

to be for the whole world. While we may think that even if the views at Jerusalem had been different, and that finally the wider and more spiritual truth would have prevailed. Yet it is hard to imagine the extent of the hindrance that would have been given to the progress of Christianity if the Judaizing spirit had not been checked when it was. You may show that it may be necessary sometimes to contend earnestly for the faith and liberly of the gospel; all the narrow-minded men are not dead, the spirit of these formalists is found to-day, and they may have to be opposed, only it must be done in the spirit of the Master—a spirit of love and gentleness.

On the *second* topic show that Paul and Barnabas and those with them exhibited this very spirit; they might have refused to go up to Jerusalem on this question, alleging, and truly, that God had given them the same baptism of the Holy Ghost, and that they were led by the Spirit, even as the brethren in Jerusalem. Further, they were going to the very source and stronghold of this error, and they knew not how their errand might fare, yet with large faith and confidence in the truth they went, nor did they on their journey seek to avoid their Gentile brethren, but took the route that led them right through those churches, themselves receiving aid and comfort, and bringing "great joy unto all the brethren."

On the *third* topic dwell principally on the noble utterances of Peter, who, recalling his Joppa and Cesarea experiences, spoke for Christian liberty, affirming that there was only one ground of salvation, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Cornelius had received the Holy Ghost without circumcision, and had been baptized by divine authority; that what God looked for in Jew and Gentile alike, was that of which ceremonies were only the sign—purification of the heart. Take his word "yoke," and for a moment contrast the burdensome yoke of Judaism with the "easy" yoke of Christ.

SUPPLEMENTARY.—If you have time it will be well to point out briefly the course of this conference, the addresses of Paul and Barnabas and the final address of James. Point out the first result in the joy the news caused at Antioch (ver. 31), and the impetus it gave to the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles. If you have an elder class you may tell them further that notwithstanding this conference and its conclusions the Judaizing error, like errors generally, alas! died hard, and that it gave great trouble to the Church, even down to the destruction of Jerusalem (see Gal. 2: 11-20; 5: 12, 13; Phil. 3: 2); while its *spirit* survives and distresses some brethren even to this day.

Truths and Teachings.—We may be called to defend the truth even with disputations.

Sometimes dangerous errors are brought into the Church by its own friends.

Always gladly to take advice from Christian brethren.

It is right to give what help we can to brethren, especially to those who are the ministering servants of Jesus.

The tidings of the spread of the Gospel is joyful news to those who love Jesus.

God seeks for spiritual worship from a pure heart to-day.

Faith is the New Testament circumcision, one and one only saving faith for all, "they," "we."

Main Lessons.—*In non-essentials—liberty*—Rom. 14: 1-6; 1 Cor. 7: 18; 8: 8; 9: 1-5.

In essentials—unity—1 Cor. 10: 17; Gal. 3: 11-15; Eph. 4: 4, 5, 16.

Jesus Christ and His Salvation, the only ground of our hope—Rom. 6: 23; 1 Cor. 3: 11; 6: 11; Titus 2: 14; 1 John 4: 9, 14; 5: 11.

LESSON II.

Jan. 13,
1884.

HEARING AND DOING

{ James 1:
16-17.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only."—James 1: 22.

TIME.—Soon after last lesson, but some writers assign a later date—about A.D. 61.

WRITER.—Commentators are divided as to the identity of this James. It was *not* the brother of John who was killed by Herod some years before the Council at Jerusalem, but there are other two Jameses mentioned in the Gospels and Acts.—(1) James, the son of Alphaeus, Mark 3: 18; Matt. 10: 3; Luke 6: 15; Acts 1: 13, 14; and (2) James "the brother of the Lord," Matt. 13: 55; Mark 6: 3; Gal. 1: 19. The question is, are these two identical, or are they distinct. We cannot go into the question further than to say that very eminent theologians are found favouring each view, and that each opinion has its probabilities and difficulties. I am inclined to take the last opinion, but as it is of no practical consequence to our lesson the subject need not be further enlarged upon. We believe that the writer, whoever he was, spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost. That is sufficient for us.

Notes and Comments.—Ver. 16. "Do not err,"—Rev. "Be not deceived." Ver. 13 tells us what the error was—supposing God was the author of temptation, whereas he does not tempt, nor can he be tempted.

Ver. 17. So far is such a thought from being true, that all that is good on earth, "every good gift and every perfect gift," comes from God. "Father of lights:" as the creator, originator of the heavenly bodies. (Job 38: 28; Gen. 1: 5, 20, 21). Reference to changes in the heavenly bodies follows, naturally, also Father of spiritual lights, and so there can be no darkness in Him or from Him. (1 John 1: 5). "Shadow of turning:" lit. the shadow mark cast by the heavenly bodies in their turning or revolution, an eclipse. There is no change in God, he is eternally the same.

Ver. 18. "Of his own will:" this is one proof of the goodness of God—comp. John 1: 13. "Begat" the change which the Spirit of God creates in the hearts of men, is like a new creation. "Word of truth:" preached gospel, God's instrument in the conversion of men. "First-fruits:" under the old dispensation the first-fruits were consecrated to God. James is writing to Jews who would understand the allusion. He wishes to inculcate holiness, so he tells them that their position is that of the consecrated sheaves, they are the first-fruits in the great harvest of salvation, and should pre-eminently be the Lord's.

Ver. 19. "Swift to hear:" that is the word of truth, its vast importance demands instant attention. It is contrasted with the next clause, "Slow to speak:" that is with assumption of authority, be modest, slow to speak unwise things of God, as in ver. 13. This is further spoken of in ver. 26, and throughout the next chapter. "Slow to wrath:" see chap. 3: 13, 14; and chap. 4: 5. Wrath, as a rule, implies sin, although there may be a righteous *wrath*, only we must be slow even to that.

Ver. 20. A special reason why we should abstain from wrath. "Worketh not:" is not served by, rather it hinders the work of God's righteousness. We are told that it is good to be zealously affected in a good thing. Yes, but not with anger; the heated, angry advocacy of the truth by some men does more harm than good. Wrath will not make him that indulges in it righteous, neither others.

Ver. 21. "Filthiness, or defilement which is washed away by the word of Christ. (John 15: 3.) "Superfluity," rather, as in Rev., "overflowing of wickedness." Sin is not merely an evil in the hearts and lives of men, but it is an abounding evil. "Meekness:" the opposite of wrath in ver. 20, it includes a child-like, humble, as well as an un-