was told by the hermit to use his strength in carrying the weak and helpless over a mountain torrent; and how he obeyed and for a long time was the servant of all in need, and how there came one night a little child to the river's brim and begged to be taken across. And when the river, which raged as never before, was over-passed, it was revealed to him that he had borne, in the guise of a little one, the Lord Christ himself.

Ah! be sure we shall be thankful for our St. Christopher's chivalrous aid before the day is done for us. He may be too strict for us when we are young, "uncomfortable company," setting a restraint on our lips, forbidding the thoughtless word, the light sneer, the unkind surmise, but shall we scoff at him for a prig or a Puritan when it is our turn to be assailed and he springs up to defend us? Will he then seem too kind, too long suffering, too tender of our reputation? Shall we not wish we had set him over Mouth-gate long ago before we learned to wield the bow so dexterously, to fling our stones so accurately that we hit friend and foe alike, and have turned our world into a battlefield where every hand draws the sword against us?

One thing must be noticed before we bid the brave silver-clad Captain farewell. Do not suppose he condones wrong-doing because he shuts the door of his lips and will not magnify the evil by spreading it? There is in the same story of which he is one of the heroes a certain Mr. False-Peace, whose father's name was Flatter, and whose mother was a Sooth-up. This gentleman liked everything comfortable and pleasant about him; he did not hate sin, not he, he was willing to wink at anything so long as there was no fuss made, nobody's temper ruffled, nobody's digestion spoiled; he would re-christen wrong and call it right if it made things smoother and more agreeable for every body; he was all for quiet and outward respectability, for taking no notice of little unpleasantnesses, for hushing up unquiet reports and putting a fair mask on an ugly face.

There are a good many of his descendants going about the world (they call themselves Peace now), and some of them claim kinship with Captain Charity. But that brave soldier and honest man will have no dealings with them, for though he suffers long it is the sinner he bears with and not the sin; with that he is ever at mortal enmity, witness the great slaughter of the invader's army at Eye-gate and Ear-gate. Set him in charge of Mouth-gate, and he will win the day there for us too.

Not with the archer's bow and sling, not with the arrows or sharp stones of bitter words; his weapons are other than these. Love, patience, pity, humility, the single mind, the pure heart. Without this—the whole armour of God—no victory is possible. With it, what may not be achieved?

IT IS A MERE MOCKERY to ask us to put down drunkenness by moral and religious means when the Legislature facilitates the multiplication of the incitements to intemperance on every hand.—*Cardinal Manning*.

INFANT CLASS COLLECTION.

As teachers, we should teach our scholars to give, and to give regularly. They should all be encouraged to bring their penny, or more, if able, each Sunday. In the primary class it would be well to have the little ones march up and deposit their pennies in a box at the desk, or the teacher may mark the collection of each in her book, or both may be done. In many primary classes the collection is sadly neglected. Scholars are not even asked if they brought a contribution. Indeed, in most classes, the collection is meagre. This is not as it should be, or as it had best be. All that it needs is attention, and the result will be a much larger fund for the needs of the school.

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From Westminster Question Book.)

LESSON IX.—AUGUST 28, 1892.

THE FIRST CHRISTIAN MARTYR.—Acts 7: 51-50; 8: 1-1.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 57-60.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"He kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."—Acts 7: 60.

HOME READINGS.

M. Acts 6: 1-15.—The Seven Chosen.
T. Acts 7: 1-29.—Stephen's Defence.
W. Acts 7: 30-53.—Stephen's Defence Continued.
Th. Acts 7: 51-60; 8: 1-1.—The First Christian Martyr.
F. Rev. 2: 1-11.—Faithful Unto Death.
S. 2 Cor. 4: 1-18.—Unto Death for Jesus' Sake.
S. 2 Tim. 4: 1-18.—Ready to be Offered.

LESSON PLAN.

I. The Martyr's Vision. vs. 51-56.
II. The Martyr's Death. vs. 57-60.
III. The Martyr's Burial. vs. 1-4.
TIME.—Probably May, A.D. 37; about Pentecost. Caligula emperor of Rome; no governor at Jerusalem. Pilate having been deposed; Vitellius governor of Syria; Herod Antipas governor of Galilee and Perea.
PLACE.—Jerusalem. The trial at the hall of the Sanhedrin, in the temple area; the martyrdom in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, to the east of the city.

OPENING WORDS.

The apostles boldly continued their work in the temple and from house to house. As the number of believers increased the work of caring for the poor became more laborious. To meet the necessities of the case seven men were selected and set apart to this work. Soon the persecuting spirit was again aroused. Stephen, one of the seven, was arrested and brought before the council. False charges were brought against him. He defended himself in a masterly speech, at the close of which he sternly charged their sins upon the rulers. Our lesson passage pictures the terrible scene of wrath and brutal vengeance that followed.

HELPS IN STUDYING.

53. When they heard these things—the terrible charges in verses 51-53. Cut to the heart—very angry. 55. Saw the glory of God—some glorious manifestation of God's presence. Jesus—his divine, glorified Master. 56. Standing—elsewhere he is represented as sitting; here he has risen, and is standing to help and welcome his suffering servant. 57. Stopped their cars—as if horrified by his words. 58. Cast him out of the city—they were forbidden to have executions in the city. Stoned him—without pronouncing sentence upon him, in a savage, mob-like manner. The witnesses—the law required them to cast the first stones; so they laid aside their outer garments to give freedom to their movements. Saul—here first mentioned, now everywhere known as the apostle Paul. 59. Calling upon God—Revised Version, "calling upon the Lord." That is the Lord Jesus. Compare these dying prayers and Christ's, Luke 23: 34, 46. 60. Fell asleep—calm and peaceful; as in an easy bed. Ch. 8: 1. Consenting—giving his approval. At that time—Revised Version, "at that day." Except the apostles—who stayed at Jerusalem; doubtless by divine direction.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Who was Stephen? On what charge was he arrested? Before whom was he brought? What false testimony was given against him? How did he defend himself? Title of this lesson? Golden Text? Lesson Plan? Time? Place? Memory verses?

I. THE MARTYR'S VISION. vs. 51-56.—What effect had Stephen's words on the council? How did they show their rage? What vision was granted to Stephen? Why is it said that he was full of the Holy Ghost? Why was Jesus represented as standing?

II. THE MARTYR'S DEATH. vs. 57-60.—What did they do when they heard Stephen's words? Of what crime did they hold him guilty? How was blasphemy punished? Lev. 24: 14. Who was Stephen stoned? Why were the witnesses present? Deut. 17: 6, 7. Who took charge of their clothes? To whom did Stephen pray? What was his first prayer? His second? Who offered similar prayers? How is his death described?

III. THE MARTYR'S BURIAL. ch. 8: 1-4.—What followed the death of Stephen? What became of the church? Who remained in Jerusalem? Why did they remain? By whom was Stephen buried? Who was active in the persecution? What measures did he take? How was the persecution overruled for good?

PRACTICAL LESSONS LEARNED.

1. The indwelling of the Holy Ghost is the true source of Christian strength and power.
2. Saints on earth sometimes get a glimpse of heaven's glory.
3. Jesus ever watches over his disciples, and is ready to help.
4. The Christian never dies, but falls asleep to awake in heaven.

REVIEW QUESTIONS.

1. By what vision was Stephen strengthened for a martyr's death? Ans. He saw the heavens opened and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.
2. What did his enemies do? Ans. They cast him out of the city and stoned him.
3. What was his prayer for himself? Ans. Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.
4. How did he pray for his murderers? Ans. Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.
5. What followed this prayer? Ans. When he had said this, he fell asleep.

LESSON X.—SEPTEMBER 4, 1892.

PHILIP PREACHING AT SAMARIA.—Acts 8: 5-25.

(Quarterly Missionary Lesson.)

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 5-8.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"And there was great joy in that city."—Acts 8: 5.

HOME READINGS.

M. Acts 8: 5-25.—Philip preaching at Samaria.
T. John 4: 1-42.—Jesus preaching at Samaria.
W. Luke 9: 46-50.—Jesus Rejected in Samaria.
Th. Exod. 7: 1-13.—The Sorcerers' Enchantment.
F. Isaiah 1: 1-18.—The Bond of Iniquity.
S. Ezek. 11: 17-20.—A New Heart.
S. Rev. 3: 14-22.—Gold that Makes Rich.

LESSON PLAN.

I. The Power of the Gospel. vs. 5-13.
II. The Gift of the Holy Ghost. vs. 14-17.
III. The Sign of Simon. vs. 18-25.
TIME.—A.D. 37; summer; not long after the last lesson. Caligula emperor of Rome; Vitellius governor of Syria—his capital at Antioch; Herod Antipas governor of Galilee.
PLACE.—Samaria. The exact city not known—probably Samaria, then called Sebaste, or Sychem.

OPENING WORDS.

The disciples, dispersed by the persecution, went everywhere preaching the word. Philip, one of the seven deacons (ch. 6: 5), went down to Samaria and preached Christ to them. Multitudes were converted by his preaching and miracles, and there was great joy in that city.

HELPS IN STUDYING.

6. The people—Revised Version, "the multitudes." Our Lord's visit to Samaria (John 4) had prepared the way for this reception of the truth. 9. Simon—called Magus, very noted then and afterwards. Used sorcery—practised magic arts, skilfully imposing on the people. 13. Then Simon believed also—he believed the bare facts pertaining to Christ's nature, life and resurrection, because he saw absolute miracles; but with no true spiritual saving faith in Christ. 14. Sent unto them Peter and John—to give formal sanction to the work and to impart spiritual gifts. 15. Receive the Holy Ghost—in his miraculous gifts, as on the day of Pentecost. 18. He offered them money—he wanted to buy, not the gift of the Holy Ghost, but the power to impart that gift. 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. 22. Repent—there is hope for the worst of sinners if they repent. 23. The gall of bitterness—the bitterest of the bitter, such is the bitterness of sin. The bond of iniquity—chained and followed by sin.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—What followed the martyrdom of Stephen? What did the disciples do in their dispersion? Title of this lesson? Golden Text? Lesson Plan? Time? Place? Memory verses?

I. THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL. vs. 5-13.—Who was Philip? Where did he go? What effect did his preaching produce? What signs did he work? What noted person did Philip meet? What influence had Simon with the people? What did the people do when they heard Philip? What did Simon do? How did Simon's faith differ from saving faith in Jesus Christ?

II. THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST. vs. 14-17.—Why were Peter and John sent to Samaria? What did they do on their arrival? What had these Samaritan disciples not yet received? What did the apostles do after prayer? What followed the laying on of hands?

III. THE SIGN OF SIMON. vs. 18-25.—What did Simon ask of Peter and John? Why did he wish this power? What was Peter's reply? What did Peter urge him to do? How might even Simon be forgiven? What request did Simon now make? What did this request show? What did the apostles do on their way home?

PRACTICAL LESSONS LEARNED.

1. The persecution and dispersion of earnest Christians spread the truth.
2. True saving faith brings joy to the believer.
3. God's gifts cannot be bought.
4. Baptism and church membership cannot save us.
5. We must have a clean heart and a right spirit, or we cannot please God.

REVIEW QUESTIONS.

1. What effects were produced by Philip's preaching in Samaria? Ans. Many received the word with joy and were baptized.
2. What did the apostles do when they heard this? Ans. They sent to them Peter and John.
3. What did these apostles do after praying with the Samaritan converts? Ans. They laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost.
4. What did Simon want to do? Ans. He wanted to buy this power from the apostles with money.
5. How did Peter reply? Ans. He rebuked Simon for his sin, and urged him to repent.