

LESSON NOTES.

FIRST QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

A. D. 30.] LESSON VI. [Feb. 11.

NONE OTHER NAME.

Acts 4. 1-14. Commit to memory verses 10-13.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. Acts 4. 12.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Christ is the Saviour and only Saviour of men.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Acts 4. 1-14.
T. 1 John 5. 1-12.
W. Heb. 2. 1-18.
Th. Rom. 10. 1-15.
F. John 3. 1-36.
Sa. John 14. 1-16.
Su. 1 Cor. 1. 17-31.

TIME.—June, A.D. 30. The same afternoon as the last two lessons, and the day following.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

CIRCUMSTANCES.—In our last lesson we had Peter's sermon to the people, with the healed lame man for his text. The authorities, drawn by the crowd, overhear the teaching of the apostles, and take measures to put an end to it.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—1. *Captain of the temple*—The head of the band of Levite sentinels who kept guard over the temple. *Sadducees*—A sect of the Jews, whose name was derived from Sadee their founder. They were a small but influential sect; the unbelievers and materialists among the Jews, denying the existence of soul, angels, and a future life. Hence they were opposed to the preaching of a *Risen Christ*. 2. *Servants*—It was three o'clock when the lame man was healed. It must now have been as late as six. 3. *Five thousand*—The whole number of male converts, including the three thousand of Pentecost. 4. *Rulers*—The whole Sanhedrin of seventy-one members, composed (1) of *Elders*—heads of families, leading men. (2) *Scribes*—teachers of the schools, interpreters of the law. (3) *The priests*—the heads of the twenty-four courses, and the leading priests as mentioned in verse six. 5. *Anas*—He was the high priest elected and acknowledged by the people, while *Capitatus* was the legal priest appointed by the Romans. 6. *By what power*—They wished to accuse them of magic or sorcery, which was punishable by death. (Exodus 22. 18.) 7. *Notes the boldness of Peter*, who a short time before had denied his master. 8. *This is the stone*, etc., quoted from Psalms 118. 22. 9. *Salvation*—from sin, to holiness, to heaven. *None other name*—The name includes all that there is in Jesus, of power, divinity, humanity. *Must be saved*—Why can we be saved only by Christ? (1) He only brings God's forgiveness. (2) The promise is only through him. (3) He has the power of the Spirit by which the heart is changed. (4) He is the sum of all goodness. To reject him is to reject goodness, and hence be unsaved.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—The Sadducees.—The Sanhedrin.—Filled with the Holy Ghost.—The change in Peter.—Salvation only through Christ.—They took knowledge that they had been with Jesus.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—To whom had Peter been speaking? What was the occasion of the sermon? Were there many hearers? At what hour of the day was it now? How long after Pentecost?

SUBJECT: CHRIST THE POWER OF GOD.

1. IN TIME OF TROUBLE (vs. 1-4).—Who were drawn by the crowds to listen to Peter? Who was the "captain of the temple"? Describe the Sadducees. Why were they opposed to Peter's teaching? Why were the priests opposed? What was done with Peter and John? Did this persecution prevent men from becoming Christians? How many believers were there in all. Is opposition ever a good reason for not believing on Christ? Does persecution tend to make truth-lovers better? Will their being better tend to make more Christians?

2. IN GIVING AID TO HIS DISCIPLES (vs. 5-8).—Before whom were they brought next day? Give some account of the Sanhedrin? Who were the "rulers"? who the "elders"? "the scribes"? Who was the real high priest? What did they ask Peter and John? What was the punishment if they had used magic or sorcery? (Exodus 22. 18. Lev. 19. 26. Deut. 13. 1-5.) Who replied? What promise was fulfilled in him? (Matt. 10. 19, 20. Luke 12. 11, 12.) How was this being filled with the Holy Ghost different from the ordinary abiding of the Comforter with him?

3. IN THE SALVATION OF MEN (vs. 9-12). Was Peter's deed a bad one? By whose power was the lame man healed? Was the man present in the assembly? With what did Peter charge them? What Psalm did Peter quote? What does this verse mean? In whom alone is salvation? Why only in Christ? Must we be saved by him or be lost? Is the Gospel to blame for the loss of those who refuse to believe?

4. IN CHANGING THE CHARACTER (vs. 13, 14). What change did they not see in Peter? Was this the same Council that condemned Christ? How did Peter once act in view of them? (Luke 22. 54-62.) How long before this? Why was the conduct and character of the apostles unexpected to them? How was it to be accounted for? Will being with Jesus change our character? How? What is it for us to be with Jesus?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. We must not be disappointed if we meet opposition in doing good.
2. Persecution increases converts as the wind adds to the fire.
3. Christ fulfils his promises to the letter.
4. Whatever is right, however unpopular, is sure to succeed at last.
5. Salvation is through Christ alone, (1) He convicts of sin, (2) He brings forgiveness, (3) He shows the way, and teaches the truth, (4) He gives the new heart, (5) He intensifies all motives,—hope, fear, love, duty.
6. Being with Christ will make us like him, ennoble our character, inspire courage.

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

6. Who now began to persecute the Christians? Ans. The rulers of the Jews. 7. Did this put an end to their increase? Ans. They increased to five thousand men. 8. How did Peter defend himself? Ans. By preaching Jesus Christ, and pointing to what Christ had done. 9. What did he say about Jesus? (Repeat the Golden Text.) 10. What was the source of Peter's wisdom and courage? Ans. He had been with Jesus.

A. D. 30.] LESSON VII. [Feb. 18.

CHRISTIAN COURAGE.

Acts 4. 18-31. Commit to memory vs. 29-31.

GOLDEN TEXT.

If God be for us, who can be against us? Rom. 8. 31.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

The Holy Spirit gives courage to speak and power to do.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Acts 4. 14-31.
T. Psalms 2. 1-12.
W. Psalms 121. 1-8.
Th. Psalms 46. 1-11.
F. Acts 12. 1-17.
Sa. Acts 16. 16-34.
Su. Rom. 8. 28-39.

TIME.—June, A.D. 30. The same day as the last part of the last lesson. The day after the healing of the lame man.

PLACE.—Jerusalem. The hall of the Sanhedrin, and assembling-place of the disciples.

CIRCUMSTANCES.—In our last lesson we left Peter and John in trial before the Sanhedrin. After Peter had finished his address, the apostles were sent out of the room, while the Council consulted together as to what they should do. Not daring to punish them for a good deed, and with the people on their side, the Council recalled the apostles and tried to silence them by threats.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—18. *And they*—The Sanhedrin. *Called them*—Back before the Council. 28. *To their own company*—Of Christians assembled in the city, and probably praying for these imprisoned disciples.

24. *God, which hath made heaven*, etc.—And therefore able to grant their request. 25. *Who... hath said*—In the Second Psalm *People imagine vain things*—Things they were unable to do, and vain, useless if they could do them. 27. *Jesus, whom thou hast anointed*, i.e., made King and Messiah, which was done by anointing. 28. *If it were thy counsel determined*—God controls even bad men. He is never frustrated in his plans. 29. *Grant unto thy servants*—They did not ask freedom from persecution, but only strength to do their duty and spread the Gospel. 31. *The place was shaken*—As on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came down in power. It was the token that their prayer for help was answered.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—The courage of the apostles.—Obeying God rather than man.—The prayer, its characteristics.—What they prayed for.—How signs and wonders aid the Gospel.—The answer to the prayer.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Where were Peter and John, in our last lesson? What discussion did the Sanhedrin hold over them? (Acts 4. 15-17.) Why did they not dare keep them in prison? How did they propose to stop the progress of the Gospel?

SUBJECT: CHRISTIAN COURAGE.

1. MANIFESTED (vs. 1-2).—Who called the apostles? From what place? (Ch. 4. 15) Where to? What did they command? What was the apostles' answer? Why must we always obey God rather than man? How does doing this require courage? Is there special need of Christian courage in our day? Why could not the apostles refrain from speaking? What things must they speak? What hindered the Sanhedrin from punishing them? How are the good results of Christianity, and especially wonderful conversions, the best answer to opposers? What is courage? Why is it a noble quality? Do all people admire it?

2. SUSTAINED (vs. 23-28).—Where did Peter and John go when released? Why? Should we go to our Christian brethren for sympathy and strength? Was their prayer of one accord of voice or of heart? Why did they speak here of God as the Creator? What Psalm did they quote? Does the expression, "who by the mouth of thy servant David hath said," prove the inspiration of the Psalms? What "vain things" did the people imagine? Why were they vain? Who had conspired against Christ? What is referred to? How would this fact be a comfort to the disciples?

3. INCREASED (vs. 29-31).—For what did they pray? Why not for escape from persecution and trouble? In what respects was theirs the best prayer? How should our prayers resemble theirs? What, in addition to courage, did they ask? How do signs and wonders aid the Gospel? How was the prayer answered? When before this was there a like answer? (Acts 2. 1-4.) What was the object of such a visible manifestation? Does being filled with the Holy Ghost make us bold?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. The test of a true disciple is that he obeys God rather than man.
2. The true Christian must speak out what he experiences of the Gospel.
3. Every person naturally goes to his own place,—like to like.
4. We should lay all our burdens before the Lord.
5. Because God is the Creator of all, He can govern all for the good of His cause and His children.
6. God controls and uses even the bad deeds of bad men.
7. True prayer desires more to do right in trouble, than to escape from it. God's cause is always first.

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

11. What did the Sanhedrin do to Peter and John? Ans. They forbade them to preach, and then let them go. 12. What was their reply? (Repeat vs. 19 and 20, beginning with "whether it be right," etc.) 13. Where did they go when released? Ans. To the assembly of the disciples. 14. What did they all do? Ans. They prayed with one accord. 15. For what did they pray? For boldness to speak, and for the power of Christ to be with them? 16. How were they answered? Ans. They were filled with the Holy Spirit, the source of courage and power.

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