

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

THE QUARTERLY REVIEW.

For the Older Scholars and Bible Classes: Further Expansion of the Church.

The previous quarter's lessons traced the expansion of the early church during the first ten years of its history. This quarter carries the work very much further:—

1. The new territory covered by the first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas. The map will show the breaking of much new ground, and that in a very perilous country. The chief places should be pointed out, and important persons and events recalled. It should be carefully noted that among these wild people the gospel showed its power, and that in the planting of the church there is a remarkable testimony to the energy of the apostles, who were undaunted by their difficulties.

2. Note the gradual strengthening of opposition on the part of the Pharisee Jews, and how their hatred became so great that they sought to kill Paul. It is well to trace the origin of this trouble, and also the rise of the Judaizing teachers who followed Paul and sought to destroy his work. The Epistle to the Galatians gives light on this whole question. Paul's theological teaching, both as to its form and the points it emphasizes, was, in many respects, determined by the errors and the methods of his enemies.

3. A most noteworthy feature of the expansion was the decision which admitted the Gentiles to the Church because of their new life in Jesus. Bring out the value of the special revelations leading to this decision, as the visions of Cornelius and Peter, and of Paul and Ananias; also the part miracles had in unfolding the gracious character of Christianity, and the power of Jesus among men. Further, the success of the work at Antioch in Syria and during Paul's missionary journey demanded some new conception of the Church. The teacher should spare no pains to master the great principal involved, and to show the value of the Council at Jerusalem. It is difficult for us to appreciate the meaning of the new decision to a Jewish Christian. Observe that it was reached under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Jesus assured His disciples that He would give the truth as they could bear it (see John 16: 12, 13). The church should still look up, as God has still many things to bestow.

4. Special mention should be made of the overcoming life of the Church. To appreciate this, recall the difficulties in the way. Note: (a) The trouble caused by persecution where, singlehanded, the Church met the combined forces of the Jewish leaders and Roman state. Mention the persecutions by Saul, Herod, the Jews at Jerusalem, at Pisidian Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra. (b) The enmity of the Pharisee Jews, who used every art to sow discord, poisoned the mind of the Church against Paul, and even sought to slay him. (c) The danger arising from the low state of morals among the Gentiles, even after they were admitted to the Church. (d) The problem occasioned by the admission of the Gentiles to the Church. Amidst all these, the Christian Church was victorious. Note some of the factors in its success, as: (1) The conversion of Saul; (2) The supervision by the mother church at Jerusalem; (3) The high character of the disciples; (4) The new spirit of love. The letters (Lessons IX. to XI.) sent out to the churches show wonderful attainment in thought and experience.

5. Special reference should be made to Paul, and the part he played in the

expansion of the church. Note: (1) His training after conversion, his forced retirement, his years of quiet thought and meditation, all helped to fit him for his life work, as was seen when he was called to Antioch. (2) His relation to the mother church showed great love, wisdom and tact. (3) He had special fitness for work among the Gentiles. His conversion led him to know that Jesus saves by grace, through faith alone. His early training gave him a sympathetic grasp of the Old Testament. He could meet the Pharisee Jews on their own ground, and overthrow their arguments against receiving the Gentiles. His conception of Christianity as a religion for all men, and his abounding sympathy easily made him master of those principles by which the Italian heart is reached and won.

ANDREW AS A PERSONAL WORKER.

Andrew is an illustration of a faith that bears immediate fruit. He is not a century plant that blossoms but once in the lifetime of a generation, but a tree that, planted to-day, bears fruit to-day. That was a good day's work which Andrew did. As soon as he had been brought to Jesus and came under his wonderful power, he went right to work. "He findeth first his own brother, Simon, and saith unto him, we have found the Messiah (which is, being interpreted, the Christ). He brought him unto Jesus. Jesus looked upon him and said, Thou art Simon, the son of John: thou shalt be called Cephas (which is by interpretation, Peter.)" A rather brief narrative, but an all-important one. It tells of a life redeemed and a work begun. And it was characteristic. Andrew, like his "own brother Simon," seemed to work with his coat off. There was no idling, no dallying. He saw what to do, and the gift of vision was followed by the work of his hand. He came, he saw, he was conquered, and then went forth to conquer. There is nothing reluctantly, nothing doubtfully done. The fact that he had found the Messiah was reason enough why he should strive to have his friends share in his blessing. He had evidently been in a receptive mood. It did not take much urging to have him follow Jesus. He had "heard John speak." John did not say much, but he said the right thing, and it started Andrew on the right road. And Andrew started to work at once to set somebody else right. John converts Andrew, and Andrew converts Peter, and Christ is pleased.

There is a text for a personal worker. When once the grace of God has been manifest in the conversion of a soul, that soul, Andrew like, owes a duty to souls who are yet unredeemed. What good may be done by even the humblest individual under the influence of God's Spirit cannot be estimated. But the duty is plain, whether many or few are brought into the new relationship: it is to seek and to save the lost.

One of the good things about Andrew is, he began his missionary work at home. He saw that there was need of evangelistic work there, and he went direct to his "own brother" and spoke to him on the subject of Christianity. It was no elaborate address that he made; it was no abstruse, metaphysical argument that he presented: it was a plain message on the "lips of a plain man, spoken directly to one whom he desired to share the divine blessing. "We have found the Messiah!" That was all. It would be just like Peter to want to argue the matter. But Andrew had no time for argument. There was something better than that. And we

can imagine we see Andrew taking Peter by the hand and leading him to "the Messiah" whom he had found. And "he brought him;" brought him to the Saviour; brought him to the fountain of life, where he drank to the refreshment of his soul.

How simple the method of Andrew's evangelism; how almost artless it seems. How direct, how emphatic. One sentence, yet it brought a soul to Jesus. One declaration, yet the Rock Man yields to the power of a word. One invitation, yet it gave the Church one of its ablest defenders in all history. How much there must have been back of that word! An earnestness, a pathos, a consecrated soul, a positive conviction that the Messiah had been "found" by the speaker! O for the Andrew spirit, the Andrew power, the Andrew positiveness as to the certainty that Jesus is the Christ; that he is the Son of God; that he is the Redeemer of the World! How such an evangelism would set the world on fire and turn the hearts of men to Christ; a definite gospel, a positive gospel, one that comes warm and loving from the lips of one who has "found" him! What might it not accomplish. Andrew had tasted and seen that the Lord was good. He knew that those who trusted in Him were blessed. He had not been long in the kingdom, and the kingdom had not been long in him, but as a saved man he sees his newborn enthusiasm to enlarge the kingdom by first including his nearest friends.—United Presbyterian.

GOLDEN GRAIN BIBLE READINGS.

By Rev. J. A. Dickson, B.D., Galt. GOD AND OUR THOUGHTS.

He only knows the heart, 2 Chron. vi. 30; Isa. lxvi. 18.

He understands the thoughts afar off. Psa. cxxxix. 2.

He searches the heart, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9; Psa. vii. 9.

He perceives the thought of the heart, Luke ix. 47.

He declares to man what are his thoughts, Amos. iv. 13; Dan. ii. 28.

(1) They are vanity, Psa. xciv. 21.

(2) Not piercing to him, Prov. xv. 26.

(3) God is not in them, Psa. x. 4.

(4) They perish, Psa. cxlvi. 4.

He remembers those who think of Him, Mal. iii. 16, 17.

JEWS TO COLONIZE MESOPOTAMIA.

It is reported that Jacob H. Schiff, the well known banker, and Isaac Zangwill, head of the Jewish Territorial Organization, are about to put into effect a plan for establishing a great Jewish colony in Mesopotamia. The vast possibilities of that region under adequate irrigation have long been recognized, and more than one plan has been proposed by which the riches of the ancient civilization could be revived. But so long as the rapacious old regime in Turkey stood ready to lay its hand upon the gains of the colonizer and promoter, there was no prospect of practical realization. Under the new order, however, it is believed that sufficient security will be afforded, and Ahmed Riza Bey, president of the Turkish Chamber of Deputies, is reported to have indicated that the project of Messrs. Schiff and Zangwill will be favored by the government. It is believed that co-operation of four Jewish organizations will be obtained—the Zionists, the Jewish Territorial Organization, the Jewish Colonization Association, and the Alliance Israélite Universelle. The cost of the irrigation undertaking would be some forty millions of dollars; but as the colonization association already possesses fifty millions bequeathed to it by the late Baron Hirsch the financial problem does not appear to be difficult.