

What Does it Matter?

It matters little where I was born
Or if my parents be rich or poor,
Whether they shrank at the cold world's
scorn.

Or walked in the pride of wealth, secure,
But whether I live an honest man,
And hold my integrity firm in my clutch,
I tell you brother, plain as I can,
It matters much!

It matters little how long I stay
In a world of sorrow, sin, and care,
Whether in youth I am called away,
Or live till my bones and put are bare;
But whether I do the best I can
To soften the weight of adversity's touch
On the faded cheek of my fellow-man,
It matters much!

It matters little where be my grave,
Or on the land, or on the sea:
By purling brook, or 'neath the wave,
It matters little or naught to me,
But whether the angel death comes down
And marks my brow with his loving touch,
As one that shall wear the victor's crown,
It matters much!

LESSON NOTES.**SECOND QUARTER.**

STUDIES IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

A. D. 37-39.] LESSON IV. [April 22.

SAUL PREACHING CHRIST.

Acts 9. 10-31. Commit to memory verses 20-22.

GOLDEN TEXT.

He which persecuted us in times past, now
preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.
—Gal. 1. 23.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

The young Christian increases in strength
by study, by communion with God, by Chris-
tian work, and by trials of his faith.

TIME.—From midsummer, A. D. 37, to the
autumn of A. D. 39. Paul's visit to Jerusalem
was probably about September, A. D. 39.

PLACES.—Damascus, Arabia, Jerusalem,
Cilicia.

PAUL was thirty-five to thirty-seven years
of age.

RULERS.—Caligula, emperor of Rome.
Marcellus, governor of Judea, appointed A. D.
38. Herod Antipas, governor of Galilee
(41-48), deposed A. D. 39. Aretas, king of
Arabia, Petras, and now including Damascus.

CIRCUMSTANCES.—This lesson follows close
upon the last lesson, and gives a brief history
of the first three years of Paul's life as a
Christian.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—19. *Received
meat*—After his three days' fast. *Certain
days*—Paul preached a short time in Damas-
cus, then he went for some time into Arabia
(Gal. 1. 17, 18) for study and communion
with God, preparatory to his great work.
Then he returned again to Damascus. 23.
After many days—This includes the time
from his conversion to his visit to Jerusalem,
three years (Gal. 1. 18), i. e., parts of three
different civil years. (See TIME.) 26. *They
were all afraid of him*—It was three years
since his conversion. They probably had
only heard vague rumours of the great event,
and they feared it might be a trick of the
great persecutor to get into their confidence
and betray them. 27. *But Barnabas*—Who
being from Cyprus, near Tarsus, probably
knew Saul personally. 30. *Cesarea*—A large
seaport of the Mediterranean, sixty miles
north-west of Jerusalem. 31. *Rest*—From
persecution, not from religious activity.
Edified—Built up as a temple, (1) in charac-
ter, (2) in numbers. *Fear of the Lord*—
Reverent fear, as subjects of his kingdom.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—Saul's
stay at Damascus.—His retirement to Arabia.
—His increase in strength.—Why persecuted.
—His visit to Jerusalem.—Why they were
afraid of him there.—Rest of the Churches.
—Edified.—Fear of the Lord.—Comfort of
the Holy Ghost.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Over how much time
does this lesson extend? Who were the
rulers of the world? Give a brief account of
Paul's conversion? When and where was it?
How old was Paul at this time?

SUBJECT: THE YOUNG CONVERT.

1. **BEGINNING TO WORK FOR CHRIST** (vs.
19-21).—How long had Saul been without
food? How was his body fitted for work?
Should we ever take care of the body as the
instrument of the soul? How long did Saul
remain at Damascus at this time? What was

he doing? What did he preach? Does speak-
ing to others about our Saviour strengthen
us in the Gospel? What did the people
think of Paul? Was the change a proof of
divine power? In what way can young
Christians work for Christ?

2. **INCREASING IN STRENGTH** (vs. 22, 23).
—After a short time where did Paul go?
(Gal. 1. 17). Where in Arabia? How long
did he remain? What was the purpose of
this retirement? In what ways would it
prepare him for his future work? Are sea-
sons of retirement for study and communion
with God necessary for all Christians? What
was the effect of Saul's preaching and re-
tirement upon himself? In what did he
increase? To what place did he return?
(Gal. 1. 17.) How long a time does "many
days" include? (Gal. 1. 18).

3. **ENDURING TRIALS** (vs. 23-25).—How
did the Jews receive Saul's preaching? What
did they do in order to get him in their
power? How did those he came to destroy
now save his life? How does he speak of
this event? (2 Cor. 11. 32, 33). Why was
this method of escape a great trial to Saul?
How do trials increase our strength? (1 Pet.
1. 7. Jan. 1. 2-4).

4. **AT HOME** (vs. 26-30).—Where did Saul
now go? What was his object? (Gal. 1. 18.
Acts 22. 21). Which of the apostles did he
see? (Gal. 1. 18, 19). How was he received
at first? Why? Who introduced him?
How did Barnabas know Saul? What did he
do at Jerusalem? What would make it spe-
cially hard for him to preach Christ here?
Is it harder to speak of religion at home than
elsewhere? Why? What made Saul leave
Jerusalem? (v. 29. Acts 22. 17-21). Where
did he go?

5. **AT REST** (v. 31).—What was the "rest"
the Churches now had? Does rest imply
idleness? What is it to be edified? How
were the Churches edified? What is it to
walk in the fear of the Lord? What is the
comfort of the Holy Ghost? What follows
when we have these two?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Signs in Saul of a new heart: (1) choos-
ing Christian companions; (2) speaking to
others about Christ; (3) silent communion
with God; (4) courage in taking a stand for
Christ; (5) suffering for Christ.

2. We are prepared for work: (1) by work-
ing; (2) by study and meditation; (3) by
trials; (4) by intercourse with other Chris-
tians.

3. God saves us by human means more
often than by miracle.

4. Rest is freedom from outward hinder-
ances, and free joyous activity in doing good.

5. We are built up: (1) by holy living;
(2) by the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit.

6. The two needs of our Churches: (1) to
be edified; (2) to be multiplied.

REVIEW EXERCISE. (For the whole School
in Concert).

18. What did Paul do as soon as he was
converted? **ANS.** He preached Christ at
Damascus. 19. Where did he go soon?
ANS. He retired to Arabia to prepare for his
great work. 20. Where is he next found?
ANS. He returned to Damascus. 21. What
befell him here? **ANS.** He was persecuted,
and escaped through the wall by night. 22.
Where did he then go? **ANS.** He went to
Jerusalem to counsel with the apostles.

A. D. 39, 40.] LESSON V. [April 29.

PETER WORKING MIRACLES.

Acts 9. 38-43. Commit to memory verses 32-35.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Jesus Christ maketh thee whole.—Acts 9.
34.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

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

TIME.—A. D. 39, 40. Soon after Paul's
visit to Jerusalem in our last lesson.

PLACE.—Lydda, a city in Judea twenty-
five miles north-west of Judea; and Joppa,
ten miles further to the north-west, on the
Mediterranean.

PAUL, at Tarsus, aged thirty-eight.

RULERS.—Caligula, emperor of Rome (4).
Marcellus, governor of Judea. Great com-
motions at Jerusalem on account of an at-
tempt by Caligula to put a statue of himself
in the temple.

CIRCUMSTANCES.—The Churches now had
rest from persecution, the Jews having too
many troubles of their own to attend to. So
that Peter was able to leave Jerusalem for a
short visit among the Churches which had
been formed in various parts by those scath-
ered by the persecution.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—32. *Lydda*—
A city of good size in north-west Judea. 33.
Kept his bed eight years—Showing the dulli-
culty of curing him. *Palsy*—Paralysis. 35.
Saron—Sharon, the fertile and beautiful plain
in which Lydda was situated. 36. *Joppa*—
A large seaport city, now Jaffa. Here Jonah
embarked when told to go to Nineveh. *Tar-
bita*—Aramaic (i. e., the common language
of the people) for *Dorcus*, which is Greek.
Both names mean "a gazelle," the symbol of
beauty. 37. *In those days*—While Peter was
at Lydda. 38. *Night to Joppa*—About ten
miles. 40. *Peter put them all forth*—That he
might be alone in prayer.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—Peter's
circuit among the Churches.—Saints.—
Lydda.—Joppa.—Dorcus.—Her work among
the poor.—Woman's work in the Church.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—About whom was our last
lesson? Whom did he visit? Where was
Paul at the time of our present lesson? How
old was he?

SUBJECT: CHRISTIAN GOOD WORKS.

1. **AID AND COMFORT TO OTHER CHRIS-
TIAN** (v. 32).—What was the state of things
in Judea at this time? (v. 31). Where had
Churches been formed? By whom? (Acts
8. 1, 4, 5, 26, 49). How long was it now
since Christ's death and resurrection? What
did Peter do during the period of rest from
persecution? What cities did he visit? How
long was he gone? (v. 43). What was the
object of this visit? What good does it do
for the members of one Church to visit other
Churches? What can we do for our Christian
companions and friends?

2. **AID TO THE SUFFERING** (vs. 33-35).—
What suffering man did Peter find? Should
we seek out cases of need, or only wait till
they come to us? How long had this man
been sick? Why is the time mentioned?
What is the palsy? Who cured the man?
What are we taught by Peter's giving all the
honour to Christ where it belonged? Why
is the healing called a making whole? How
does curing us of sin make us whole? What
was the effect of this miracle? Why had it
such an effect? Does Christianity still help
and heal men? In what ways? Are we
Christians if we do not strive to help the
suffering?

3. **WOMAN'S WORK IN THE CHURCH** (vs.
36-43).—Where are Lydda and Joppa? Des-
cribe them? What good woman lived at
Joppa? What had she done? What hap-
pened to her? Why does God let such good
people die? Whom did her friends send for?
What did Peter find on coming to the house?
Could Dorcas have left a better memorial of
her life? What does the Bible say of true
religion? (James 1. 27). What can Chris-
tian women do now for Christ? What are
they doing for missions? What among the
poor? What in visiting the sick? What in
gathering children into the Sabbath-school?
What in teaching? What other work can
they do in the Church? What did Peter do
for Dorcas? Why did he send the friends
out of the room? When your pastor visits
the sick at your house do you let him talk
and pray with them alone? Was it a blessing
to be restored to life? What was the effect
of this in Joppa? Did all here and in Lydda
(v. 35) become true Christians?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. All true Christians are saints, i. e., holy,
consecrated.

2. We should seek for opportunities to do
good.

3. To be cured of sin is to be made whole
in soul, complete in spiritual health.

4. Give Jesus the glory of all the good
deeds He does through us.

5. Dorcas is a model for women in the
Churches.

6. Women have a great and glorious work
in the Church.

7. The best monument we can leave is in
the good deeds to Christ's poor and suffering
ones.

REVIEW EXERCISE. (For the whole School
in Concert).

1. Where did Peter go after Paul had left
Jerusalem? **ANS.** He went on a visit to the
Churches? 2. Name two of the cities he
visited? **ANS.** Lydda and Joppa. 3. What
did he do at Lydda? **ANS.** He healed Eneas,
who had been sick of the palsy for eight years.
4. What did he do at Joppa? **ANS.** He
raised Dorcas to life. 5. What kind of a
woman was Dorcas? **ANS.** She was full of
good works and almsdeeds which she did?
6. By whose power were these miracles done?
(Repeat the Golden Text).

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