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BEREAN NOTES.

A. D. 34. LESSON VI. SAUL'S CON-VERSION. Nov. 5. HOME READINGS.

MONDAY-The Lesson. Acts 9, 1-18. THESDAY-Paul's Conversion related to the Jews. Acts 22. 6-16. WEDNESDAY - Paul's Conversion related to Agrippa. Acts 26. 1-15.

THURSDAY-The need of the new nature. John 3. 1-13. FRIDAY-Beholding the risen Christ.

1 Cor. 15. 1-10. SATURDAY-The old life and the new. 1 Tim. 1.1-17. SUNDAY-Saved by grace. Eph. 2. 1-10.

Topic: - Newness of Life through GOLDEN TEXT: -A new heart also will I give you. Ezekiel 36, 26.

DOCTRINE :- The Christian a new crea-

ture. 2 Cor. 5, 17; Gal. 6, 15; Eph. 2, 15.

GENERAL STATEMENT. While the church was spreading through the zeal of Philip, the persecution was also carried on with fierceness under the leadership of Saul of Tarsus. But our present lesson tells us of his becoming a follower of Jesus. Saul's Conversion is its true conversion-Newness of life through Jesus; and the GOLDEN TEXT states what leads to the new life and makes it easy and blessed : A new heart also will I rative into three parts: 1. "The old life;"
2. "The overwhelming vision;" 3. "The new life." The one great, practical lesson to be learned and enforced from it all is in the DOCTRINE stated, namely, The Christian a new creature.

> BEREAN NOTES. BY D. A. WHEDON, D. D.

1. The old life. Versse 1, 2. 1. AND SAUL-Thus far we have known of Saul only as in charge of the clothes of Stephen's murderers, chap. 7, 58, as approving the deed, chap. 8, 1, and as prime leader of the bitter persecution, chap. 8, 3, 4. He was a Jew. of pure Hebrew blood, of the tribe of Benjamin, born in Tarsus, in Cilicia. He was then a Grecian, or Hellenist, chap. 6, 1. He was also a Roman citizen, and by trade a tentmaker. At about twelve or thirteen years of age he was sent to Jerusalem to complete his education under the learned Gamaliel. He became a strict Pharisee, and was a man of great learning and energy of character, with the fairest prospects of eminence. In the Cilician synagogue (chap. 6, 9,) he had doubtless disputed with Stephen, and was now "exceeding mad" against the disciples. The cruel work had now gone on for probably some months, and Saul was still breathing threatenings and slaughter, as though they were the very life of his soul. Chap. 22, 4; 26, 10, 11. HIGH-PRIEST-Supposed to be Theophilus, appointed by Vitellius, A. D. 37. The Sanhedrin, by decree of the emperors, had full power over all Jews everywhere in religious questions. The high-priest was judge in all matters of heresy.

2. DESIRED—Saul himself conceived the project, and was the first mover in the matter. He sought the wicked business, asking that LETTERS of authority to the officers of SYNAGOGUES might be given. him, to secure their help in seizing any disciples of Jesus whom he might find, and bring them BOUND prisoners TO JERUSALEM, where the high-priest could try and punish them. DAMASCUS is the oldest city in the world, about a hundredand forty miles north-east from Jerusal. em, in the track of ancient commerce between the Mediterranean and the East, and celebrated for its magnificence, beauty and wealth. There were probably several SYNAGOGUES in the city, as many Jews were residing there. Saul might well expect to find there not a few Christians who had fled from the persecution. This WAY-Rather, the way, a term that had then come to designate the Christian life.

2. The overwhelming vision, 3-9. 3. SUDDENLY-Saul with his companions, after perhaps six days of travel, had come NEAR DAMASCUS, when, at noon, there SUDDENLY flashed around him a LIGHT FROM HEAVEN, brighter than that of the sun at that midday hour. Chap. 26, 13. At that moment he saw the person of the glorified Jesus, as is evident from verses 17, 27.

4. HE FELL-As John fell at his feet as dead. (Rev. 1, 17.) on seeing his glorified Lord, so Saul FELL TO THE EARTH at the same sight, as did also his companions. Chap. 26, 14. They had not seen that glorious form, and soon regained their feet, while Saul remained prostrate. It. was then that he HEARD A VOICE whose words went through his inmost soul, say. ing, in Hebrew, SAUL, SAUL, WHY PERSE. CUTEST THOU ME? As he will do in the coming judgment day. (Matt. 25, 40.) Jesus makes his disciples' cause his own.

5. Who-He knew not yet who, and asks. The answer, I AM JESUS the Nazerene, (chap. 22, 8,) WHOM THOU PERSE-CUTEST, was overwhelming. Jesus, then, had truly risen from the dead, and was the true Messiah. Stephen, then, truly saw my fools heaven in this life, that I may be him, as he had seen him now. Saul at saved forever .- Rutherford.

once saw his terrible mistake, and felt his awful guilt. PRICKS-Goads. rods with sharpened or iron points for driving oxen. Against them resistance is useless. So to such evidence must Saul surren ler.

6. LORD, WHAT-Saul sees the truth. The great surrender is prompt and complete forever. He will henceforth Do Jesus' will, though he knows not what it may be. This is the true consecration which all should make. ARISE-Ananias will tell him what he MUST DO.

7. THE MEN-Risen from the earth. they had stood during this conversation speechless with astonishment, HEARING the sound of Jesus' VOICE, but understanding not the words spoken, (chap. 22, 9,) and yet seeing no man.

8, 9. SAUL AROSE—Sightless, (chap. 22. 11,) and led by the hands of his friends, Saul enters this Damascus in a different which he had planned. Such was his soul's intense anguish in its awful struggle of THREE DAYS with those words, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest, ringing through his soul, that for THREE DAYS he was WITHOUT SIGHT, and neither ate nor TITLE. The TOPIC gives us the result of drank. No other instance is mentioned where it took a sinner so long to find mercy. But the more sincere he had been, the more terrible and despairing would be gire you. The OUTLINE divides the nar- his penitence and remorse. Rom. 7. 24. 3. The new life. 10.18.

> 10-12. Ananias-The Lord's way is to use a human ministry in saving a soul-He first, to encourage Saul's hope and faith, gave him as he was praying a VISION in which a MAN, whose face he saw and whose NAME he knew, entered his room, and laid his hand on him, in order that he might recover his SIGHT. Next a corresponding vision is given ANANIAS, a Jew of repute, a disciple of Christ, (chap. 22, 12.) residing in Damascus. The directions given him are minute and very exact. The STREET CALLED STRAIGHT. about a mile long and cutting the city from east to west, still exists, though now called by the natives the "Street of Bazaars." The street, the house and the man are so described that Ananias would readily find Saul, while the knowledge of his praying and his vision would show Saul's preparation for his coming. He had often prayed before; but he was now praying

to Jesus for his mercy. 13, 14. Answered-Still in vision. The cautious Ananias would understand the case better. See the beautiful confidence between the child-like disciple and his Lord. THY SAINTS-The holy ones, consecrated to Christ : the term first used here. CALL-This shows that the disciples were wont to pray to Jesus. How is it that a man of such evil deeds, and of such an errand, needs this disciple? And Jesus explains it.

15. 16. Go-Without questioning. CHO-SEN-That is, to do a certain work, TO BEAR MY NAME, to be my apostle. Yet Saul might have refused. SUFFER-A precious gift of grace. Phil. I, 59.

17. WENT-OBEYING. Exactly as Saul had seen. Ananias went in, and put HIS HANDS ON HIM, and thus confirming the vision, and kindling faith. BROTHER SAUL-Rather, the more tender Saul, rother. JESUS-Showing whom he meant by LORD. APPEARED-Was seen. It is not likely that Saul had told of this, and Ananias's mention of it proved that Jesus ent him. This further helped faith.

18. THERE FELL-Luke describes as a physician. Something resembling SCALES that had formed FELL, and Saul at once saw. Next, he was FILLED WITH THE HOLY GHOST, giving him a new heartand making him a new man. Third, chap. 22, 14-16, was said. Fourth, he then arose and was baptized, receiving, evidently, on the spot, the symbol of the heavenly baptism which Jesus had just poured

upon his soul. Lessons. 1. Glorious, indeed, is the change in the new birth, in which the Holy Spirit sheds abroad in the heart the love of God, makes us his children, and gives us power to overcome sin and serve Christ. It was a wonderful transition in Saul's case, but it is equally real in every case. It is the beginning of a new life, a life of faith, of prayer of holy living, that finds its blessed fulness in heaven. How different Saul's life was from that day. Acts 26, 18; Rom. 6, 22; 7, 24, 25; Eph. 2. 1: 4, 22.24: Col. 1.13: 1 John 5, 4, 18. 2. Saul's case shows us that no honesty, or sincerity, or morality, or attempts at obedience, can save the soul, or serve as substitutes for Christ as a Saviour and the new birth by his Spirit. This man of splendid genius and vast learning found it necessary to fall at Jesus feet; and so must we. And what a joy he found, just. as also may we. John 3, 6; Rom. 8.7, 8, Gal. 6, 15; 1 Tim. 1. 13:15:0

It is a good sign when the Lord blows off the blossoms of our forward hopes in this life, and taps the branches of our worldly joys to the very root, on purpose that they should not thrive. Lord spoil

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