

prepared for that new revelation which, little as the Church understood it, really sealed the doom of Judaism, and opened the way for Christianity to become a world-religion. Peter thus prepared the way for Paul, whose conversion had occurred probably a short time before that of Cornelius, and whose life work consisted in the realization of the divine purpose revealed to Peter at Joppa and at Caesarea—the sweeping away of all human distinctions before the triumphant progress of Christianity. Peter's prominence brought him into deadly peril when Herod began to persecute the Church, but the Lord who had much work for His servant still to do wonderfully delivered him, to the great joy and comfort of the Church.

In every event that marked the beginning and expansion of the early Church we discern the guiding hand of Providence, and the wisdom of the great Head of the Church in selecting and training during His earthly ministry just these men for carrying on His work. A handful of Galilean fishermen were not those whom the world would have selected to carry on a gigantic enterprise. But God's ways are not the ways of men.

FOR THE SABBATH SCHOOL

International S. S. Lesson.

LESSON XIII.—REVIEW OF THE QUARTER.—MARCH 28.

GOLDEN TEXT.—The Word of God grew and multiplied—Acts xii. 24.

TIME AND PLACE.—A.D., 32-60. Mount Olivet, Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, Gaza, Caesarea, Azotus, Damascus, Ephesus.

INTRODUCTION.—The lessons of the quarter have detailed the leading incidents in the establishing of the Church of Christ on earth, after His Ascension to Heaven, and its extension to Samaria, Damascus, and other places where "Devout Jews" resided, and down to the period of its introduction among the strictly Gentile nations.

REVIEW.—LESSON I, Christ's Ascension Acts i. 1-14; unfolds the history of Christ's Ascension. It was written by Luke, under Paul's direction, while he was imprisoned at Rome. They were companions and fellow-laborers. Luke had been an eye-witness to the Ascension, and could relate the Master's words and describe the scene. He was among the number who gathered in the upper room at Jerusalem to wait the fulfilment of the promise of the Father.

LESSON II, The Holy Spirit given. Acts ii. 1-13; described the scene at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, ten days after the Ascension. The promise was fulfilled, and the Holy Ghost came upon the waiting disciples. During the ten days of waiting, Matthias was chosen to fill the place of Judas, to make the number of disciples complete. The Holy Ghost descended at Pentecost, which was the second yearly feast of the Jews. They observed that yearly feast in memory of the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. The Passover was the first yearly feast.

LESSON III, A Multitude Converted. Acts ii. 32-47; shows us the effect of the first Christian sermon, preached by Peter, under the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. In one day three thousand were converted. Peter was changed from an impulsive, cowardly disciple into a steady, powerful preacher.

LESSON IV, The Lame Man Healed. Acts iii. 1-16; gives a case of Divine healing at the temple in Jerusalem. Peter and John were God's instruments in leading a lame man to Jesus for the healing of his body and the salvation of his soul. That event gave Peter opportunity to preach Christ to the Jews.

LESSON V, The Boldness of Peter and John. Acts iv. 1-14; tells us how the Jewish officials were affected when they saw the miracle of healing, and heard Peter and John preach. Their effort was to silence the apostles. The Sadducees opposed the doctrine of the Resurrection, while the others saw their own crime revealed when the apostles preached that Jesus was the risen Saviour. On this account they were agreed together, against the apostles. When permitted to speak, Peter declared God had highly exalted Jesus, regardless of his enemies.

LESSON VI, True and False Giving. Acts iv. 32 to v. 11; tells of the blessed harmony which the early church enjoyed. They were devoted to God and each other. Satan then entered into the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira, and made them act the part of hypocrites, and God visited them in judgment.

LESSON VII, The Prison Opened. Acts v. 17-32; tells of the bitter, persecuting zeal which the Sanhedrim exercised against the cause of Christ. After the death of Ananias and Sapphira, the apostles preached with great power and healed many. Seeing the rapid progress of Christianity, the Sanhedrim foresaw their own downfall, and stirred them to make a second effort to bind the Word of God. They thrust the apostles into prison, but the

angel of the Lord opened the prison doors, and let them go free.

LESSON VIII, The First Christian Martyr. Acts vi. 8-15; vii. 54-60; gives the story of the death of Stephen, the first Christian martyr.

LESSON IX, The Disciples Dispersed. Acts viii. 1-17; tells how Saul of Tarsus, afterward called Paul, persecuted the Christians, and how they escaped and went everywhere preaching Christ. Philip preached with great success in Samaria among the Gentiles. Peter and John joined Philip, to assist him in the gospel work.

LESSON X, The Ethiopian Convert. Acts viii. 26-40; tells how Philip was directed by the Lord toward the desert, where he met an Ethiopian officer, and explained to him the Scriptures, and preached Christ to him. The Ethiopian was converted.

LESSON XI, Saul, the Persecutor Converted. Acts ix. 1-12; 17-20; gives an account of the wonderful conversion of Saul, as he journeyed to Damascus to bind the Christians and put them into prison.

LESSON XII, Christian Self-Restraint. 1 Cor. ix. 19-27; is taken from one of St. Paul's letters to the Corinthian Church, where he taught them the great necessity of practicing self-denial for Christ's sake, and always to seek the salvation of souls.

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR.

DAILY READINGS.

First Day—A Good Man's Portrait—Ps. i.
Second Day—Excellence of God's Name—Ps. viii.
Third Day—Two Bibles—Ps. xiv.
Fourth Day—The Shepherd Psalm—Ps. xxiii.
Fifth Day—The Earth is the Lord's—Ps. xxiv.
Sixth Day—Our Light and Salvation—Ps. xlv.

PRAYER MEETING TOPIC, March 28—WHAT CHRISTIAN HEROISM IS AND DOES.—Luke ix. 18-26, 51-62.

HEROISM.

The thinking world under the influence of Christ has been gradually emerging out of brutal and warlike ideals of heroism to the sublimely moral. Christian heroes fight and suffer for the good of humanity. They, like their Master, suffer to save, or serve and sacrifice to secure the best for men. And thanks be to God, there is enough of His own spirit of love abroad in the earth to make Christian Heroism of no rare occurrence, but that they are of "all times." Even heathen days were not without them, and how much more should they not abound after the words have been spoken, "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." And after the one Great Deed has been wrought that has consecrated all other deeds of self-sacrifice, of martyrdoms we can scarcely speak, they are too numerous to be dwelt on here: and even as soldiers deem it each man's simple duty to face death unhesitatingly, so "the glorious army of martyrs" had, for the most part joined the church with the expectation that they should have to confess the faith, and confront the extremity of death and torture for it.

While men and women still exist who will thus suffer and thus die, losing themselves in the thought of others, surely the many forms of woe and misery with which this earth is spread do but give occasions of working out some of the highest and best qualities of which mankind are capable. And oh, young Endeavor, if your hearts burn within you as you hear of these various forms of the truest and deepest glory, and you long for time and place to act in the like devoted way, bethink yourselves that the alloy of such actions is to be constantly worked away in daily life; and that if ever it be your lot to do acts of heroism, it will probably be in unconsciously that you are doing anything extraordinary, and that the whole impulse will consist in the having absolutely forgotten self.

"Prayers of love like rain-drops fall
Tears of pity are cooling dew,
And dear to the heart of our Lord are all
Who suffer like Him in the good they do!"

A story of the noble army of martyrs has come down to us from the beginning of the Christian era. It is that of Pancratius, or Pancras, who was born in Phrygia. He was brought up to worship Jupiter; but, his father having died, his uncle placed him, at Rome, under the tuition of the aged and holy Marcellinus, under whom he was converted to Christianity. His uncle soon after died; and the youth, then only fourteen years old, was left with his religion and his father's vast fortune, in the world without a friend. Diocletian was then persecuting the Christians.